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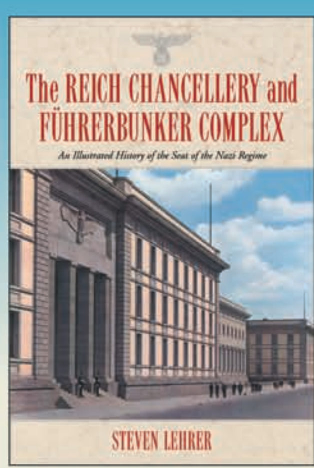

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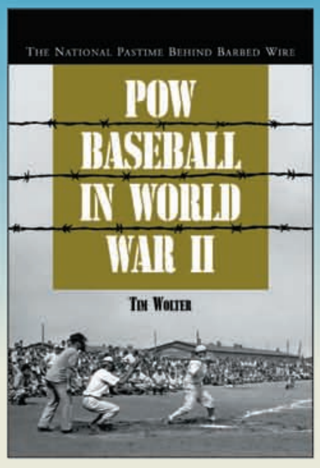

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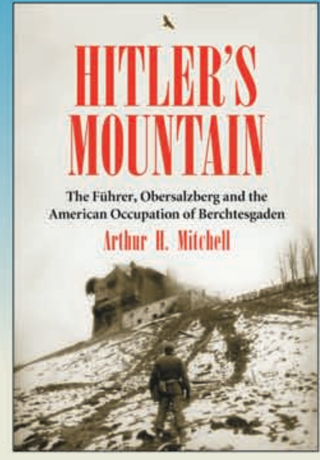

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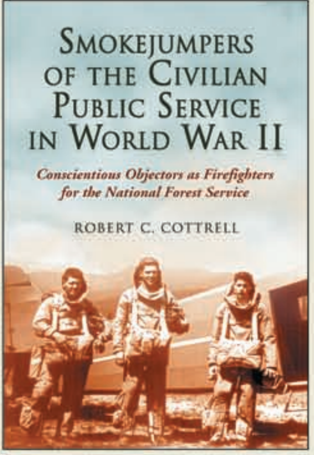

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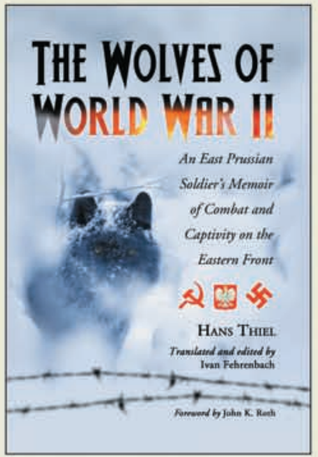

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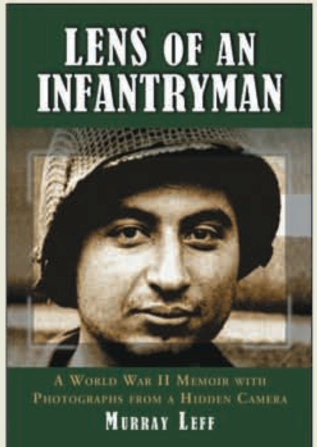

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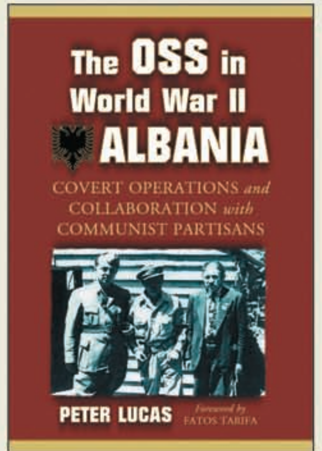

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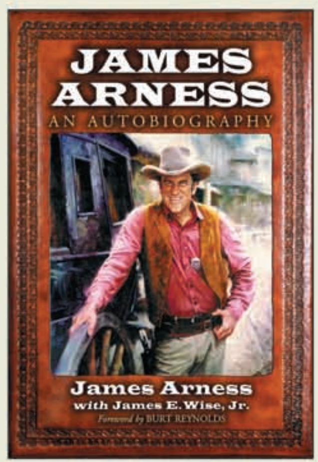

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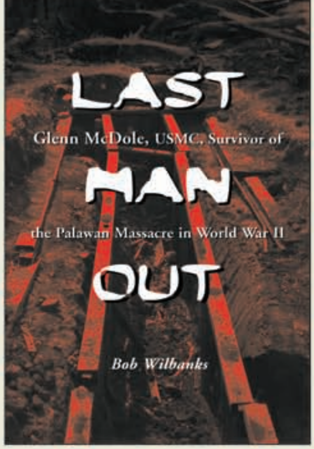

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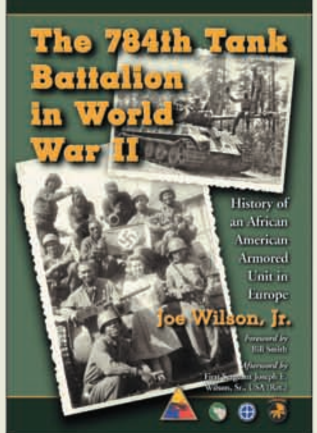

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Cover: A U.S. soldier operates a flamethrower, a weapon first introduced in 1943 at Guadalcanal. It was invaluable against the Japanese bunkers encountered on the islands of the South Pacific. © Bettmann/CORBIS

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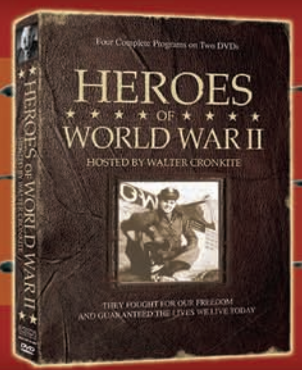

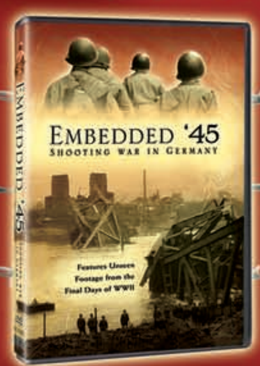

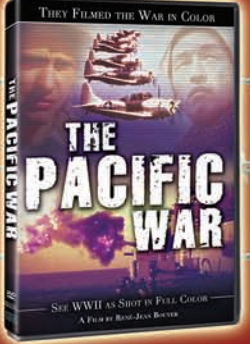

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Editorial

Kurt Waldheim's diplomatic service was tainted by his Nazi past.

WHEN FORMER UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL AND PRESIDENT OF Austria Kurt Waldheim died on June 14 of this year, he had been officially barred from entry into the United States for 20 years. Why? Despite a successful diplomatic career, dealing with the tensions of the Cold War and numerous crises around the world, Waldheim was unable to suppress the nature of his service in the German Army during World War II.

Born in St. Andra-Wordern, near Vienna, on December 21, 1918, Waldheim was a student at the University of Vienna in 1938, when Hitler and the Nazis announced the anschluss, or union, of Austria and Germany. Subsequently, he became a member of the Nazi student union and joined the Sturmabteilung, popularly known as the Brown Shirts. These paramilitary Nazis were basically street thugs and had gained a reputation for terrorizing enemies of the Nazi government.

With the outbreak of war, Waldheim was drafted into the German Army. During his service on the Eastern Front in 1941, he was wounded and supposedly granted a medical discharge. Insisting for decades that he did not return to active duty, Waldheim wrote two autobiographies but related very little about his later activities during the war years. Reportedly, he graduated from law school in 1944 and then married.

At the end of World War II, Waldheim's diplomatic career developed quickly. He accepted a position in the Austrian Foreign Ministry and served in France. In 1955, he became Austria's first delegate to the United Nations. He held the position of ambassador to Canada and was named UN Secretary General in 1972. In 1986, he was elected President of Austria amid a raging controversy as to the true nature of his involvement with the German Army in the Balkans.

During his presidential campaign, various documents that contradicted Waldheim's claims came to light. Organizations such as the World Jewish Congress released evidence that he had actually served in the German Army until 1945. In fact, they indicated that Waldheim had been an intelligence officer in Yugoslavia and Greece during the spring and summer of 1942 and that in April 1943 he joined Department I-C, attached to Army Group E. When confronted with this information, Waldheim admitted only that he had been a clerk and denied any knowledge that his unit had committed numerous atrocities, including the executions of partisans and innocent civilians. Nevertheless, his commanding officer, General Alexander Loehr, had presented him the War Merit Cross, First Class, with Swords in 1945. Loehr was executed for war crimes two years later.

Waldheim was identified as a war criminal, but never tried. Perhaps the most compelling evidence against him is the fact that he was an apparent participant in Operation Kozara, a successful offensive against Yugoslav partisans under Tito, which was conducted in 1942. The bodies of many of those executed by the Germans were displayed on wooden gallows along the road between Kostajnica and Banja Luka. Waldheim was decorated and identified on the German Army honor roll for his participation. He also received a medal from the notorious Ante Pavelic, leader of the Ustashi, a fascist organization. Later, he was said to have approved the dropping of Anti-Jewish propaganda leaflets behind Red Army lines. One of the leaflets concluded, "Enough of the Jewish war, kill the Jews, come over."

When Waldheim was elected president of Austria, Israel boycotted his inauguration. The United States officially labeled him a war criminal, and an international commission found that he was aware of atrocities committed and failed to act in order to stop them. He became a virtual outcast from the world diplomatic community.

Although he had been a champion of peace during his tenure with the United Nations, Waldheim could not hide his Nazi past forever. In 1996, he wrote in his own defense, "I did what was necessary to survive the day, the system, the war—no more, no less."

A legacy of terror and murder has outlived Kurt Waldheim, and years of diplomatic service are destined to fade into obscurity.

Michael E. Haskew

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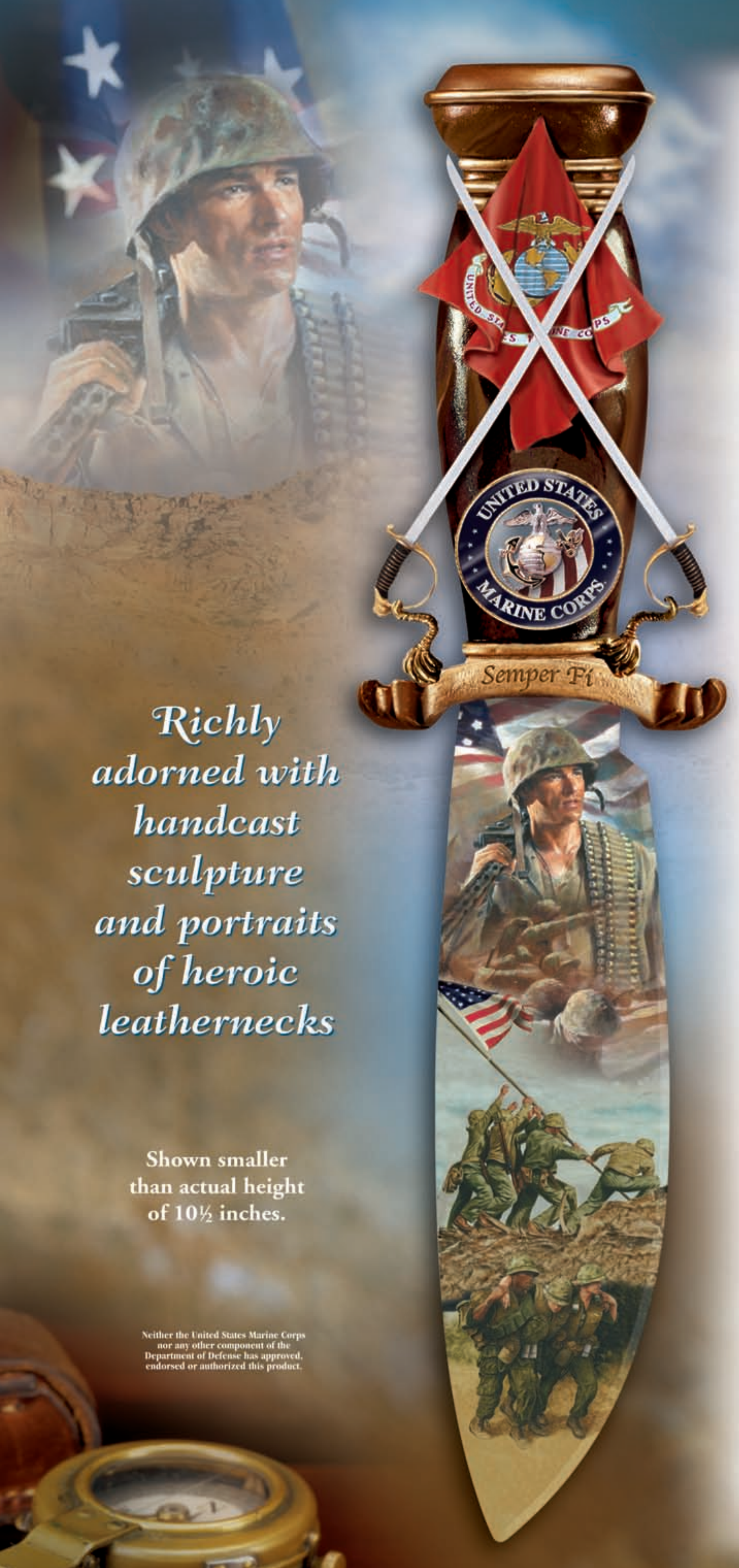

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ATC versus CNAC at the Hump

Dear Editor:

The article in your July 2007 issue, "Over the Hump" by Sam McGowan was an ambitious undertaking as the statistics by the ATC (Air Transport Command), U.S. Air Force, were never complete because the enormous losses were too embarrassing to be revealed. CNAC (China National Aviation Corporation), the civilian airline with civilian pilots, flew the Hump the right way.

I am the historian for CNAC who flew 347 round trips over the Hump during World War II, 1943, 1944, 1945. I have laid down the statistics of the Hump operation in my book, *Saga of CNAC #53,* published by Authorhouse.

Sam McGowan made gross errors in his article, i.e., the armed forces lost two transports to Japanese gunfire in the entire war, when they lost 173 in October 1943, while CNAC lost two. This is proven and known information.

I won't bore your readers with a lot of statistics, but it is well documented in my book that CNAC captains flying 33 of the oldest, smallest, underpowered twin-engine C-47s on the Hump accounted for one-seventh of all the freight delivered to China during World War II. At the same time on the same route, 3,000 ATC captains who operated 18 times as many modern, four-engine transports delivered the rest. CNAC transports only carried three tons per trip versus six tons for the larger ATC transports. CNAC only lost 81 lives, versus 3,800 by ATC.

Fletcher Hanks, Jr.
Oxford, Maryland

Dear Mr. Hanks,

I am thrilled to hear from a China National Airways Corporation veteran.

I am a little confused about your point, however. My source for the article is the official history of the U.S. Army Air Forces in World War II and the numbers I used came from it. You may or not be aware that the Military Airlift Command historical office was upset when the volume describing the CBI came out because it made the ATC look bad and they wrote a new article that was published in a later volume in the late 1950s. Still, even the Air Mobility Command only acknowledges the loss of seven ATC transports and 13 crewmembers to enemy action during the entire war. On the other hand, their operational losses were quite high, with at least 500 transports and 1,000 airmen lost on the Hump routes.

However, it is important to remember that these figures are only for the ATC part of the ferry, and do not include losses incurred by Tenth Air Force. Nor do they include losses sustained by troop carrier squadrons or bomber squadrons that were flying their own supplies from India to China. Still, I would have a hard time accepting that 173 airplanes were lost to all causes in October 1943 alone. The AAF history reports ATC losses of 143 transports to accident during a six-month period in 1943, but they don't state the time period. To have lost 173 airplanes in one month in the CBI would have been a military disaster. Eighth Air Force bomber operations in Europe were less than that, and October 1943 was the worst month of the war for them.

I'm surprised at your reference to four-engine transports. After the ATC took over the Hump operation, they primarily used C-87s and C-46s. The ATC did not begin operating C-54s on the Ferry until the latter part of 1944 because they did not have the high-altitude capabilities to operate over the 15,000-foot ridges, not to mention that they were needed on other routes. ATC did continue operating the C-47s of the 1st Ferrying Group for a while, but eventually replaced them with C-46s. Still, there is no doubt that the CNAC did a much better job of hauling cargo, especially when considering the difference in resources. I wasn't aware that the CNAC share was one-seventh of the total.

I'd love to read your book and communicate with you. As a Vietnam era airlift veteran, I am very interested in anything having to do with military air transportation.

Sam McGowan
Missouri City, Texas

Comments on the July 2007 Issue

Dear Editor:

The July issue has much to commend it: the interesting article about FDR's devious preparations for war, the generous treatment accorded to Japanese troops by troops of the Kuomintang Republic postwar despite the atrocities committed by too many of those troops (who else has every covered that?), the article about the Italian armored force prior to and during WWII, etc. Author Blumberg did an excellent job of relating the general course of the Regio Esercito's tank corps development, but his characterization of the Carro Armato P40, the Italian "heavy" tank, as comparing "favorably" with the German PzKpf IV (long or short 75mm gun version) is overly generous: the riveted armor of the Italian tank had a much poorer tensile quality, the two-man turret crew of P40 with rare or no radio carried the same severe ergonomic disadvantage as the Russian T-34-76, the M3 Light, and most tanks of the era. (Only the M3A3 Light model finally got a radio, an indication, by the way, of the low standards of pre- and early-war U.S. tanks.)

Peter Kross's tracing of FDR's preparations for war is insightful and candid. Unfortunately, Kross's piece ends abruptly in mid-sentence on page 19. Do we have to buy a future issue to get the rest of the story? Or do you have a means of posting it on your website, etc.?

Dietz Ziechmann
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

EDITOR'S NOTE: The remainder of Peter Kross's Top Secret article on FDR is on page 85. We inadvertently omitted the continued line on page 19 and the new heading on page 85 and we apologize for the inconvenience.

Australia Stands with Us

Dear Sir,

Some very dear friends of ours in Arizona, knowing that I am a very keen war historian, sent me your May 2007 issue, which I enjoyed reading very much. My main point here is to assure you that there wouldn't be another Australian who would be more pro-American than myself. I have been to your country twice (1988 and 1996), made many friends there, and completing our world tour in 1996, we were able to say that in our opinion your courtesy, good manners, the abundance of good food, your own patriotism, and the way you treat tourists couldn't be matched anywhere else.

Having said that, I now wish to congratulate you that at last we have an American magazine that gives credit to other countries who contributed to winning World War II, and this brings me to the Pacific War which very much involved us here in Australia. Because of Hollywood, many people in the world think that the U.S. won the war all by herself. In *Flags of Our Fathers,* page 58, James Bradley states that "America would stand alone in the Pacific, the Pacific would be America's war."

Bradley's book is a masterpiece, but I believe that this one line spoilt it and is an insult to the thousands of Australian families who lost their boys in the savage fighting in New Guinea and other islands. The two highlights to us Aussies in WWII were Tobruk in North Africa and the Kokoda Trail in New Guinea. I won't mention Tobruk at this stage, but after the Battle of the Coral Sea (mostly U.S. ships and planes), the Japanese landed in northern New Guinea and drove south to try to

take Port Moresby by land, which was important to them as it had an airstrip from which they could begin the bombing of northern Australia. The first boys we sent up were mostly teenagers, some with three weeks' training, while the Japanese were veterans from the war in China since 1936 and outnumbered the Aussies 10 to 1.

There are no words to describe the fearful conditions of the New Guinea jungles—constant rain, dysentery, mosquitoes, malaria, berri-berri, swamps and mountainous terrain, against a fanatical enemy who considered it an honor to die for the Emperor and Japan. The Japanese drove the Aussies to within 30 miles of Moresby, but our prime minister, John Curtain, against Churchill's wishes, had brought our fighting men back from Africa, where they had been successful against the German General Rommel and his "Africa Cor."

These tough veterans got here in the nick of time, and from then on the Japanese were pushed back the way they had come over the Owen Stanley ranges all the way to Gona and Buna on the north coast. There the Americans joined the Aussies, shared foxholes, and forged a successful alliance that is still talked about today. Such battles as Gona, Buna, Salamaua, Scarlet Beach, Finchhafen, Lae, Bougainville, Madang, and many more were all joint U.S./Australian battles. Yes, Guadalcanal was 100% American, just as the Kokoda Trail was 100% Australian. If your readers are interested in the American occupation of Australia during World War II, I suggest they purchase *They Passed This Way* by Barry Ralph, which is available in the U.S. There is information in this book that will stagger the most informed war historians.

I would like to conclude by saying this: Australia has stood by the United States in every war since World War I, and our boys are with you at this time of writing in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Vietnam your soldiers referred to our boys as "Little Brother" from "Down Under." That's fine, mate, as long as you do recognize that we are with you.

Ken Knuth
Thuringowa Centr., Australia

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Ireland's Wolf of the Desert

The exploits of Irishman Paddy Mayne became the stuff of legend during commando operations.

THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 14, 1941, WAS BITTERLY COLD IN THE NORTH African desert. Midway between El Agheila and Tripoli, Libya, was the German and Italian air base outside the town of Tamet. Situated on the southern Mediterranean coast, it was a vital installation, supporting the Afrika Korps, commanded by General Erwin Rommel, and Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's Panzer Army Afrika. Tamet was a plum target for Commonwealth forces.

The base was shut down for the night. About 30 German and Italian airmen were eating, drinking, playing cards, and socializing in the wooden building that served as the officers' mess. Preoccupied as they were, the pilots were flabbergasted when the door shattered under the impact of a booted foot. Filling the entrance was the silhouette of a huge man in British uniform with a submachine gun jammed against his right hip. As he opened fire, screams of terror and pain filled the room. By the time the Tommy gun's drum of 50 rounds was empty, the room was splattered with blood and littered with dead and dying men. As suddenly as he had appeared, the massive enemy soldier was gone. He was Lieutenant Robert Blair "Paddy" Mayne of Britain's Special Air Service (SAS), and he was far from finished with Tamet.

After Mayne and the five other members of his commando squad galloped into the stygian blackness of the surrounding desert, the base's terrified, bewildered personnel spent almost an hour shooting at each other in the poor light. The initial attack had come at 2140 hours. Just after 2300, Mayne and his men crept back to the airfield and commenced planting explosives on the German and Italian aircraft parked around the base's perimeter. They also booby trapped fuel and ammunition dumps and telephone poles. Just before midnight, Tamet erupted into volcanic fury as plastic explosives pulverized planes and ignited fuel and bombs. For the time being this pivotal Axis installation was utterly out of commission.

This first raid on Tamet was heralded a new style of warfare that would be a spear in the heart of Nazi Germany's North African military presence. Paddy Mayne would be the executioner of this campaign, but only he knew how far he would carry the crusade. The Germans certainly did not anticipate the degree of devastation coming at them, and neither did the British. Mayne did not bother telling either side what he had in mind—he would show them.

Born in Newtownards, Ireland, on January 11, 1915, Mayne was already a member of the Queen's University Officer Training Corps at the time of the 1938 Munich crisis. The following February he was commissioned into the 5th Light Anti-Artillery Territorial Regiment even though his superiors had evaluated him as "unruly and generally unreliable." When war was declared in September, Mayne was left behind when his unit was sent to Egypt. The snub made an impression on the fearless and lethal but hard-drinking and undisciplined young soldier. When No. 11 Commando accepted him the following spring, he eagerly threw himself into the training regimen.

TOP: The navigator and commander of an operation undertaken by a unit of the British Special Air Service (SAS) confer as to their position. LEFT: Lieutenant Colonel Robert Blair "Paddy" Mayne in an official portrait.

(Top: Australian War Memorial/ Left: Imperial War Museum)

While Hitler's armies overran continental Europe, Mayne was in Scotland enduring brutal physical training, becoming a weapons expert, learning map reading, swimming in full kit, rock climbing, prac-

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In the wake of a raid by the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG), destroyed Italian aircraft litter the airfield at Barce, Libya. An attack by the LRDG on September 13, 1942, left 30 Italian planes destroyed and impeded the delivery of supplies to Axis forces. (National Archives)

ticing unarmed combat, using explosives, and learning how to organize transportation in all situations. Mayne was a deadly warrior by the time he was sent to the Mediterranean Theater in the summer of 1941.

Mayne's unit participated in the abortive Litani River raid in Syria in which 120 Commonwealth soldiers were killed. After the survivors were sent to Cyprus for rest, Mayne became angry at his commanding officer, 24-year-old Lt. Col. Geoffrey Keyes, for not including him on the roster of a raid to abduct Rommel, which was never carried out. When Keyes imprudently approached Mayne in the mess hall one night, the resentful young Irishman rose from his chair and knocked his colonel senseless with a roundhouse right to the jaw. His next commanding officer, Colonel David Stirling, would be much wiser in utilizing Mayne's deadly talents.

Hastily organizing the best available talent into the new SAS, Stirling relocated his unit to the North African mainland. Arranging to work in cooperation with the better publicized Long Range Desert Group (LRDG), Stirling and Mayne were ready for devastating special operations by late 1941. The inaugural raid on Tamet set the standard for ensuing SAS depredations. Realizing the Nazis and Fascists would not be expecting another raid on Tamet for a while after the destructive December 14 assault and would likely pack it with aircraft and supplies, the SAS returned to this mark on the 27th. The second visit resulted in 27 warplanes blown up along with several fuel dumps, three trucks, and two trailers crammed with vital spare parts for aircraft. Axis forces in the desert were already beginning to dread the night.

The sprawling Commonwealth land offensive of late 1941 had driven the Germans out of Benghazi, forcing them to ship supplies and reinforcements to the port of Bouerat, 350 miles to the west. A foray against Bouerat happened to fall at a time when the harbor was empty, and Mayne and his commandos found nothing to destroy but 18 fuel drums and a few food caches. The raiding party returned home in time for Rommel's early 1942 counteroffensive that carried his forces all the way back to the Gazala Line, from which he had been driven two months earlier. In the midst of all this momentous military action, Mayne was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

Now promoted to captain, he led his men in crucial attacks on Benghazi harbor and the adjacent airfields. On March 15, he set out to assail an airfield called Berka Satellite. Accompanied by two corporals named Rose and Bennett, and a Private Byrne, he reached the target at 3 AM the next day. The commandos blew up the base's fuel dumps, 15 aircraft, and a stack of 12 torpedoes. Escaping cleanly, they missed their rendezvous and had to walk 30 miles across the sweltering desert to the next LRDG pickup point.

On May 26, Rommel launched a pulverizing offensive, capturing the long-standing Allied bastion of Tobruk, bagging 33,000 prisoners, including five generals, and a huge haul of tanks, artillery pieces, food, and medicine. By the end of June, the British Eighth Army had been shoved all the way to El Alamein, across the Egyptian frontier, and was just 60 miles west of Alexandria.

After the aerial pounding he had inflicted on the British at Malta, Kesselring assumed the island was finished as a major threat and called off his warplanes. The Royal Air Force took full advantage of the respite and rushed large shipments of pilots and Supermarine Spitfire fighter planes to Malta. With the German supply lines being ravaged by warplanes, Luftwaffe units were forced to withdraw from the support of Rommel's eastward advance and again target RAF airfields on the island. With Axis air power thus diluted, Mayne and Stirling realized their attacks on enemy airfields were imperative to further reducing Rommel's priceless tactical air support.

The SAS swiftly outfitted a fleet of jeeps for mobile warfare. Welding two Vickers, rapid-firing machine guns facing forward on the vehicles and a swiveling .50-caliber Browning machine gun in the rear of each jeep, the commandos transformed the machines into devastating, high-speed gun platforms. By the end of July 1942 the unit was wholly motorized.

On July 4, even before the transformation was complete, an SAS convoy set out to raid the airfields scattered in the Bagush/Fuka region, 100 miles behind enemy lines. Reaching Bagush on the night of July 7, Mayne and three men blew up 22 aircraft with plastic explosives. This was far fewer than they had sabotaged, and Mayne growled, "Damn, we did 40 aircraft. Some of the bloody primers must have been damp." Not about to leave the job undone, Mayne and Stirling charged their vehicles onto the airfield and opened up with their Vickers guns, firing 1,200 rounds per minute apiece. Stunned by this new assault after they assumed the saboteurs had departed, the Germans ran for cover as the raiders shot to pieces 12 more of the Luftwaffe's precious warplanes.

The largely overlooked effectiveness of the SAS is demonstrated by comparing this night's work with one of the RAF's greatest victories during the Battle of Britain. On September 18, 1940, England's renowned legless Wing Commander Douglas Bader and his squadrons had garnered international headlines by downing 30 German planes. Mayne and his marauders destroyed 34 on the night of July 7, 1942, contributing mightily to the Eighth Army's victory at El Alamein in October. Yet, outside the immediate area, no one took note.

The clinical detachment and unselfishness with which Mayne approached his duty is typified by his encounter with a superior, Maj. Gen. David Lloyd Owen, after a raid on the German airfield at Fuka. "How were things tonight?" asked Owen. "A bit trickier tonight," replied Mayne. "They had posted a sentry on nearly every bloody plane. I had to knife the sentries before I could place the bombs." When Owen asked how many of these guards Mayne had killed that night, the casual reply was, "Seventeen." Far from demanding recognition and reward for this mass throat cutting, he never mentioned it again. Had Owen not asked, the incident would have been recorded as just another night's work for the SAS. It is possible nobody but Mayne would have ever known about it.

In early July, Mayne and Stirling contrived a plan for a major motorized raid on the sprawling Luftwaffe base at El Daba, about 50 miles west of El Alamein. By this time, the Germans had significantly strengthened security around their bases. The large number of sentries Mayne had been forced to slay at Fuka was evidence of this. The two commanders therefore conspired to launch a sudden jeep-borne attack out of the darkness, plowing through perimeter defenses and shooting up the installations from within.

On the night of July 9, Mayne used this strategy on El Daba and destroyed 14 aircraft. Two nights later he led his jeeps back to Fuka and shot to pieces 22 more planes. This ongoing attrition of German airpower profoundly affected Axis morale as the Third Reich could not protect its most important North African military installations when they were hundreds of miles from the front lines. Mayne and his SAS men, even though they were among the most effective military units then fighting, remained virtually unknown.

At this point Allied reconnaissance flights revealed that Sidi Haneish, another Luftwaffe field in the Fuka area, was not only one of Rommel's main aircraft assembly areas, but that it was packed with his priceless Junkers Ju-52 transport planes. Already in short supply, these tri-motor cargo carriers were invaluable for making his eastward advance possible by ferrying in men, medicine, munitions, and provisions. Mayne and Stirling devised a plot to send 18 jeeps against the facility under a full moon. Because the bright moonlight would make it difficult for the SAS to approach the field unnoticed, the Germans would not be expecting a raid.

The vehicles would brazenly advance in line abreast, and as they neared their target's perimeter they would form into two columns, plunge into the base at high speed, and shoot. With the jeeps spaced just five yards apart and so many powerful, fast-firing guns blazing at once, perfect timing was crucial to avoiding the raiders' hitting each other with their gunfire or colliding. After exhaustively rehearsing the assault, Mayne led the strike force into the Sahara at dusk on July 27.

Four hours later, the raiders were within a half mile of the airfield and preparing to form into their twin attack columns when the installation ahead was suddenly flooded with light. At first, the raiders thought they had been spotted, but it turned out that the brilliant illumination was guiding a Heinkel He-111 bomber returning from a night patrol. The jeeps continued advanc-

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ing and barged straight into the base as their gunners opened up with scores of twin Vickers in a pulverizing display of firepower.

The Ju-52s were there all right, but the base turned out to be even more of a prime target than Mayne and Stirling had expected as they wound their vehicles between rows of parked Messerschmitt Me-109 fighters, Heinkels, and Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive-bombers. The Germans were completely surprised. Within minutes the base was ablaze, but Mayne would not leave any job unfinished. As the attackers were leaving, he spied a lone Ju-52 that the raiders had overlooked. With his machine guns out of ammunition, Mayne jumped from his jeep, ran up to the plane, slapped a plastic bomb onto its wing, galloped back to his vehicle, and roared off into the desert.

In this attack the SAS lost one man and one jeep in exchange for at least 40 Luftwaffe aircraft destroyed. This spectacular success in a long line of devastating actions led Eighth Army high command in Cairo to decide Mayne and his destructive little outfit should now be used in a large-scale operation.

General Bernard Law Montgomery, the newly appointed commander of the Eighth Army, was anxious to achieve a decisive, exclusively Commonwealth, military victory before the United States entered the war in force. He decided the SAS would take part in a large-scale operation against Benghazi Harbor. Mayne would have to absorb 100 new recruits in order to bring the unit up to the strength of 220 men required for the mission. There was insufficient time for him to train this influx of newcomers to his exacting standards. Forced to adhere to a rigid timetable, the unit would lose its valuable asset of flexibility, and being part of a large force would mean loss of the crucial SAS element of surprise. Still, Mayne readied his troops as best he could.

The first leg of the expedition was an 800-mile drive to the mission's staging point at Kufra Oasis. From there the convoy had another 600 miles to travel to the mountainous Djebel region to assemble for the assault on Benghazi, 20 miles away. Although high command in Cairo had received repeated intelligence reports that the enemy was aware of the approaching strike force, Mayne and Stirling were ordered to go ahead with the attack. On the night of September 13, the raiders set out for Benghazi.

Stopping at an unmanned roadblock just outside the city, the convoy was ambushed from both sides of the road. Sent reeling back to Kufra, the column still had another 800 miles to go to reach friendly lines. Constantly strafed by the vengeful Luftwaffe, the force lost men and machines steadily along the route. At one point Mayne was wildly maneuvering his jeep while being strafed by a relentless German pilot. When one of the men in the jeep was wounded and fell from the vehicle, Mayne kept going until the airman finally broke off his attack. After finding cover and parking his jeep, Mayne, not knowing whether the man who had fallen from the vehicle was dead or alive, backtracked until he found the wounded soldier and carried him on his shoulders back to the jeep.

The Benghazi fiasco cost 50 men and 50 vehicles and justified Mayne's misgivings about integrating the SAS into a large-scale offensive. Such a move wasted their unique talents and commando training. Montgomery seemed to realize this and permitted Stirling and Mayne to return to their covert ways.

In late October, the unit had set up a new base of operations inside the Sand Sea. The facility was about 200 miles behind enemy lines around El Alamein and 150 miles south of the coastal road and railway Rommel was using as supply routes. The site was well placed for attacks on both supply convoys and forward air bases. Remote as it was, few German aircraft were in the area.

Soon after settling into this new location, recently arrived SAS 2nd Lt. Johnny Wiseman had his "first terrifying experience" with Paddy Mayne. After having "a lot of rum" Mayne decided Wiseman would look good with half a beard, so he knocked the junior officer to the floor, pinned him down, and shouted, "Get me my throat-cut!" Decades later Wiseman recounted how his inebriated commanding officer "took off half my beard without any water, without anything. There was this enormous man sitting on top of me. I've never been so frightened in my life. I was sure he was about to cut my throat. After that nothing in the war ever frightened me! That cured me."

The SAS was closely involved in Montgomery's offensive in the autumn of 1942. With Rommel dug in at El Agheila, Mayne and 90 of his men were ordered to relocate to a wadi called Bir Zalten, about 100 miles south of Rommel's lines. With 30 jeeps, the SAS was tasked with haunting the 400 miles of highway linking the Germans with their supply base at Tripoli. Axis forces would be compelled to run the gauntlet of jeep-borne raiders at night and expose their convoys to incessant strafing by the RAF during daylight hours. Montgomery personally approved the plan. He was quoted as saying the SAS "could have a decisive effect, yes, a really decisive effect, on my forthcoming offensive."

Paddy Mayne's greatest feat of heroism occurred during the closing days of the war.

The final days of the war in Europe saw some bloody combat for the SRS. On April 9, 1945, Lt. Col. Mayne and his men were leading a regiment of the Canadian 4th Armored Division through the German countryside northeast of the city of Oldenburg, en route to Kiel, when the column was ambushed by German troops firing from a house to the side of the road.

Grabbing a machine gun, Mayne ran into the house alone and gunned down every enemy soldier inside. He then ran back outside, deployed his men, and jumped behind the wheel of a jeep. With another officer as gunner, Mayne drove about 100 yards farther up the road to where the enemy was raking the convoy with gunfire from positions in a wooded area. Fully exposed to the Germans, Mayne drove his jeep slowly up and down the thoroughfare while his gunner fired at the enemy positions. Although still under fire, he then returned his vehicle to the point of ambush and lifted numerous wounded British and Canadian soldiers out of the roadway, placed them in his jeep, and drove them to the rear.

The column, which had been at a standstill until Mayne's appearance at the point, then continued its advance until it was a full 20 miles ahead of the division's main body. With their rear threatened by the appearance of Mayne and his spearhead, the Germans withdrew, easing the advance of the rest of the division. Mayne both saved the wounded and routed the enemy, and never mentioned the incident again.

The encounter at Oldenburg earned Mayne his third bar to the Distinguished Service Order. However, in 2005, the House of Commons in London voted in favor of upgrading the DSO to the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest decoration for valor. □

Averaging 16 raids per week, the jeep commandos made nocturnal supply runs at least as perilous for the Afrika Korps as daylight runs under a sky controlled by the Royal Air Force. The pinch on the Germans' supplies became so severe that Rommel detailed some of his armored patrols to fruitlessly chase the night raiders. On October 8, 1942, Hitler himself issued a formal order that "these British saboteurs and their accomplices are to be hunted down and exterminated without mercy."

With the flow of men, weapons, ammunition, food, medicine, and even mail cut to a trickle, Rommel's forces had no chance when Montgomery's massive, copiously supplied army fell upon them at El Alamein. Montgomery achieved his coveted goal of a decisive Commonwealth victory before the Americans dominated the Allied war effort. The Germans retreated westward.

ABOVE: Colonel David Stirling, founder of the SAS, poses with several of his men prior to their departure for a raid. The heavily armed Jeeps usually mounted twin Vickers machine guns and carried provisions for extended forays into the desert. LEFT: Lieutenant Colonel Blair "Paddy" Mayne succeeded to command of the SAS after the capture of Colonel David Stirling. (Above: National Archives/Left: Imperial War Museum)

During Operation Torch in November, U.S. troops landed along the western coast of North Africa, threatening to squeeze the Axis forces in a vise. By the end of January, the Allies had captured Tripoli. Weeks later, the battle for North Africa was over.

Stirling was captured before the final German surrender in North Africa, and Mayne was promoted to lieutenant colonel and given command of the SAS. His first task was to convince his superiors not to disband his outfit. Captain Derrick Harrison later recalled, "Paddy fought desperately to keep us alive. He managed to do it by changing our role. We became Special Raiding Squadron, SAS."

Miffed at having to politic desperately to preserve the mere existence of such a heroic outfit, and still angry over the Army's recent refusal to allow him to return to Ireland for his father's funeral, Mayne went on a drunken rampage while on leave in Cairo. Owen was present at this brouhaha and later said, "I was there. I saw Paddy throw the provost-marshal and two military policemen down the steps of Shepherd's Hotel." Although Mayne was arrested for this escapade, his superiors were aware of his value as a soldier and made certain he was not court-martialed. He was instead sent off to prepare the newly named Special Raiding Squadron for the invasion of Sicily.

Mayne threw himself into retraining his troops for non-desert warfare, even teaching them to fight on horseback. However, the SAS would never again reach the heights of gallantry, effectiveness, and adventure it had achieved in North Africa. Now called the SRS, the unit fought through Sicily, Italy, France, and into Germany. During the Normandy campaign the unit worked in cooperation with the French Maquis, operating destructively behind German lines and easing the advance of the invading Allies. Mayne continued his occasional drunken carousing, at one point riding in the back of one of his jeeps through the streets of newly secured Le Mans, France, firing his .50-caliber guns into the air. Arrested by military police and brought before General George S. Patton, Jr., commander of the U.S. Third Army, he shamed Patton into releasing him by slurring, "I hope I didn't frighten your men."

In the spring of 1945, the SRS helped wrap up the war in Europe by working closely with the Canadian 4th Armored Division. Mayne and his soldiers chewed holes in German defensive lines so that the Canadian tank columns could penetrate. War's end saw the SRS participating in securing the Baltic port of Kiel.

Mayne's unselfish dedication to his cause is exemplified by how he kept secret a painful back injury he had suffered in North Africa. His repeated parachute drops into France in 1944 agonizingly exacerbated the damaged vertebra, but he kept it a closely guarded secret. No one else knew about the injury until after the war. He did not let his back trouble stop him from earning the Distinguished Service Order with three bars, a testament to his displays of incredible heroism on four separate occasions. Mayne was one of the most highly decorated soldiers of World War II.

After being mustered out of the service he spent the next 10 years wandering aimlessly from one job to another. Lost in peacetime, this massive soldier's drinking grew worse. During the predawn hours of December 15, 1955, after having too many drinks, 40-year-old Mayne was killed in a car crash in his hometown of Newtownards.

After easily surviving everything the Third Reich could throw at him for four years, Blair Mayne fell prey to the peace he had done so much to achieve. Never married and childless, his only legacy is his fantastic military record. With no room in his own soul for conceit, he and his valor were largely lost among the enormous egos of the Allied war heroes he supported. He made their jobs much easier. □

Kelly Bell writes regularly on various aspects of World War II, including the naval war in the Pacific and the land war in Western Europe. He resides in Tyler, Texas.

By G. Paul Garson

Warhorses—collateral casualties of WWII

Thousands of pack animals and cavalry horses labored in the German Army, and many were killed in combat or slaughtered for food by starving soldiers.

BY 1939 THE GERMAN REICH POSSESSED 3,800,000 HORSES WHILE 885,000 WERE initially called to the Wehrmacht as saddle, draft, and pack animals. Of these, 435,000 horses were captured from the USSR, France, and Poland. Additional horses were purchased from Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Ireland.

Klaus Christian Richter, himself a member of the 1935 German cavalry class, commented in his book *Cavalry of the Wehrmacht 1941-1945* on the physical and psychological stress of the war: "The old soldierly virtues proved themselves once more: courage, sense of duty, feeling of responsibility, comradeship, and as well love of the horse." German riding schools, horses, and riders were of the highest quality, and from 1930 to 1940 competed in every important international event. Their crowning achievement came at the 1936 Olympics when the German team won six equestrian gold medals and one silver, dominating all three disciplines—dressage, jumping, and military—a feat never repeated.

Prior to 1935, thanks to a staggering 12 years of military service required for enlisted men and NCOs, a great amount of time, up to 3,000 hours, was spent on basic rider training in the German cavalry. This laid an excellent groundwork for the horse-mounted troops, although as Germany moved toward war the rider training was reduced to an average of one hour per day, with the riders now focusing on weapons and combat strategies. While much of their duties were aimed at reconnaissance and scouting, the horse troopers trained as much as the infantry. Training was rigorous, often days of 30-60 miles in the saddle, each horse carrying upward of 250 pounds of man and equipment.

Many German soldiers were accustomed in civilian life to tilling the rich farmlands of Germany, in which animals, particularly horses, were an integral part of their lives. They had a special bond with the animals, a bond of blood and soil. While the popular conception of the German military machine was just that, a massive array of tanks, armored vehicles, troop transports, and trucks, much of the heavy hauling was actually done by horses. In addition, thousands of troops went to war on horseback in the German cavalry. Their mounts were chosen by special committees that purchased horses at the age of three with training beginning at four and continuing for two more years in a program unsurpassed by any other nation. Heavy draft-sized horses also entered service as the wagonloads grew heavier, while a number of Berber horses entered Wehrmacht service after

TOP LEFT: Racing through shellfire on the Eastern Front in 1944, a German courier on horseback attempts to deliver a message. TOP RIGHT: Slogging through mud on the Eastern Front, a German soldier leads his horse forward. Both men and horses were pushed seemingly beyond the limits of endurance during the brutal fighting between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army.

(Top Left: U.S. Army Art Collection/Top Right: National Archives)

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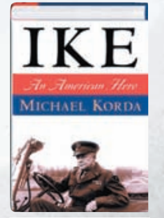

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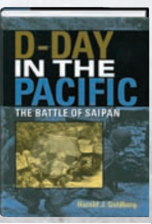

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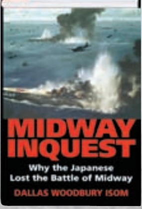

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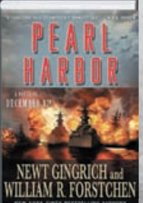

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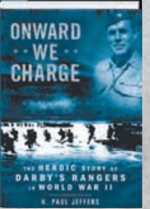

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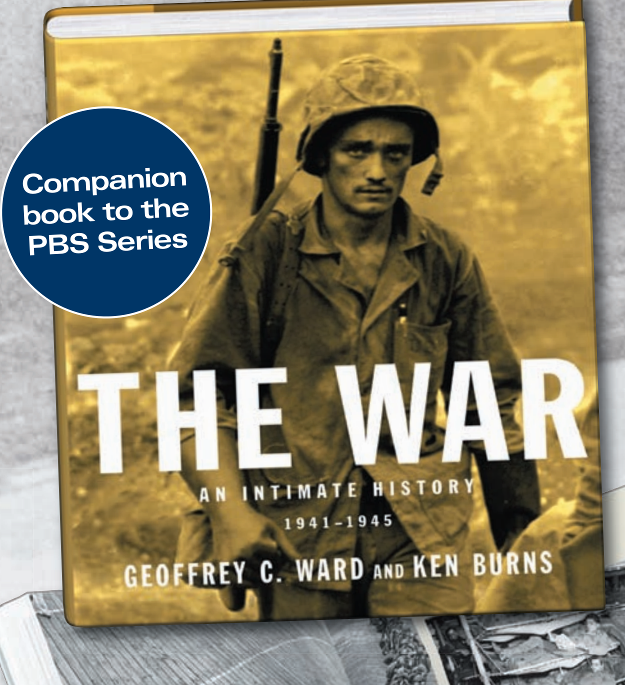

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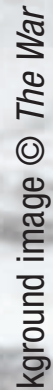

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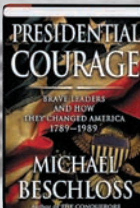

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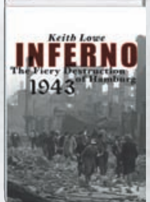

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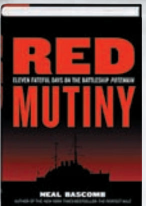

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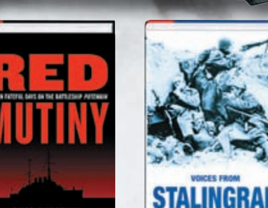

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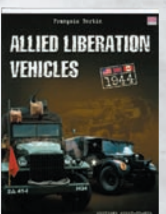

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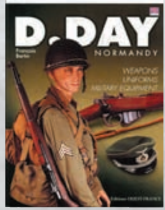

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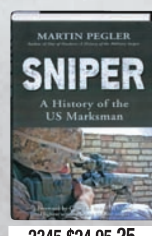

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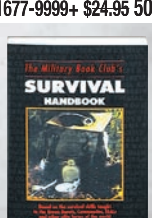

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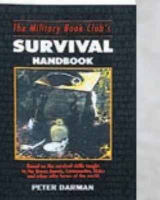

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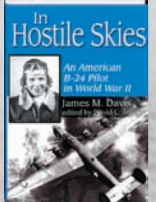

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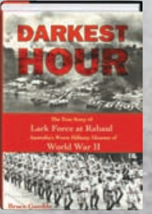

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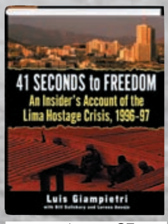

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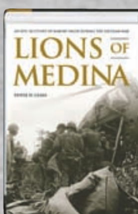

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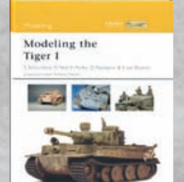

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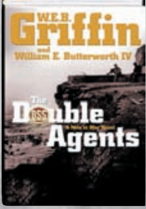

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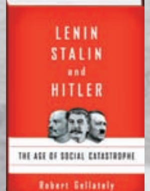

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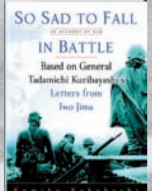

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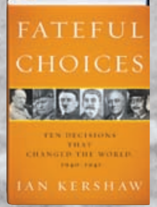

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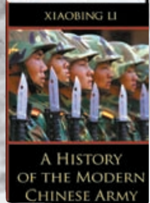

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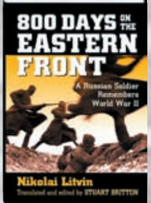

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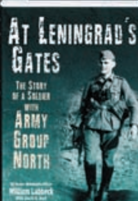

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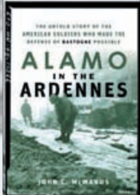

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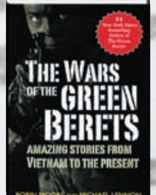

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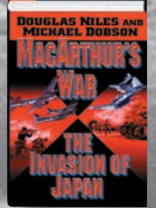

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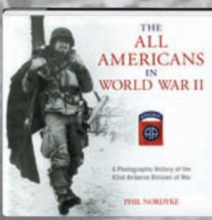

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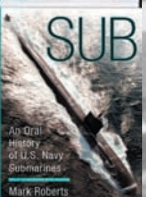

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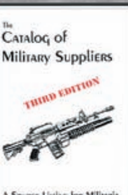

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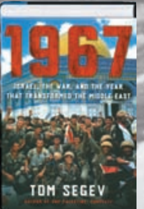

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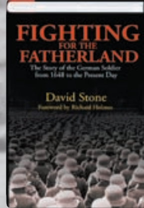

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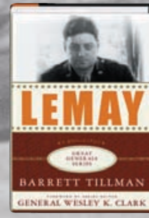

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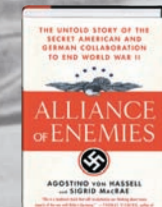

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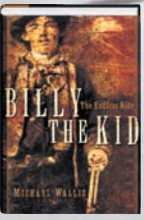

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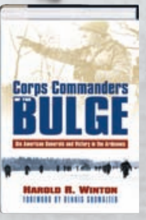

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RIGHT: A team of horses strains under the weight of a heavy artillery piece, which produces a cloud of choking dust as German soldiers advance alongside. Note the makeshift attempt to camouflage the gun. BELOW: Waffen SS cavalrymen, members of one of two regiments that were formed into a brigade in the summer of 1941, appear cheerful and relaxed astride their mounts.

(Both National Archives)

the fall of France. Unloaded wagons themselves could weigh from 610 to 1040 kilograms and could require four to six horses to pull them, especially across the difficult terrain and unimproved roads of the Eastern Front.

Horsemanship was also taught at the SS academies, as it was considered part of the legacy of the Teutonic Knights to which the Nazis ascribed. Unlike American cowboy movies in which, miraculously, no horse is ever injured during blazing gun battles, horses littered the roads and fields of Europe, killed by machine guns, mortars, artillery fire, and air attack. During the killing Russian winters, pampered German farm and riding horses, lashed to heavy wagons, dropped in their tracks. Often they became food for the starving soldiers.

The German cavalry corps, which in wartime consisted of horse, bicycle, and motorcycle troops, contained 18 horse regiments. Disbanded at the outbreak of the war in 1939, they were reformed into divisional reconnaissance battalions, followed in 1943 by what is considered the rebirth of the German cavalry. Three regiments were reconstituted.

The size and equipment of the German military were restricted by the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I. Motor vehicles for the military, for example, came under strict control. The treaty did allow for seven infantry divisions and three cavalry divisions consisting of 18 regiments. In effect, the cavalry made up a large part of the German Army, with 16,400 of the full complement of 100,000 soldiers allowed in the German Army by the treaty riding on horseback. Germany's World War I foes considered the horses antiquated by the standards of modern warfare, and they believed the expenses associated with maintaining them would siphon funds away from other military activities. At first, the German cavalrymen even carried lances, which eventually gave way to carbines. In late 1934, motorcycles entered the

A Horse Named Barbarossa in a Place Called Auschwitz

Born in Cologne, Germany, in 1928, Henry H. Oster was a member of a family whose roots went back 180 years. By 1936, the Oster family had been thrown out of its home by the Nazis, and 11 members were living in a one- bedroom apartment. Henry's father, once a department store manager, was sent to a forced labor camp. In 1939, Henry and his family were deported in cattle cars to the Lodz ghetto in Poland. The family received one loaf of bread and some potatoes each week. Occasionally, they received a can of horse meat, which was a great treasure.

In 1943, Henry and his mother were once more on a cattle car, their destination the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. By this time, Henry's father had been killed by a German guard. Henry was separated from his mother shortly after arriving at Auschwitz. He was spared from the gas chamber when he was selected to care for four horses. He spent 16 hours a day cleaning the stalls. The horses ate better than the prisoners, so he took great risk in supplementing his diet with oats. The guards regularly examined his mouth to determine whether he was eating the horses' food, a crime punishable by death.

One day, the Germans gave him an additional horse to care for, a beautiful red Arabian stallion named Barbarossa, the namesake of a famous red- bearded 12th-century German king and military hero and the codename for the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941.

Henry was small and was made even thinner by the starvation diet, but the Germans, thinking it great sport, required him to assist the stallion in its breeding efforts with the mares. The Germans stood watching the entertainment, laughing at his struggles. Henry remembers that the horse, though annoyed, did not attempt to bite or kick him, but just gave him an occasional nip and a flick of the whip-like tail.

In the closing days of the war, with the Russians close to liberating Auschwitz, Henry and 1,200 other prisoners were sent on a death march. Only 358 survived to reach Buchenwald concentration camp. Henry was barely alive when tanks of the U.S. Third Army liberated the camp on April 11, 1945.

So, Henry Oster survived the Holocaust. At 18 he was able to emigrate to the United States and enter school. For 50 years, he has worked as a doctor of optometry in Los Angeles and has never returned to Germany. He still loves horses. In fact, the warhorses saved his life. □

During the spectacularly successful Wehrmacht offensive of the summer of 1941, German mounted infantrymen advance past Soviet tanks that were knocked out in earlier combat. Later, the horses would suffer greatly during the terrible Russian winter.

(National Archives)

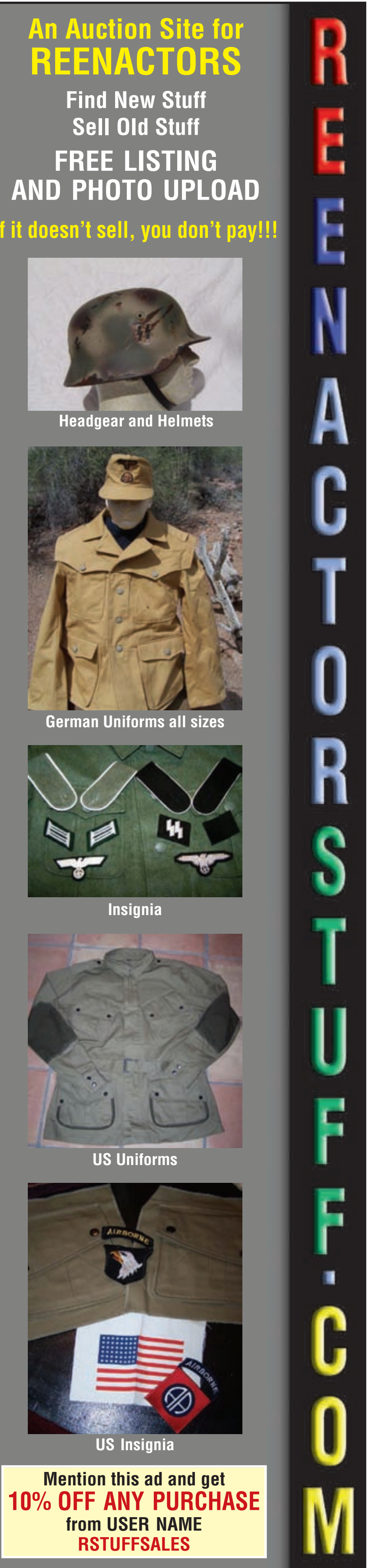
picture, with the 11th, 12th, and 16th Horse Regiments now serving as motorized rifle troops. In effect, these cavalrymen were now riding "iron horses," principally German-made BMWs and Zundapps. Other cavalry regiments were re-equipped as tank regiments, including panzer, antitank, and reconnaissance units, while the Waffen SS also had cavalry units.

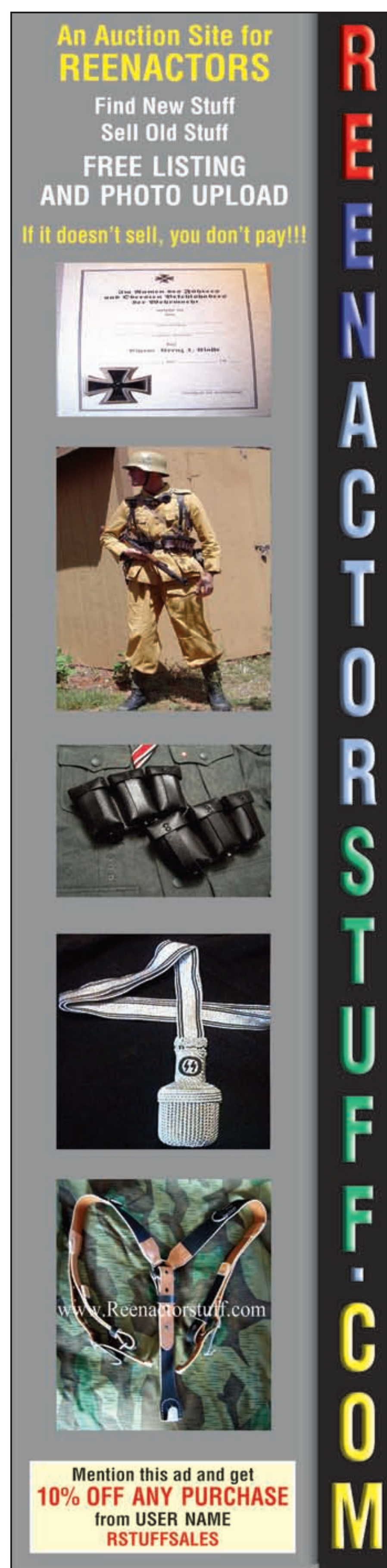
Horses were also employed by other elements of the Army, including the infantry, artillery, pioneers (engineers), medical units, and supply units. As of 1935, a cavalry platoon was assigned to each active infantry regiment and comprised 32 men and 33 horses. In addition to 13 other regional riding schools, a special cavalry school operated in Hanover for replacement officers and for both vehicle driving and riding instructors. In many cases, particularly later in the war, women assumed the instruction duties. As an adjunct, horse racing was encouraged in the Wehrmacht, and the "jockeys" wore a variety of 38 different racing colors representing the various battalions and regiments. In addition, some horse-mounted and horse-drawn units augmented their training by keeping and hunting foxes.

Horse-mounted soldiers wore gray uniforms with leather trim, as well as riding boots of soft leather, taller and without the hobnails of the foot soldiers' marching boots. After completion of rider training, the riding boots were fitted with buckled spurs, a telltale identifier on photos from the era. The trooper's backpack held a tent square or shelter half, basically a section of material used as camouflage, raincoat, or shelter. In many cases, this was the only protection against the Russian winter, for which the Army had not prepared. This mistake proved fatal for thousands of landsers, as the German soldiers were called.

As for weapons, every horse-mounted soldier carried a saber in a leather pouch when riding. After 1939, every officer carried the MP-38 and later the MP-40 submachine gun. All others carried the standard infantry issue Karabiner 98K carbine, a modified version of the long standard 98a, its shorter length making it more suitable for mounted troops. The carbine was based on an 1898 design, and while five rounds could be pressed into the magazine, it required a manual opening and closing of the bolt action to eject a spent round and cycle a new round into the chamber. In contrast, the standard U.S. issue Garand, a gas-operated semiautomatic design, required no bolt action and thus increased its firepower. Many veterans on both sides said this was often the difference between life and death on the battlefield. Officers, sergeants, and medical personnel also carried the Pistole 08, a 9mm semiautomatic, better known as the famous Luger. Some horse troops were issued the new 7.92 MPi 43/44 assault rifles, predecessors of the modern infantry weapons of today.

Each squad of horse soldiers consisted of nine troopers, and an MG 34 light machine gun provided additional firepower. Horses were also integral to the mobile field kitchens and the blacksmith, ammunition, and weapons wagons. While each troop had a motorcycle dispatch rider for maintaining long-distance com-





Mired in mud up to its axles, a German supply wagon is caught in the quagmire of a Russian road. Soldiers attempt to push, pull, and exhort the pair of horses drawing the wagon to extricate it from the trap caused by the spring snow thaw and heavy rain. (National Archives)

munication with command, most communication on horseback consisted of 25 standard hand signals.

A cavalry brigade consisted of 6,684 men and 4,552 horses plus 409 horse-drawn vehicles and 318 motorcycles (153 with sidecars), as well as 427 cars and trucks and six armored scout cars. After the success of these troops during the 1939 Polish campaign, the 1st Cavalry Division was formed in October 25, 1939. The cavalry division would go on to fight in Holland, Belgium, and France during 1940. When it was time to attack Russia, the division came under the command of Panzer Group II, commanded by General Heinz Guderian. At this stage, because some 17,000 horses were employed, the sheer number caused supply problems. As a result, during the winter of 1941-1942 in Russia the Army's cavalry operations ceased. The specially trained horses were relocated to noncavalry units, where they were basically squandered.

After the ravages of the 1941-1942 Russian campaign, the 1st Cavalry Division became the 24th Panzer Division, functioning as 85 divisional reconnaissance battalions. These were the last of the German cavalry. Because they were often sent into the fiercest battle situations, they earned the honorary, but somewhat ironic, title of "division fire-brigade" as if they put out the raging conflagrations of battle. However, the horse-mounted cavalry itself was soon consumed, leaving the bicycle troops to carry on their reconnaissance and scouting duties. As the war progressed, each cavalry platoon decreased in size from three squadrons to two, but they continued to perform in an exemplary manner. At higher levels, the cavalry force was reorganized as three regiments and as two cavalry brigades in 1944 during the German retreat and final battles of the war.

In March 1945, the horse troops took part in defensive operations along the Danube River. They surrendered in good order to the British in Austria, with a final horse march through Wurttemberg in June 1945. Held as prisoners of war for only a brief period, they were released, and their horses were returned to the fields under the care of local farmers.

The two Waffen SS Cavalry Divisions, after fighting for two years on the Eastern Front, were destroyed in the desperate fighting around Budapest, which was taken by Soviet forces on February 11, 1945. Wehrmacht cavalry units composed of anticommunist Cossack volunteers surrendered to the British, and despite promises to the contrary, they were forcibly repatriated to the Soviets who considered them collaborationists and traitors. As a result, the common soldiers received eight-year prison sentences in the Gulag system, while the higher ranking officers were hanged.

The number of horses and mules used by the German military eventually amounted to 2,750,000. Of these, an estimated 750,000 died during the war. □

Paul Garson has done extensive research on wartime postcards and photography. He resides in Los Angeles.

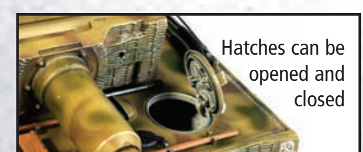
Achtung Panzer!

Relive History with Michael Wittmann's Legendary Tiger I Tank

"He was a fighter in every way, he lived and breathed action."

- SS-Obergruppenführer Josef "Sepp" Dietrich after learning of Michael Wittmann's demise

Pop the rear hatch to inspect the engine compartment



Hatches can be opened and closed

Each metal linked track weighs over 2 pounds!

"Extreme Metal" 1:16 Scale PzKpfw VI Tiger I Ausf. E Heavy Tank
"007" - Michael Wittmann's Final Ride, Cintheaux, France, August 1944

The engine can be removed and viewed up close

1:16 scale replicas of Michael Wittmann and his crew are also included

Accurate insignia, weathering, and zimmerit all combine to make a truly realistic replica

The German leadership issued an order to design the VK4501(H) in May 1941, just one month prior to the commencement of Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia. Henschel und Sohn was charged with building the heavily armored chassis, while Krupp, by far the largest munitionwerks in Germany, was tasked with development of the turret. The ensuing PzKpfw VI Ausfuhrung E (type E) heavy tank was one of the first German tanks to feature a torsion bar with eight interleaved wheels, which was designed to support the weight of the mammoth 57-ton panzer. Built largely in response to the Soviet's T-34 tank, the Tiger I mounted a huge 8.8cm KwK36 L/56 cannon and featured two MG34 machine guns for close support against enemy infantry.

Boxy and cumbersome, the new tank was nevertheless a hit with the panzertruppen, who went on to use the tank with great success on virtually every European front in WWII. When commanded by a panzer ace, the Tiger I was one of the deadliest weapons on the battlefield, capable of destroying enemy armor from thousands of feet away. By war's end, some 1,354 vehicles had been produced; a paltry sum compared to the 40,000 American Shermans and 58,000 Soviet T-34s the Allies managed to field.

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This stunning recreation features a removable engine, rotating turret, elevating gun, opening hatches, die-cast ammunition, oil drums, tank traps, and realistic-looking metal tracks! Each metal track alone weighs over 2 pounds! Only 2,500 pieces are being produced, making this one of the most sought after military collectibles of our time.

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41000
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11271
German Sd. Kfz. 251/1 Half-Track

43000
US M1A2SEP Abrams Tank

19024
German Jagdpanther Tank Destroyer

42070
GMC CCKW 353 6x6 2-1/2 Ton Truck

11170
German Prime Mover

10002
German Tiger I Heavy Tank

41100
US M60A1 Patton Tank w/ ERA

25000
T-72 Main Battle Tank

35000
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42170
GMC Communications Truck

42270
GMC Water Tanker

11004
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Create your own battlefield in miniature or build your own private war museum with these superb 1:35 scale tributes to some of the greatest weapons of all times! Produced by Minichamps, these gorgeous die-cast metal vehicles measure - on average - 10" long x 4" wide x 3-3/4" high, and are engineered to the highest production standards attainable today. Besides a rotating turret and elevating gun, each fully assembled tank boasts all-wheel independent suspension and treads that are made of flexible metal links, just like the real 'kings of the battlefield'. Many feature working parts and, in the case of the 88mm gun, its wheels can be detached so the piece can be displayed in a firing position. Weighing in at around 3 pounds, these marvelous limited edition replicas make a wonderful gift for the holidays!

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German King Tiger Ausf. B Tank with Henschel Turret & Zimmerit - sPzAbt. 506, Ardennes, 1945

61005
German Elefant Tank Destroyer - sPzJgAbt 653, Russia/Poland, 1944

61011
German King Tiger Ausf. B Tank with Henschel Turret & Zimmerit - 3./s.Pz.Abt.506, "313", Western Front, 1945

61006
German Tiger I Tank - Michael Wittmann, 13./Pz.Rgt.1, Operation "Zitadelle", July 1943

61012
Morser Karl 60cm Self-Propelled Gun - "Loki"

61007
German King Tiger Ausf. A Tank with Porsche Turret & Zimmerit - France, 1944

61003
German Tiger I Tank - "#122", sPzAbt. 502, Eastern Front, 1942

Oryon Collection 1:35 Scale Soldier Sets

B11E443
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B11E432
4-Figure Set - British 1st Airborne ("Red Devils")

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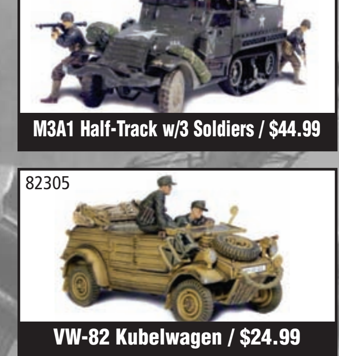

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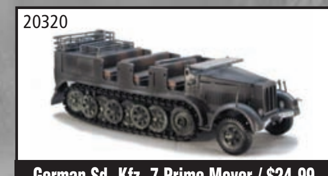
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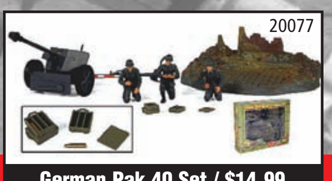
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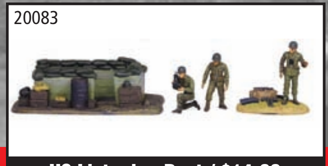
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By Jon Latimer

Caught in the Crosshairs

The deadly business of the sniper further developed into a refined practice of killing and gathering intelligence during Word War II.

THE ART OF SNIPING DEVELOPED FROM THE SHARPSHOOTING PRACTICED during earlier conflicts. During the 19th century, the steadily improving technology of the rifle led to the use of sharpshooters during the American Civil War and the Boer War. However, it was during World War I that sniping progressed from simply a good marksman picking choice targets to the systematic use of selected men, trained and equipped with highly accurate rifles, telescopic sights, and high-grade ammunition, who engage high-value targets with single shots, usually at long range.

As is so often the case, immediately after World War I ended most of the protagonists discarded the skills and wisdom they had so painstakingly acquired, considering them no more than adjuncts of a type of warfare in the trenches that they dearly wished to forget. The British in particular, having taken a long time to recognize the potential for organized sniping, had been among its best practitioners by 1918 but were nevertheless swift to forget all they had learned. During the interwar period, little development took place. Although there was ad hoc sniping on both sides during the Spanish Civil War, it was Soviet advisers to the Republican side who chose to consider it further when they returned to the Soviet Union and introduced programs to the Red Army to augment existing civilian rifle shooting schemes. When World War II began, a new style of warfare was introduced; it was capable of swift and extensive movement and created very different battlefield conditions in a variety of theaters worldwide. In these conditions, the art of the sniper could be adapted to produce an effective weapon.

The German Army retained sniping as a specialization between the wars but showed little enthusiasm for its pursuit. In the opening campaigns in Poland and the West, the Germans moved so rapidly that there was no real opportunity for snipers to demonstrate their value. It was not until later in the campaign against the Soviet Union, after Soviet snipers had demonstrated their worth, that the German Army caught up. The British Army had been totally remiss in its attention to the skills it had done so much to develop previously. In 1942, sniping instructor Lt. Col. N.A.D. Armstrong commented on the attitude prevailing between the wars: "There appeared to be a tendency amongst Army musketry men to scorn the sniper—they held that sniping was only a 'phenomenon' of trench warfare and would be unlikely to occur again."

Although training manuals still covered sniping, little was done at battalion level to maintain and encourage it until the retraining programs that followed the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk. However, British snipers were engaged in Norway and France during 1940.

Edgar Rabbets was a soldier in the 5th Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment, a Terri-

TOP: U.S. Marines attempt to hunt down a Japanese sniper in the jungles of the South Pacific. LEFT: Vasili Zaitsev, a skilled hunter from the foothills of the Ural Mountains in Central Russia, was the foremost Soviet sniper of World War II. He established a sniper school in embattled Stalingrad.

(Top: U.S. Marine Corps)

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ABOVE: A German officer takes aim through the scope of a sniper rifle during a training exercise. The Germans fielded a number of highly successful snipers during the war. One of the most celebrated sniper versus sniper duels reportedly occurred between Vasili Zaitsev and the commander of the German sniper school at Zossen. RIGHT: A Soviet sniper and his spotter, who claimed 114 Germans killed in a two-month period, set out on another mission. Although the Red Army propaganda machine may have inflated the number of sniper kills achieved, there is no doubt that many of these hunters were highly successful. (Both National Archives)

torial Army unit. A country man from Boston in Lincolnshire, he was capable of catching a rabbit in his hands. When his unit was deployed to France he was appointed as a company sniper and given complete freedom of action to engage enemy snipers and high-value targets. By choice, he worked alone, although the common practice is for snipers to work in pairs.

During the retreat to Dunkirk, Rabbets was ordered forward to eliminate a German sniper operating in a Belgian village. According to Rabbets, "The sniper had got himself up in a roof and knocked a few slates away. He'd got a good field of fire if anyone walked into the square; he was roughly in the centre of one side of the square and his mate was in the corner. And they covered the whole square that way, the one effectively protecting the other."

After the sniper had fired at a British officer entering the square, Rabbets found out "roughly where the flash had come from and went into a house opposite. The sniper was hanging out of the roof; I shot him from the bedroom window and he fell forward." The observer fired blindly at Rabbets, thus revealing his own position. Rabbets was "firing deep from out of the bedroom window, and I wasn't exposed to view. He assumed wrongly that I was a lot nearer to the bedroom window than I was. And he gave himself away, so that was his lot."

Rabbets was an excellent marksman, capable of a first-round hit at 400 yards with the standard .303 Lee-Enfield rifle. But his outstanding fieldcraft, which may be generally defined as the use of camouflage and concealment, enabled him to close with the enemy and improve his chances of success. He also combined shooting with intelligence gathering, his freedom to roam giving him access to important information. He later wrote, "One day I went out and found a German military policeman standing at a crossroads; the only reason they stand at a crossroads is to direct a unit into a new position. I wanted to know what he was doing, so I crawled to within 150 yards range. He gave himself away by continually looking up the road to where he expected the unit to come from, and because there was only one direction to our lines, I knew roughly where they were going to. I shot him and then bundled him out of the way so that when the enemy got to the crossroads they wouldn't know where they were going. Then I went back to my unit to give them this intelligence."

Sniping began to take on greater significance after the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. The Red Army had been practically the only army in the world to actively encourage sniping during the 1930s, and this had received added impetus from experience during the Spanish Civil War and the Russo-Finnish conflict. The Finns had seriously embarrassed the numerically superior Soviets, particularly showing great prowess with sniping. Many of them were hunters and naturally adept at the military application of their sport. Simo Häyhä was a farmer and hunter who went out to "hunt Russians." He claimed more than 500 before being seriously wounded, and the hard lessons were not lost on the Soviets. They actively encouraged sniping and incorporated it into their infantry tactics. Their definition was broader than that of the West, tending to include general sharpshooting. They operated in pairs, and at low tactical levels, often being assigned to companies or even platoons, with junior officers experienced in handling them.

During the first two years of the war, the Soviets were largely on the defensive except for localized counterattacks. Snipers would be deployed forward of main defensive positions to engage reconnaissance patrols, artillery observation officers, and generally to delay enemy movement. Soviet snipers really came into their own during the battle for Stalingrad, where the ruins of the city provided excellent conditions for their operation. Snipers operated in front of their own lines, often for days at a time and completely isolated from their comrades despite being only a few hundred yards away from them. During daylight, they were often compelled to remain perfectly motionless. They suffered all the discomforts of the infantry soldier, often multiplied by the situations their specialized role required. Not only hungry and thirsty, they might be forced to urinate and defecate where they lay in order not to give away their positions.

During the Battle of Stalingrad, top Soviet snipers came to prominence. The most famous was Vasili Zaitsev, formerly a hunter in the Urals and a noted sniper before the battle, having claimed over 100 kills between August and October 1942. He founded a sniper school whose students received a two-day course before being sent into the ruined city to hunt Germans. Zaitsev became something of a celebrity, and his appearance in Soviet newspapers led the Germans to send for the chief instructor of the sniper school at Zossen near Berlin. A more personal contest could not occur in war. When some of the best Soviet snipers were killed by a rifle obviously fitted with a telescopic sight, Zaitsev knew he was up against a "Nazi super-sniper," and set out to finish it one

way or the other. He set off with his spotter, Nikolai Kulikov, and roamed the city for several days until he discovered a ruse that had obviously been set up to trap a Soviet sniper.

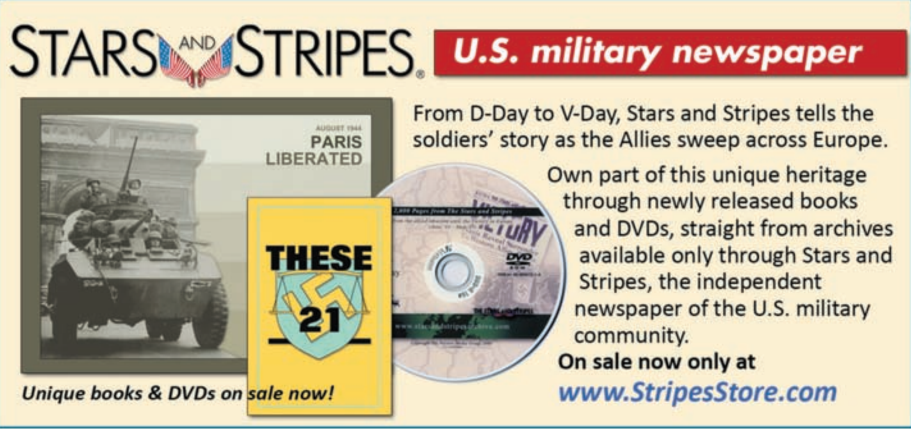
Zaitsev remembered, "Between the tank and the pillbox, on a stretch of level ground, lay a sheet of metal and a small pile of broken bricks. It had been lying there a long time and we had grown accustomed to it being there. I put myself in the enemy's position and thought—where better for a sniper? One had only to make a firing slit in the sheet of metal and creep up to it during the night."

Zaitsev was convinced, and when he carefully raised a false target, the German put a bullet clean through the middle. "Now came the question of luring even a part of his head into my sights ... We worked by night and were in position by dawn. The sun rose. Kulikov took a blind shot; we had to rouse the sniper's curiosity. We had decided to spend the morning waiting, as we might have been given away by the sun on our telescopic sights. After lunch, our rifles were in the shade and the sun was shining on the German's position ... Kulikov carefully—as only the most experienced can do— began to raise his helmet. The German fired. For a fraction of a second Kulikov rose and screamed. The German believed that he had finally gotten the Soviet sniper he had been hunting for four days and half raised his head from beneath the sheet of metal. That was what I had been banking on. I took careful aim. The German's head fell back, and the telescopic sight of his rifle lay motionless, glittering in the sun...."

Soviet snipers were trained to operate in all phases of war. Deployed down to the lowest tactical level, they worked on the flanks of an advance to attack any targets that might slow it down. Such targets would include command elements and the crews of heavy weapons. Soviet snipers were expected to use their initiative in a way that was unusual for their rank-and-file comrades. As in most armies, the intelligence-gathering ability of snipers was utilized as a matter of course.

The prowess of Soviet snipers was something of an unpleasant surprise to the Germans, and despite being somewhat overblown by Soviet propaganda it undoubtedly made the Germans take notice and institute measures of their own. As the war went from bad to worse for the Germans, particularly on the Eastern Front, the cost-effectiveness of the sniper became increasingly apparent to German commanders at all levels. German sniping also benefited from a surprising patronage in the form of Heinrich Himmler, chief of the dreaded SS.

The Waffen-SS, the military element of Himm-



ler's organization, had taken a keen interest in sniping from the beginning of the war but was hampered by a shortage of suitable equipment. German sniper training was conducted at the highest level by 1943. Experienced snipers were withdrawn from the front to instruct sniper recruits, themselves selected from the best infantry marksmen. Particular emphasis was placed on camouflage and fieldcraft. Matthias Hetzenauer was Germany's top wartime sniper with 345 confirmed kills. He was an exponent of the "one shot, one kill" philosophy. He recommended that snipers be chosen from "people born for individual fighting such as hunters, even forest rangers," a practice followed by both the British and Americans. In contrast with the Soviets, German snipers usually worked in pairs but were organized at battalion level. As the prolonged war reduced the numbers of trained marksmen available, their orders might even come from division.

During the defensive battles later in the war, German snipers rather than machine guns were often used in delaying actions. Their ability to cause casualties to high-value targets, and their flexibility and mobility while remaining difficult targets themselves, made them ideal for these tasks. Captain C. Shore, author of the book *With British Snipers to the Reich,* cites an example of a few German paratroop snipers holding up an entire battalion of the 51st (Highland) Division in Sicily. Despite being subjected to artillery bombardment, these Germans maintained accurate fire at a range of 600 yards before withdrawing in good order. The toughness of the German infantrymen, combined with excellent training and initiative, led Allied soldiers to fear the German sniper.

After the disasters of 1940, British sniping was reinstituted in a haphazard fashion, with the quality of training varying in standard enormously. The warfare in the open desert of North Africa did not lend itself to sniper operations, but as soon as the closer country of Tunisia and Sicily was encountered, this changed. Here, accurate long-range shooting was at a premium, but it went against the grain of British practice that stressed closing with the enemy. One sniper officer came up with a solution: "We found an unsuspecting Boche about 600 yards away from us and could not get any closer to him. So we lined up three snipers together and got them to fire simultaneously, hoping that one of the bullets would hit. Our hopes were fulfilled!"

Patience and careful observation were found to be the key ingredients for success, particularly where the enemy did not suspect the presence of snipers. Shore recounted one such action: "The forward platoon of the unit was in and around a cluster of smallish houses about 200 yards from the bank of the river. From the roof of one of these houses there was a good view of the top of the bank held by the Huns. Snipers watching the bank observed that the Germans changed their sentries every hour with monotonous regularity. At first the Hun was cautious and our snipers withstood the temptation to shoot, hoping that the targets would become even more favourable when the Jerries had lost some of their caution. Later in the day, the hoped for happened, and at 1200 hours, six of the enemy could be seen from the waist upwards. There were four of our snipers on duty and, having their set plan of execution ready, they each selected a Hun and fired. Three of the four Huns fell, and shortly afterwards, their bodies were dragged from the top of the bank by their comrades concealed below."

Two snipers of the U.S. Army's 296th Infantry Regiment edge up tall palm trees with the aid of pole climbers during a training exercise in Puerto Rico in March 1943. Concealing themselves among the fronds of a palm tree was a favorite tactic of Japanese snipers. (National Archives)

The bocage country of Normandy provided excellent conditions for sniping, particularly for the defenders. A lone sniper or machine gun could dominate the close country. One American platoon leader described the difficulty with inexperienced troops, who tended to go to ground and stay there when under fire. "Once I ordered one squad to advance from one hedgerow to another. During the movement one man was shot by a sniper firing one round. The entire squad hit the ground and they were picked off, one by one, by the same sniper."

The question of whether snipers should wear rank insignia was vexing for some. Shore's commanding officer demanded that his officers cease the practice of wearing roll-neck jerseys that covered their collars and ties. "If we were to die, he said, we must die as officers!" It is important for officers to be instantly recognized by their men, but it is also clear that an identifiable officer was an inviting target for the sniper.

An aide to General Omar Bradley noted, "Brad says he will not take action against anyone that decides to treat a sniper a little more roughly than they are being treated at present." If caught, a sniper could expect to suffer for his art. But the Germans did not have it all their own way during what became positional warfare for almost two months. Captain William Jalland of the 8th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry, found that his snipers regarded Normandy as ideal country, making good scores against careless German units.

At the outbreak of the war, the U.S. Army was even less prepared for sniping than the British, and despite the obvious success of snipers against them in both the European and Pacific Theaters, senior American commanders never adopted a systematic program of sniper training. Although having access to many outstanding marksmen, this lack of commitment meant that results were haphazard indeed. Upon arrival in Tunisia, Colonel Sidney Hinds of the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment created a training course that lasted five weeks and graduated a number of snipers. Elsewhere, if commanders took no interest, nothing would be done. The chief weakness in U.S. training methods was the gap between marksmanship, which was of a very high standard, and fieldcraft, which tended to be less thorough. When some ad hoc schools were set up behind the lines, they tended to deal with handling the telescopic-sighted rifle rather than the tactical intricacies of the sniper's art.

The Japanese were masters of camouflage, and since most of the fighting in Asia and the Pacific was at relatively short range, emphasis was placed on camouflage and fieldcraft. Each sniper was issued camouflage nets for helmet and body, although simpler methods were more common in the field. Tactics employed were broadly similar to those of Western armies, including the targeting of high-value installations, personnel, and equipment. One noticeable difference was the use of trees, even the rigging of small chairs among the branches and fronds.

Throughout the war, the Japanese sniper proved a constant trial to his enemies, from coral atolls in the Pacific Ocean to the forests of New Guinea.

The 1st Battalion, 163rd U.S. Infantry Regiment was badly troubled by snipers during one encounter. The divisional historian wrote, "From a tree almost anywhere around our oval

perimeter, a Jap sharpshooter could choose a Yank target who had to leave his water-soaked hole. The range could be all of 200-400 yards. The keen-eyed sniper could steady his precision killing-tool on a branch and tighten the butt to his shoulder. He could take a clear sight picture and squeeze the trigger. All 1/Bn might hear is a Jap .25-caliber (6.5mm) cartridge crack, like a Fourth of July cap cracked on a stone. Then a Yank cowering in a hole might hear the prolonged dying groan of a man in his next squad. Or long after a deadly silence, he might find his buddy a pale corpse with a deceptively small hole in his forehead."

The elimination of snipers was difficult business, but the Americans were nothing if not thorough. Two-man countersniper teams manned the forward defenses while other teams set off to climb the jungle trees Tarzan fashion and guide others along the ground. Through careful coordination of these elements, the snipers were eradicated one at a time. Rounds from 37mm antitank guns firing canister were found to be effective, blasting whole areas where snipers were suspected. British and Commonwealth troops used similar tactics, and once the Japanese sniper was seen for what he was, certainly not a superman, then the battle against him was largely won. As the war progressed, the quality of the Japanese sniper deteriorated, and the British began to have some notable sniping success of their own. One report describes the combined sniper strength of two brigades (48 snipers) having killed 296 Japanese in a two-week period, for the loss of two men killed and one wounded in the finger.

Australians made excellent snipers, the best being those who had been kangaroo hunters. A 'roo hunter must be a superb shot since a clean kill preserves the pelt and will not disturb the other 'roos. Most of them were already experienced with the heavy .303 Lee-Enfield rifle. One such hunter turned sniper accounted for 47 Japanese on Timor but only claimed 25, on the basis that "you can't count a 'roo unless you saw him drop and know exactly where to skin him." The Australians fought a guerrilla campaign against the Japanese on Timor, killing some 1,500 for the loss of 40 and forcing the Japanese to divert large reinforcements.

Unlike the U.S. Army, the U.S. Marine Corps was better disposed toward the art of sniping early in the war. However, the commitment still varied. In 1942, George O. Van Orden and Calvin A. Lloyd wrote a report that advocated the wholesale adoption of sniping as a policy by the Corps. In common with all the Allies during the war, Marine Corps training was

Continues on page 88

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By David Alan Johnson

Germany's kamikaze

The Reichenberg Project presented a controversial response to the might of overwhelming Allied air power.

BY EARLY 1944, THE LUFTWAFFE WAS ONLY A SHADOW OF WHAT it had been at the beginning of the war. Adolf Hitler and Reichsmarshal Hermann Göring were determined to retaliate against British cities, especially London, for Allied air attacks against German cities. A few years earlier, they would have ordered a series of massive air raids against London in reprisal. However, combat losses and the switch to fighter production for the defense of the Reich had drained the strength of the Luftwaffe's once-powerful bomber fleets. Massive air strikes were no longer an option.

German engineers had developed new and unconventional methods of striking back at the enemy. The Fieseler FZG-76 flying bomb, which would be known as the V-1, was one of the weapons designed for striking at targets in Britain without straining the Luftwaffe's already depleted bomber reserves. The V-1 was popularly known as the "buzz bomb" to the Allies because of the distinctive noise created by its pulse-jet engine. Theoretically, the V-1 operated with a simple guidance system and was supplied with enough fuel to reach a major target in England or Allied territory on the Continent. Once above the target, the V-1 would have expended all its fuel and begun a random descent to the ground, its warhead detonating on impact.

One of the flying bomb's many problems, however, was that it was so inaccurate. The bombs sometimes missed a target as large as Greater London, which covers hundreds of square miles, by either flying beyond the entire city or, usually, crashing far short of it. Certainly, the sheer randomness of the attacks contributed to terrorizing the enemy populace, but greater accuracy would have been beneficial from a military standpoint. One way to solve this problem would be to develop a manned V-1: to put a pilot in the unmanned flying bomb.

Luftwaffe headquarters ordered that all special assignments, including the testing of all experimental aircraft, were to be carried out by Kampfgruppe 200, a secret unit that operated from several airfields on the occupied Continent. One *staffel* (squadron) of KG 200 was formed to operate the manned version of the flying bomb. This unit adopted the name "Leonidas Staffel." Leonidas was the legendary king of Sparta who had fought the Persians at Thermopylae in 480 BC. His stand at Thermopylae was determined to the point of being suicidal. Leonidas and every one of his 300 Spartans were killed in the fighting. The name of the *staffel* indicated the intention of the unit in its unconventional attacks.

The first attempt at a manned flying bomb had ended in failure when a bomb-carrying Focke Wulf FW-190 fighter aircraft was employed in tests. This idea was scrapped because the fighter was too vulnerable to enemy fighters. The additional weight of the bomb had made the Focke Wulf slower and much less maneuverable. Hauptsturmführer (SS Captain) Otto Skorzeny, the commando leader who

TOP: The V-1 rocket, popularly known as the doodle-bug,inflicted much damage on England. LEFT: Famous aviatrix Hanna Reitsch, a favorite of Adolf Hitler's, test-flew the piloted version of the FZG-76 to determine its stability. Her suggested improvements led to the success of the V-1 attacks on London.

(Top: Mary Evans Picture Library. Left: National Archives)

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ABOVE: Photographed after its capture by Allied troops, this modified Heinkel He-111 bomber was one of those intended for use as a flying bomb carrier during the implementation of the Reichenberg Project. RIGHT: Discovered in sheds at the massive facility captured by the U.S. 29th Division, flying bombs await transport to launching sites. Some of the bombs found at the facility were the familiar V-1 "Buzz Bomb," although some were marked with V-4 identification. (Both National Archives)

became famous following his daring rescue of Benito Mussolini from captivity in the Italian Alps, is said to have suggested modifying a FZG-76 flying bomb to carry a pilot. The FZG-76 could outrun any piston-engine fighter and carried a warhead of almost one ton. With a pilot to guide it, this aircraft would be able to find any target, no matter how small, and would deliver enough explosives to destroy it.

A piloted version of the FZG-76 already existed, although it had been designed strictly for testing. Early models of the flying bomb had many problems with stabilization. The craft kept crashing shortly after being launched. The well-known pilot Hanna Reitsch, an aviatrix who had achieved fame before World War II and become a favorite of Hitler, was assigned to make a test flight of a manned FZG-76 to evaluate the machine's stability. Reitsch, the first woman to hold the honorary rank of captain, had also been awarded the Iron Cross First Class. Because of her record as a pilot, which included testing an experimental helicopter in the mid-1930s, she was given the job of finding out exactly what was wrong with the FZG-76 and what should be done to fix the problem.

The modified flying bomb, with Hanna Reitsch in the cockpit, was air-launched from a Heinkel He-111 twin-engine bomber. Catapulting the machine from a ramp, which was the usual procedure, was considered too dangerous.

Reitsch lived up to her reputation as one of Germany's leading pilots by bringing the FZG-76 to a safe and successful landing after a harrowing flight. Her suggested changes to make the machine more airworthy were implemented by the designers at Fieseler and were instrumental in the success of the V-1 campaign against London in the summer of 1944. The more popular designation "V-1" was short for Vergeltungwaffen 1, or Vengeance Weapon No. 1, which sounded much more dramatic than FZG-76.

The piloted version of the V-1 rocket increased the already deadly weapon's targeting accuracy.

Reitsch's test flight had prompted Skorzeny to suggest turning the flying bomb into a manned aircraft, which would be sent against enemy targets. The project was first called "Selbstopfer," which translates as "self-sacrifice." It was soon changed to the much less ominous sounding "Reichenberg." Fieseler designers gave the cockpit version of the machine the official name of Fi 103R.

The first trials of the Reichenberg flying bomb, which began in September 1944, were

ABOVE: Bombs awaiting shipment to launching sites were found in sheds at the V-bomb assembly plant. Most were V-1, but a few marked V-4 were also found. BELOW: The cramped cockpit of the interior of a Reichenberg Project flying bomb is seen at an assembly facility captured by troops of the U.S. 29th Infantry Division. The facility itself encompassed three square miles and 85 buildings connected by heavily camouflaged roads. When the manned bombs were placed on their launch ramp, the warhead, elevator, and wings were attached. (Both National Archives)

not very promising. Two test aircraft were manufactured, and both machines were lost during their first flight. Because an expert was needed to carry out trial flights, the tests were taken over by Reitsch, who was no stranger to unconventional aircraft. Besides her flight in the first manned FZG-76, she had also tested the rocket-powered Messerschmitt Me-163 Komet, a fighter interceptor that was to be deployed against formations of Allied heavy bombers above the Reich. She had been severely injured during these test flights, which left her hospitalized for five months.

Under the Reichenberg program, four piloted FZG-76 models were built. Reichenberg I and II were unpowered training models, designed for gliding trials. Reichenberg II had an additional cockpit added to accommodate an instructor. Reichenberg III was a powered training model, with an Argus pulse-jet engine. Reichenberg IV was the operational model.

The cockpit of the Reichenberg IV was situated just in front of the engine. The pilot sat in

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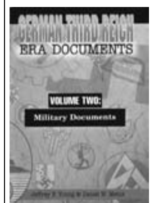

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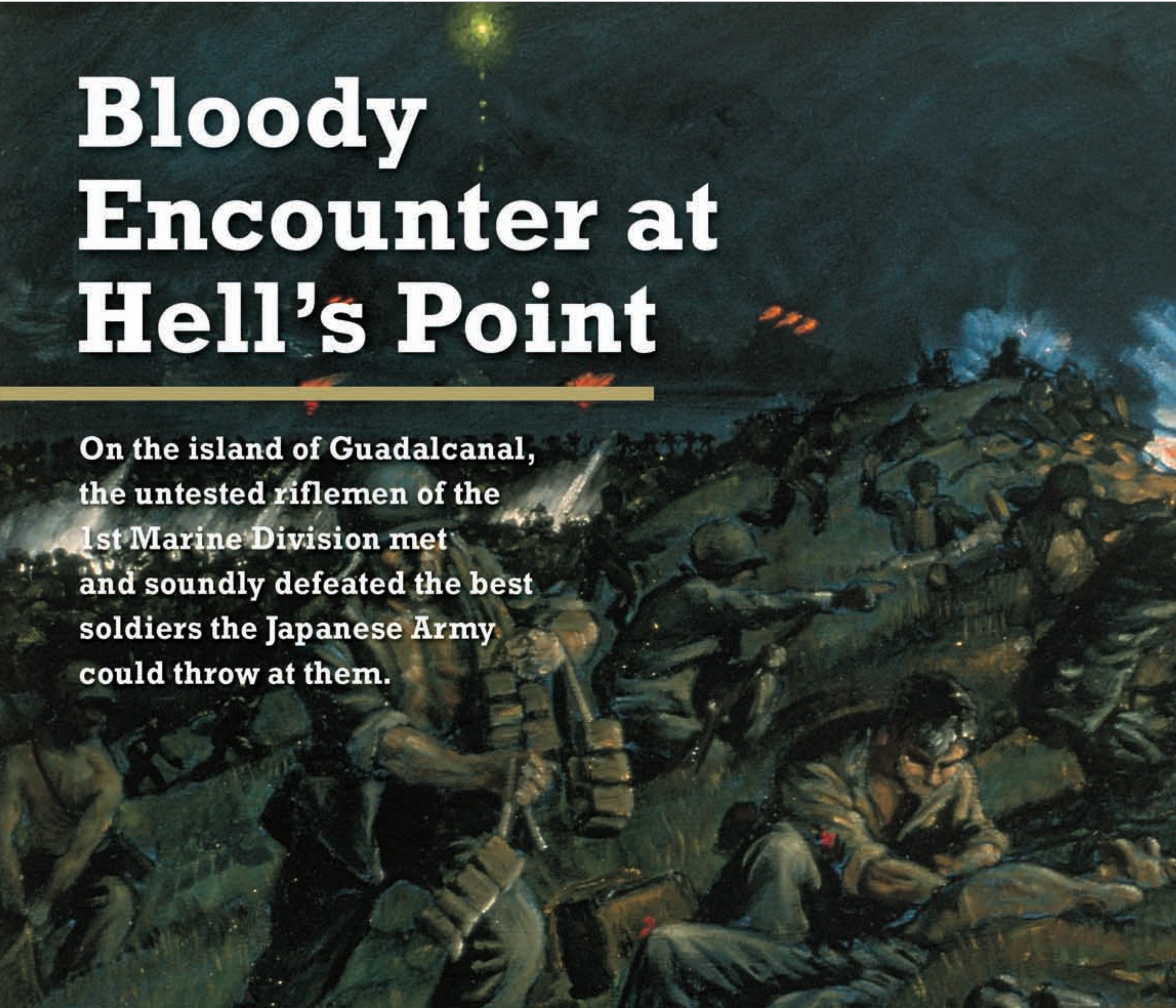
Bloody Encounter at Hell's Point

On the island of Guadalcanal, the untested riflemen of the 1st Marine Division met and soundly defeated the best soldiers the Japanese Army could throw at them.



ON THE HUMID MORNING OF AUGUST 19, 1942, infantrymen from Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines carefully eyed the landscape for any signs of Japanese soldiers as they slowly made their way through the thick jungle on the island of Guadalcanal, located in the Solomon Islands. Led by Captain Charles H. Brush, they had orders to follow the coastal road to the Koli Point-Tetere area.

Father Arthur Duhamel, a Catholic priest from Massachusetts who resided on Guadalcanal, had informed an earlier patrol that a large enemy force was nearby. Coast watchers also verified that the Japanese had established a radio station near Taivu and that they had the Marines under constant surveillance. Several days later, Brush's 60-man group was dispatched to destroy the communications building and equipment.

At noon, the leathernecks stopped to eat and take a break from the intense tropical heat. As several Marines neared a clump of fruit trees, they saw a Japanese patrol casually strolling by and "not in military formation."

Brush sent the majority of his men in a frontal assault while one platoon scurried around the enemy's right to outflank them. In less than an hour, 31 enemy soldiers lay dead. The Marines had lost three killed and three wounded.

Searching the bodies, the Marines discovered quite a few documents that looked official. Brush commented years later: "With a complete

In this stark rendering of nocturnal combat on Guadalcanal, U.S. Marines battle the Japanese near the mouth of the Tenaru River. The location was actually the Ilu River, which had been misidentified previously. The Marine victory shattered the Ichiki Detachment, a crack unit of the Imperial Japanese Army. (U.S. Marine Corps)

lack of knowledge of Japanese on my part, the maps the Japanese had of our positions were so clear as to startle me. They showed our weak spots all too clearly."

The young captain also noted that this group had possessed "an inordinate amount of rank" and their uniforms were in pristine condition. This could mean only one thing: they had just arrived on Guadalcanal as an advance party for a much larger force preparing to attack the Marine perimeter at Henderson Field. Knowing he had unearthed some vital information, Brush sent his runner back to headquarters to give the papers to the G-2 Section (Intelligence) to study.

BY AL HEMINGWAY

Ninety miles long and 25 miles at its widest point, Guadalcanal was of strategic importance to U.S. strategy in the early days of World War II. Since landing on August 7, the Marines had spent a considerable amount of time expanding the airstrip. Named Henderson Field to honor Major Lofton Henderson, a Marine pilot killed at the Battle of Midway, the airstrip would prove invaluable in the months to come.

Ironically, the main island was quickly seized because few enemy soldiers were stationed there. The first week saw the majority of ground combat on the neighboring islands of Gavutu and Tanambogo where the Raiders, paratroopers, and elements of the 2nd Marines fought a tenacious foe. Some Japanese soldiers spoke perfect English as they attempted to taunt the leathernecks with: "Die, you dirty bastard

ABOVE: U.S. Marines land virtually unopposed on Guadalcanal in August 1942. The bloody campaign for the island in the Solomons chain ended in February 1943, with the defeat of the Japanese. Guadalcanal marked the first U.S. land campaign of the Pacific War. RIGHT: Colonel Kiyono Ichiki and his 28th Infantry Regiment had originally been designated as the invasion force for Midway atoll, but the defeat suffered by the Japanese Navy cancelled the Midway landings.

(Above: National Archives/Right: Library of Congress)

Marines, die!" In the end, however, the enemy would die in fanatical suicide charges, a trademark of the Japanese for most of the war.

But then things started to disintegrate as the Japanese delivered a stunning blow to the American, British, and Australian navies on the night of August 9, 1942. The enemy, more adept at night fighting, sank or severely damaged a number of cruisers and destroyers during the Battle of Savo Island. With the sinking of these ships, the Marines onshore dubbed Sealark Channel "Iron Bottom Sound."

Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner also informed Maj. Gen. Alexander A. "Sunny Jim" Vandegrift, commanding the 1st Marine Division, that he had to weigh anchor and withdraw. This departure of the fleet left the Marines virtually stranded. Turner's transports had unloaded only half of the much-needed supplies for Vandegrift's leathernecks. Also, with no naval gunfire support, the Marines were vulnerable to Japanese air, land, and sea assaults. The enemy could now travel unimpeded to deliver supplies and reinforcements from Rabaul down the Slot, a channel running from Bougainville in the Northern Solomons to Guadalcanal in the south.

On August 15, a few transports did manage to slip the enemy gauntlet and drop off additional food, ammunition, bombs, and aviation gasoline to the leathernecks. Although life on Guadalcanal was miserable, the Marines could get some comfort knowing that their presence had upset the timetable for the Japanese takeover of New Guinea. Enemy planners expected a quick victory against the Marines since they firmly believed that they were "haughty, effeminate, and cowardly" and also had "no stomach for fighting in rain or mist or in the dark."

Lieutenant General Haruyoshi Hyatutake, commanding general of the 17th Army at Rabaul on the island of New Britain, had the unenviable task of ousting the American invaders from Guadalcanal so Japan could continue its conquest of the Pacific. Resembling a college professor rather than a senior military officer, Hyatutake assembled 6,000 troops to retake the airfield. Unfortunately, he had grossly underestimated two things—the size of the American force and the tenacity and will of the Marines to hold on to Guadalcanal.

The Marines also had another asset at their disposal—a top secret code-breaking group that worked in Washington, D.C., Hawaii, and Australia. The job of these codebreakers was to intercept, decode, and analyze the data on the enemy. This was an enormous task because of the difficulty of the Japanese language. In spite of this, cryptanalysts deciphered the message about the impending invasion and delivered it through channels until it reached Vandegrift just prior to the Japanese landing.

When Brush's runner arrived at headquarters, the information was handed over to the division intelligence officer, Captain Sherwood "Pappy" Moran, who had lived in Japan prior to the war and spoke the language. Examining the documents in his "fetid, blacked-out intelligence shack," Moran concluded that they were indeed part of a larger force that had departed Truk and had recently disembarked on Guadalcanal.

Despite this knowledge, Vandegrift was still in a quandary. The papers did not reveal the size or plans of the Japanese troops. "Sunny Jim" had to make a decision: attack or wait for the enemy to come to them. He chose to defend the perimeter and not pursue offensive operations. The enemy could stage a two-pronged maneuver, and the leathernecks already had enough ground to defend without weakening it further by sending troops out to pursue the Japanese. Also, Vandegrift's men were low on fuel and ammunition and this in itself "precluded expenditure of the amounts required for an all-out attack."

Orders were issued to Colonel Clifton B. Cates, commanding officer of the 1st Marines and a veteran of trench warfare in World War I, to lengthen his lines. Cates turned to Lt. Col. Edwin A. Pollock, commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, to prepare his men for the seemingly inevitable attack. A veteran of the Banana Wars in Central America, Pollock was a no-nonsense Marine. His battalion stretched for 2,700 yards. A thousand yards of this was along the Lunga coast and the remainder covered the Ilu (Tenaru) River's western bank.

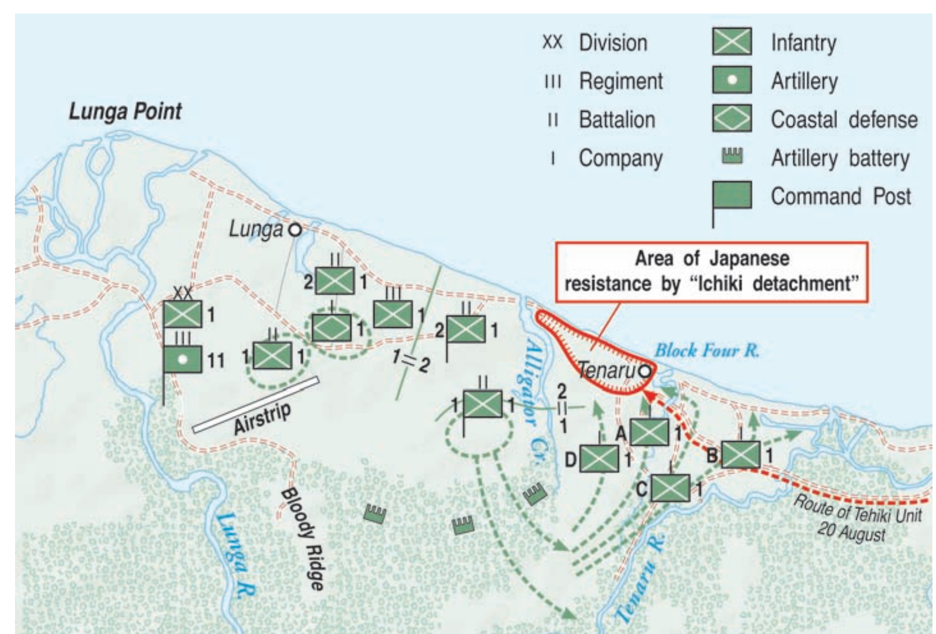
The poor quality of the maps possessed by the Marines during the initial invasion led to several of the rivers being identified incorrectly. Pollock's positions were actually on the Ilu River, dubbed Alligator Creek by the local residents (although crocodiles, not alligators, inhabited the river), not the Tenaru. The Marines thought this was the Tenaru River, which was actually located farther to the east. Alligator Creek was in reality a tidal lagoon, separated from Sealark Channel by a sandbar. This spit ranged in size from 25 to 50 feet wide and about 100 feet long and protruded approximately 10 feet above the water. It was particularly vulnerable to an enemy assault.

It was here that Pollock placed several platoons from Battery B, 1st Special Weapons Battalion strengthened by two rifle platoons from Company H. Machine guns of .30- and .50-caliber and 37mm antitank

guns dotted the area protected by sandbags and logs found nearby. Not equipped with gloves, the riflemen nevertheless strung razor-sharp barbed wire to further impede the attackers' progress. This area would be known as Hell's Point by the Marines when the fighting was over. And it would be a name well earned.

In addition to fortifying the spit, one platoon from Captain Martin Rockwell's Company E and Captain John Howland's Company F dug in along the center of the perimeter. The other two platoons from Company E and the remainder of Company H, under Captain James Ferguson, augmented by heavy weapons, covered the river approaches. Captain James Sherwood and his Company G (minus 1st Platoon) were in battalion reserve. Immediately behind the riflemen were the mortar sections standing by to deliver much-needed support during the attack.

While Vandegrift was deploying his forces and preparing his lines, the Japanese were busy as well. General Hyatutake selected the 28th Infantry Regiment, 7th Division to spearhead the assault to retake Guadalcanal. Led by Colonel Kiyono Ichiki, it had been one of the units slated to assault Midway Island prior to the crushing naval defeat suffered by the Japanese in June 1942. After the Japanese Navy's loss at Midway, however, Ichiki's men steamed toward Japan to reorganize and get some rest.



ABOVE: During the Battle of the Tenaru River, the hard-pressed U.S. Marines mowed down attacking Japanese soldiers with machine guns, rifles, and concentrated artillery fire. When daylight came, the mouth of the river was strewn with Japanese bodies. BELOW: Advancing against remaining Japanese elements on Guadalcanal, American Marines move through the steamy jungle. U.S. Army troops participated in the latter stages of the land campaign for Guadalcanal. (Above: © 2007 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN/Below: National Archives)

With the rapidly changing developments on Guadalcanal, those orders were changed, and they went to Truk. Boarding a half-dozen destroyers, the reinforced battalion, an estimated 800 men, disembarked unnoticed on Guadalcanal near Taivu on August 18. Ichiki's luck ran out when the reconnaissance patrol he had sent out was ambushed by Brush's platoon the following day, alerting the Marines to their presence on the island.

When the exhausted survivors from the ill-fated patrol returned to relay the horrifying news that most of their comrades been killed, Ichiki wasted no time in ordering a company to come to their aid. By the time they arrived on the scene, it was too late. Ichiki left behind a burial detail and continued his march westward toward the Marine perimeter. Just before dawn on August 20, the battalion arrived at the small hamlet of Rengo, where Ichiki decided to camp.

That afternoon, Ichiki met with his officers to plan the attack on the leathernecks. After nightfall, the battalion would advance in a westerly direction and seize the area once occupied by the 11th Construction Unit between Alligator Creek and Lunga Point. When this was accomplished, the unit would break up into two formations. One section would capture Henderson Field, and the other would take a Marine strongpoint at Lunga. Even though he knew the Marines knew he was on Guadalcanal, Ichiki had the utmost confidence in his men. His ranks were filled with seasoned troopers who had seen combat in Manchuria and China. They were outstanding night fighters and well disciplined, like most Japanese soldiers, and they considered themselves unbeatable.

Ichiki gave strict orders not to make any noise as they approached the Marine positions. He did not anticipate any serious challenge from the defenders. Like the majority of Japanese soldiers, Ichiki had a low opinion of the American soldier's fighting ability. Experts at night combat, he and his men fully expected to wipe out the enemy with "one brush of the armored sleeve."

As the overconfident Colonel Ichiki was issuing last-minute orders to his men, the Marines received a welcome surprise. Nineteen Grumman F4F-4 Wildcat fighter planes from VMF-223 landed at Henderson Field late in the afternoon. Accompanying them were a dozen Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bombers. These aircraft provided a boost in morale for

A U.S. soldier examines an antiquated Japanese field artillery piece abandoned during the evacuation of enemy troops from Guadalcanal. The campaign for control of the island also involved several major naval battles. (National Archives)

the weary "ground pounders" of the 1st Marine Division. Little did they know that in a matter of hours they would be involved in the upcoming struggle along the Tenaru (Ilu).

Just prior to the battle, another remarkable event unfolded. Sgt. Maj. Jacob Vouza, a retired policeman from the Native Constabulary, crawled to the lines of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines. While trying to ascertain the movements of the Japanese, he had been captured and tortured when he refused to tell them information concerning the Marine positions. Sliced with swords and bleeding profusely from his wounds, he was seriously injured. It was a miracle that Vouza made it to safety. Before going to the hospital, the native scout informed Pollock of the enemy's plan to attack. For his bravery, Vouza was awarded the Silver Star by the U.S. government and the St. George Medal by the British military.

As darkness fell, Ichiki's infantry began its march toward the Tenaru (Ilu) River. The inky blackness concealed the advance of the Japanese, and they arrived there several hours later without being detected. Hearing movement, however, two Marines occupying listening posts squeezed off several rounds before withdrawing from their holes to tell Sergeant Anthony Conti that they heard noises. Conti immediately told the officer on watch, but his information was dismissed. Even the 1st Marine Division after-action reports stated, "Neither fact was considered of particular significance as minor affrays with small enemy parties were of almost nightly occurrence." Nevertheless, Conti apprised his men to be wary and keep vigilant.

Private John L. Joseph from George Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines was amazed to see an apparition rise from the river. The ghostlike figure was in fact a Japanese soldier who crawled toward Joseph's fighting hole. As the enemy rifleman peered over, Joseph cracked him square in the face with the butt of his '03 Springfield.

Sporadic rifle and machine-gun fire erupted along the line as Ichiki's main force made its way toward the sandbar. Astonished that the Marines were entrenched this far from Henderson Field, Ichiki nonetheless told the 2nd Company, led by Captain Tetsuro Sawada, to eliminate these emplacements. The fact that the leathernecks knew he was present did not deter Ichiki in the least. He was adamant about certain victory and would still attack even though he was outnumbered.

At 0200 hours, August 21, a Marine let loose a green flare bathing the landscape in an eerie light and creating a surreal atmosphere. Before them was a horde of enemy soldiers crossing the sand spit. Many leathernecks were dumbfounded at the lack of discipline among the Japanese. "We could hear them walking along the beach towards us, and jabbering," said Private Richard W. Harding. "They didn't even have scouts out."

The riflemen held their fire until the Japanese were halfway across. Then the entire line erupted with rifle and machine-gun bursts. The 37mm cannon barked canister that produced gaping holes in the enemy's formation.

Elsewhere, Corporal Dean Wilson aimed his BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) at the onrushing enemy. When the NCO attempted to fire, all he heard was a click—the weapon has misfired! The young Marine quickly began swinging a machete and within seconds had disemboweled three Japanese soldiers.

As the fighting raged, Lt. Col. Pollock sent the 1st Platoon of George Company, led by Lieutenant George Cordea, to seize several key positions that had fallen to the Japanese. The young Ohio native split his platoon into three squads. He took one group to Hell's Point. Sergeant James Hancock maneuvered his way to a 37mm cannon emplacement, and Sergeant Charles Spakes went to the spit and established a blocking position to cut down retreating enemy soldiers.

While maneuvering his men, Cordea was struck in the arm, but he remained with his platoon. Digging into the sand on the spit, the riflemen kept up a constant stream of fire to harass the enemy. The Japanese, in turn, showered the infantrymen with machine-gun fire. For his bravery, Cordea was awarded the Navy Cross. His citation read in part: "His outstanding leadership, determination and inspiring fortitude throughout the engagement were largely instrumental in stopping the most serious enemy threat."

Despite pleas from one of his company commanders, Ichiki was determined to press the attack. He ordered his 1st and 3rd Companies, augmented by the Engineer Company, to outflank the Marines. Just prior to the assault, however, he decided against that plan and instead had his 70mm cannon and eight automatic weapons from the 2nd Machine Gun Company brought up to smash the leatherneck emplacements.

"We had not realized there were so many Japs in the grove. Group after group was flushed out and shot down by the tanks' canister shells."

Ichiki's battalion howitzers sent round after round crashing into the Marine lines. The leathernecks responded with 75mm cannon fire from the 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines that landed precariously close to the 1st Marine perimeter. Colonel Cates requested that the guns send in a few shells on the eastern bank of the river. His gamble paid off as enemy soldiers had massed there for another try at overrunning his lines and were quickly dispersed when the rounds sent them scurrying for cover.

BELOW: A formation of Grumman F4F Wildcat fighter planes banks slowly to the right. Wildcats flown by U.S. Marine Corps aviators based at Henderson Field on Guadalcanal were instrumental in maintaining daylight air superiority and securing the island. (National Archives)

Throughout the night, Ichiki's companies were decimated. These setbacks, however, did not sway his opinion. He remained resolute about taking the Marines' positions. He ordered what was left of his 4th Company and volunteers from the remainder of his other three companies to execute a flanking maneuver to destroy the Americans.

This provisional rifle company moved on the Marine left flank by walking waist high in the water along the shoreline. Unfortunately, like Ichiki's other schemes, this one failed miserably as well. The .30-caliber rounds from the water-cooled Browning machine guns and the deadly accuracy of the 75mm shells rained death and destruction upon this group, and soon the Japanese were cut to pieces.

Dawn finally greeted the weary Marines on August 21. The bright crimson sun that rose that morning displayed the horrible bloodbath that had transpired all night. The mutilated bodies of hundreds of enemy soldiers littered the area in and around Hell's Point. Despite this ghastly scene, the Japanese did not retreat. Had they renewed their attack in daylight, however, they would have been slaughtered by the unending Marine rifle and automatic weapons fire.

Ichiki was still firm about driving out the Americans and getting as close to the airfield as possible. Because of the accurate stream of the Marines' small arms fire, however, what remained of Ichiki's command had no alternative but to hunker in and wait for darkness before they resumed the assault.

The Marines had other ideas. Colonel Cates held a meeting at his CP (command post) to decide on a plan to deliver the decisive blow against Ichiki. "We aren't about to let those people lay up there all day," said Colonel Gerald C. Thomas, the division operations officer. Cates nodded in agreement: "We've got to get them out today."

Also present at the conference was Lt. Col. Lenard B. Cresswell, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. It was decided to send Cresswell's men upstream, have them cross the Tenaru (Ilu), and assault in a northwesterly direction along the right bank of the river. This would place him on the enemy's rear and left flank. Joining Cresswell would be a platoon of M3A1 Stuart light tanks under the leadership of Lieutenant Leo Case from Company B, 1st Tank Battalion.

By mid-morning three of Cresswell's rifle companies had pushed northward while Company D advanced to the north but along the river. Lieutenant Nick Stevenson's Charlie Company encountered a platoon-size force of Japanese near Block Four Village. While attempting to outflank the enemy, the Japanese soldiers charged the Marines. With their bayonets flashing in the morning sun, the group was mowed down by a broadside of small arms fire. Meanwhile, the other pair of companies continued their movement, squeezing the Japanese in the triangle of land on the east bank of the Ilu.

As the afternoon wore on, four of the light tanks pushed over the sandbar to engage Ichiki's men. Belching rounds from their 37mm cannon and .30-caliber machine guns, the lightly armored vehicles flushed out the enemy troops concealed in the grove.

ABOVE: Senior officers of the 1st Marine Division, which fought heroically at Guadalcanal, included (left to right), Lieutenant Colonel L.B. Cresswell, Lieutenant Colonel Pollock, Colonel Clifton B. Cates, Lieutenant Colonel William N. McKelvy, and Lieutenant Colonel William W. Stickney. LEFT: Placing a wounded Japanese soldier on a stretcher, two U.S. Marines have plucked the injured man from among the bodies of his dead comrades. The suicidal charge of the Ichiki Detachment at the Tenaru River took a heavy toll among the elite troops. (Both National Archives)

In his classic account, *Guadalcanal Diary*, author Richard Tregaskis witnessed the deadly duel: "It was fascinating to see them bustling amongst the trees, pivoting, turning, spitting sheets of yellow flame. It was like a comedy of toys, something unbelievable, to see them knocking over palm trees, which fell slowly, flushing the running figures of men from underneath their treads, following and firing at the fugitives. It was unbelievable to see men falling and being killed so close, to see the explosions of Jap grenades and mortars, black fountains and showers of dirt near the tanks, and see the flashes of explosions under

Two American tankers, one of them holding a Thompson submachine gun, stand beside their Stuart light tank, which had recently participated in the fighting at the Tenaru River. U.S. firepower, particularly tanks and artillery, played a pivotal role in the victory on the island. (National Archives)

their very treads. We had not realized there were so many Japs in the grove. Group after group was flushed out and shot down by the tanks' canister shells."

With no antitank weapons, the Japanese were forced to stop the tanks by utilizing anti-tank mines and grenades. Ichiki's men took heavy losses attempting to halt the Stuarts using these primitive means. Case's "steel beasts" were ripping into the enemy when he received word from Cates to move back. Engrossed in his work eliminating the Japanese positions, Case snapped, "Leave us alone. We are too busy killing Japs." For hours the deafening sounds of automatic weapons fire permeated the air.

Miraculously, several men survived the onslaught. One sergeant, Sadanobu Okada, remained motionless as a pair of Stuarts neared him. The lead vehicle passed over him, but he escaped injury because he was shielded by the enormous root of a coconut tree. He stayed in this position until nightfall, when he slipped away.

Other members of Okada's unit were not so lucky. Numerous Japanese fled to the ocean only to be cut down by the Marine rifle fire. Other enemy infantrymen made their way to the east and south. But, they too, were killed. Wildcat fighters from VMF-223 patrolled the beach area, gunning down escaping Japanese with their M2 12.7mm Browning machine guns. By late in the afternoon of August 21, the Battle of the Tenaru River was finished.

The final demise of Colonel Ichiki is still shrouded in obscurity. One account says he committed hara-kiri after putting a torch to his regiment's flag. Another possibility is that he was killed during mop-up operations after the majority of the fighting had ceased. The few enemy survivors, however, insist he was lost leading his men in a charge across the sand spit.

Regardless of how he met his end, Ichiki's plan to annihilate the Marines was a disaster. He thoughtlessly sent his men into combat knowing he was outnumbered nearly three to one. He also attacked the leatherneck positions in the Lunga area knowing they were well entrenched there. As the Marine Corps history states: "Ichiki's mission was suicidal in concept, execution, and outcome."

When it was over, nearly 800 Japanese were massacred and only 15 were taken prisoner. The Marines suffered 34 dead and another 75 wounded. Vandegrift's men also snared several 70mm guns, nearly two dozen Nambu machine guns, another 20 mortars, a dozen flamethrowers, 700 Arisaka rifles, plus a variety of other weapons and ammunition.

When news of the slaughter of the Ichiki detachment reached headquarters, one Japanese general commented, "I think it's a false report." When the news was confirmed, the Japanese officers present were in total disbelief. The invincibility of the mighty Imperial Army had been shattered. The "haughty, effeminate and cowardly" Americans had dealt a severe blow to the morale of the Japanese fighting man.

For the Marines, it was also a learning experience. General Vandegrift penned a letter to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Maj. Gen. Thomas Holcomb, in which he wrote, "General, I have never heard or

Hero Al Schmid was the pride of the Marines.

As the light of a sickly green flare shot skyward, three Marines from the 11th Machine Gun Squad, H Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment crouched in the hole awaiting the Japanese onslaught on Guadalcanal. The trio, Corporal Leroy Diamond, Pfc. John Rivers, and Private Al Schmid, were manning a .30-caliber machine gun on the west bank of the Tenaru (Ilu) River. Sandbags and coconut logs were placed around the hole for protection, and palm leaves and jungle growth further concealed them from the enemy.

About 2 AM, as the flare lit up the night sky, the Japanese stormed across the sandbar screaming at the tops of their lungs, taunting the leathernecks to open fire to reveal their positions. As the bloodcurdling yells of "*Banzai*" pierced the dank air, Rivers, who was manning the machine gun, did not open fire.

As the enemy hordes neared their hole, Rivers squeezed the trigger, raking the columns of Japanese. The Browning spit hundreds of bullets, temporarily stopping the assault amid the screams of the wounded and dying. The enemy soon focused on the Marine machine gun, and the sharp crack of Arisaka rounds filled the air.

Suddenly, Rivers was struck numerous times in the face, killing him instantly. As he fell backward, his finger remained on the trigger, sending out another 200 rounds at the enemy. Overcome with rage at his friend's death, Schmid leaped on the weapon and took his place. Diamond kept reloading the machine gun as Schmid maintained a constant barrage of .30-caliber bullets tearing into the Japanese.

When a bullet smashed into Diamond's arm, rendering it useless, Schmid had to take on both jobs of firing and reloading. Bullets whizzed all around the two Marines as Schmid kept the pressure on the Japanese for four hours.

Suddenly, there was a brilliant flash and concussion as a lone Japanese soldier crawled close enough to lob a grenade at Schmid. Shrapnel peppered his face, tearing into his eyes, blinding him. Although in intense pain, he got behind the machine gun and, with Diamond 's direction, Schmid continued to let loose a broadside at the attackers.

When he was finally relieved, Schmid passed out from sheer exhaustion. He returned to the United States in the fall of 1942 and was a patient at the naval hospital in San Diego, California. The Pennsylvania native underwent scores of operations on his eyes and face. Through the concerted efforts of Virginia Pfeiffer, a Red

Slaughtered by U.S. Marine gunfire at the mouth of the Tenaru River the previous night, the jumbled corpses of Japanese soldiers litter the Guadalcanal beach in the morning sun. The Ichiki Detachment had provided the first concerted effort by the Japanese to drive the Americans off the island. (National Archives)

read of this kind of fighting. These people refuse to surrender. The wounded wait until men come up to examine them … and blow themselves and the other fellow to pieces with a hand grenade."

The Battle of the Tenaru (Ilu) would set the stage for combat in the Pacific Theater—bloody and unforgiving. As Brig. Gen. Samuel B. Griffith commented in his book *The Battle for Guadalcanal,* "But there was something more fundamental involved here than action taken on the basis of poor information, a reckless and stupid colonel, dedicated soldiers, and a disparity in weapons. This was "face." Once he committed his sword, Ichiki must conquer with it or die. This was the code of the Samurai, 'The Way of the Warrior:' Bushido.

"For their part, the Marines had learned one lesson they would not forget. From this morning until the last days of Okinawa, over two and a half years later, they fought a 'no quarter' war. They asked none for themselves. They gave none to the Japanese." □

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In recognition of his heroism during the fighting at the Tenaru River, U.S. Marine Gunnery Sergeant Al Schmid receives the Navy Cross from Colonel A.E. Randall at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. (National Archives)

Cross worker, Schmid began the long road back to recovery. Sadly, he would lose the sight in one eye completely while the other was severely damaged. Pfeiffer wrote Ruth "Babs" Hartley, Schmid's fiancée, keeping her abreast of his condition.

For their extraordinary bravery, both Schmid and Diamond were awarded the Navy Cross on February 18, 1943. Schmid went to Washington, D.C., and met President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Over the next few years, Schmid was inundated with accolades. In Philadelphia, his hometown, a parade was held to honor him. The *Philadelphia Enquirer* gave him its Hero Award and a check for $1,000. Author Roger Butterfield wrote a best-selling story entitled *Al Schmid—Marine.* A movie, *Pride of the Marines,* starring Hollywood legend John Garfield, was released in 1945. The film was a huge success at the box office.

Schmid's biggest battle was against his blindness. He struggled to be treated like any other person. Schmid later recalled, "When I came back I was the most disgusted man you ever saw. I didn't want to bother to do anything. I could see people looking away from my ugly scars. They wouldn't want to associate with me."

In April 1943, Schmid and Babs were married. With the assistance and love from his wife, Schmid slowly regained his confidence and partial sight in one eye. Relocating to St. Petersburg, Florida, the former Marine became an accomplished fisherman and played the organ. Another pastime he ardently pursued was that of a ham radio operator. Sadly, he succumbed to bone cancer and passed away on December 12, 1982. He was laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

Throughout his life, Al Schmid exemplified the word "hero." Although he would be the last to think of himself as such, Schmid was a role model to all who knew him. The title of the movie certainly is most appropriate when describing him. Al Schmid was the Pride of the Marines.□

RENEWED *Confrontation* IN GREECE

BY JON LATIMER

AS 1944 DREW TO A CLOSE, THE BRITISH IN GREECE FOUND themselves in a parlous situation. They had agreed to support the restoration of Greek civil authority while overseeing the distribution of aid and the re-creation of armed forces to ensure internal security, all while commitments elsewhere were straining them almost to the breaking point. The temporary and unstable government of "National Unity" was led by Giorgios Papandreou. It included representatives of all the major political parties and was constantly destabilized by bickering from all sides.

From the pan left-wing group, Ethnikon Apelefterotiken Metopon (EAM), or National Liberation Front, which had been formed during the German occupation, came seven members including the undersecretary for war. Outside the capital, the EAM controlled four-fifths of the country, imposing taxes and controlling the finances of the Athens government through the Ministry of Finance.

The Kommunistikon Komma Hellados (Communist Party or KKE) provided two members. However, far from being satisfied with this contribution, when the 3rd Greek Mountain (Rimini) Brigade returned from Italy, the EAM/KKE used this as an excuse to bring pressure on the government to demand its disbandment. When the government refused,

In the wake of World War II, conflict developed for control of the government of the Mediterranean nation.

EAM/ KKE threatened civil war. While the 3rd Greek Mountain Brigade had been fighting the common enemy in Italy, the EAM/KKE had been fighting their compatriots in Greece with this outrageous demand as a climax. Papandreou had tried appeasement, but this strongly disciplined and politically dedicated group understood exactly the stakes it was playing for.

The military wing of the EAM/KKE was the Hellenikos Laikos Apeleftertikos Stratos (ELAS), or Greek People's Liberation Army. It amounted to 35,000 men organized in nine divisions and some independent brigades. In Athens, a corps of around 11,000 men with artillery and a dedicated administrative staff had never been used against the German occupation forces but had been retained as a reserve for what was seen to be the endgame.

Greek partisans scramble across the rocky landscape of the island of Samos in this primitive rendering. As the Germans were forced to withdraw from Greece, fighting broke out between Communist guerrillas and those who were pro-Western. (U.S. Army Art Collection)

Its numbers were maintained through press-ganging and the liberal use of criminals, bandits, and thugs leading to an appalling reputation among the citizens.

In Constitution Square, a mile from the Acropolis in Athens, stood the Hotel Grande Bretagne, site of the British Military Mission. On December 3, 1944, a demonstration against the interim government was organized by EAM/KKE forces and moved toward the square. It was later reported that two grenades had been thrown, but arguments remain as to who fired first. A scuffle began and degenerated into a firefight. This was the signal for the revolution to begin, and ELAS made its move.

ELAS ignored the curfew imposed by the Greek government and infiltrated troops into the city to attack various police stations and other key points. Rioting and fighting spread throughout the city, escalating until 500 police and gendarmes were dead or missing by the end of the week. Initially, ELAS tried to seize control without involving the British, whom they hoped to persuade to stand aside. However, the British decided that they had to maintain order, if possible without resorting to force which the commander, Lt. Gen. Ronald M. Scobie, attempted throughout the 4th and 5th. Under the terms of the Caserta agreement, by which the British were present in Greece, ELAS forces were under Scobie's command. However, they paid no heed to orders to retire and overran most of the police posts by the night of December 4.

Having failed to preserve order without resorting to force, Scobie ordered Brigadier R.H.B. Arkwright, commander of the 23rd Armoured Brigade, to clear ELAS from the prohibited Athens-Piraeus area at 11:45 AM on December 5. At Arkwright's disposal were the equivalent of eight British and four Greek infantry battalions, but they soon found themselves going backward. After the German occupation forces withdrew from Greece toward the end of 1944, the British had sent the Military Mission under Scobie with III Corps Headquarters from Italy to Athens. Its purpose was to distribute food and medical stores, which were in desperately short supply. This was hampered by the hapless state of the country's infrastructure following three years of occupation.

At the same time, the Military Mission was to help the Greeks form and maintain a temporary government to see the country through to formal elections. Consequently, the British forces assembled in Greece were ill prepared for internal security operations. Their training and psychological preparation had been in applying maximum force against heavily armed, easily identified, and aggressive opposition in the form of German forces among mountains and river valleys of Italy. Suddenly, they were expected to engage fleeting and indistinct opponents darting through the back streets of Athens where only minimum force was to be applied.

The Athens Corps of ELAS was commanded by Athanasios Klaras, officially its second in command but its de facto field commander. He surrounded himself with 50 bodyguards wearing Astrakhan hats and black beards, ruffians of the first order. Klaras had a fearful reputation for cruelty and despised all things British. He liked to style himself as Ares after the ancient Greek god of war. Decency was meaningless to him, and stretcher parties could expect to be fired upon. Ambulances carried ammunition and civilian hostages. Children were forced to carry messages, while ammunition was carried by old women in their shopping baskets and young women in their baby's carriages.

Late in 1944, Panayiotis Kanellopoulos, the Greek Navy Minister, appeared in Cairo. Pale and shocked, he reported massacres in the Peloponnese at Pirgo and Kelami perpetrated by Ares with as many as 10,000 killed. Only the presence of a British detachment prevented further atrocities at Sparta. When asked if he had killed 1,200 in the Peloponnese with his own hands, Ares answered, "The figure is wrong, I killed 2,000." He was known by various names in the British Military Mission where liaison officers accused him of sadistic pleasure in the infliction of pain. Among the mildest was "Archbastard."

At all levels there was a misunderstanding of the size of the task facing the British. The 2nd (Independent) Parachute Brigade had been scheduled to leave Greece until a directive from Prime Minister Winston Churchill arrived. In a telegram to London, Scobie's superior, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, stated that he did "not anticipate that he [Scobie] will have any difficulty in dealing with any disorders that may occur in that area." And at the tactical level, there was similar confidence that order would be swiftly restored. Throughout the first day, British troops tried to persuade ELAS groups holed up in police stations to surrender

"Reinforcements for Athens are essential.... We are up against a very tough and determined organization."

LEFT: A group of Greek partisans searches for remiaining Nazis in a Greek town. CENTER: The bodies of 120 victims of a massacre perpetrated by ELAS guerrillas on the outskirts of Athens are laid out for burial in a mass grave near where they were murdered. RIGHT: Athanasios Klaras, also known as Ares, was responsible for much of the left-wing Greek resistance movement and the attacks carried out by ELAS. (All National Archives)

to them, prior to reestablishing Greek police control. At the same time, ELAS continued to attack others outside the reach of British troops.

The only regular forces available to support the government in Athens were the British 23rd Armoured Brigade, 2nd (Independent) Parachute Brigade, 139th Brigade (which had been scheduled to replace it), and the 3rd Greek Mountain (Rimini) Brigade with an additional artillery regiment acting as infantry. These were officially constituted as "Arkforce" at 9 PM on December 5 with a headquarters set up near III Corps just north of Constitution Square. The city was divided into four brigade areas, and clearing operations were scheduled to begin at dawn the following day. As this was taking place, administrative units working in areas dominated by ELAS were to continue as normal without provoking an attack. The only restriction laid down was that a warning was to be issued before opening fire. Unarmed crowds were not to be engaged except with solitary warning shots if they interfered with operations. Buildings occupied by ELAS units could be engaged without regard to other occupants.

Arkwright's main concern was his supply routes. Most of the troops were in central Athens, and the sea and air terminals were only lightly held. Shipping had been diverted into the Straits of Salamis to be unloaded onto the Piraeus Peninsula and Faliron Bay. These major supply dumps were defended by just one squadron of the Royal Air Force Regiment with another two guarding the airhead at Kalamaki. In support, they had only the 64th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery, operating as infantry and covering a very wide area. These detachments might easily be overrun if not supported. Consequently, the 2/5th Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment was sent to secure the naval headquarters and clear the docks. The 16th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry was dispatched to clear the Faliron Bay beaches.

The 16th Durham Light Infantry soon met up with the RAF Regiment and on the following day worked its way around to where the built-up area of Pireaus began. Here the 16th Battalion encountered mines, obstacles, and strong ELAS forces in the narrow streets. With his troops strung out in a long line, the commanding officer realized his vulnerability but decided to bluff his way out. He was assisted by the repulse of an infiltration on the night of December 8. Meanwhile, the 2/5th Leicesters had a thornier problem to grasp. After skirmishing, they were aided by two tanks in dispersing a crowd besieging the naval headquarters. They then commenced a methodical advance toward the docks at Leondos Harbor.

At midday on December 7, the Leicesters encountered a strong ELAS position blocking the narrowest point of the peninsula. This checked their progress, and infiltration to their rear forced them back to the naval headquarters. The 139th Brigade now had two battalions pinned down on either side of Kastella Hill, which was occupied by ELAS in old German positions that had originally been constructed to withstand air and naval bombardment.

At the same time, the belief that resistance would be feeble had been dispelled in central Athens. ELAS fought back hard wherever attacked and infiltrated wherever lines became thin and overextended. On December 6, operations went quickly and smoothly until ELAS became aware of what was going on. The 50th Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment, operating dismounted as infantry, cleared Stadium and University Streets, capturing EAM headquarters and taking the staff completely by surprise.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, Highland Light Infantry cleared the Kolonali district, and an observation post was established on top of Lykabettos Hill to enable the 463rd Battery, Royal Horse Artillery to support all three brigades in Athens. The Fifth Battalion, Parachute Regiment swept through Hadrian's Arch and cleared the Royal Palace and Gardens, securing the Acropolis the next day. The 3rd Greek Mountain Brigade, supported by two troops of the 46th Liverpool Welsh Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment, and the guns of the Royal Horse Artillery, managed to clear Kouponia suburb but were stopped short of Kaisariani.

ABOVE: Shortly after their arrival in their native country from Italy, soldiers of the Greek Mountain Brigade receive a hero's welcome as they parade through the streets of Athens.

Altogether, it was becoming clear to Arkwright that he would need to reconsider his plans if he was to secure a perimeter to protect the vital points. Only the inexperience of the ELAS command prevented what was a singularly precarious position for the British from becoming untenable. At the beginning of the operation, they had barely three days of supplies in central Athens. To complicate matters, the main depot was at Rouf Barracks, well within the ELAS-controlled area. Despite seizing the Fix Brewery, ELAS did not attempt to block the running of a convoy of trucks escorted by scout cars and armored command vehicles supported by tanks from the 46th Royal Tank Regiment.

Arkwright forwarded a revised assessment of the situation to Scobie on December 8. He advocated immediate restoration of law and order in Athens and Piraeus. Under conditions of total war, he had enough troops for this, but with restrictions on the use of force, he argued that he would require at least two more brigades. With the arrival of 5th Indian Brigade, diverted from Crete, the only source of additional troops would involve evacuating Patras and Salonika.

General Scobie decided, however, that he would need to hold these to concentrate the 4th Indian Division. Two battalions of the 23rd Armoured Brigade would be recalled from the Peloponnese and Thessaly into Athens. Other naval detachments would be called in, but he urgently signaled Wilson requesting the balance of 46th Division (of which 139th Brigade was a part), an armored car regiment, and 35 Sherman tanks to complete the reequipping of the 46th Royal Tank Regiment. He commented, "I intensely dislike applying for more troops at this stage but in view of the Prime Minister's strong directive I feel that ... reinforcements for Athens are essential if I am to be able to carry out his policy in a satisfactory manner ... We are up against a very tough and determined organization."

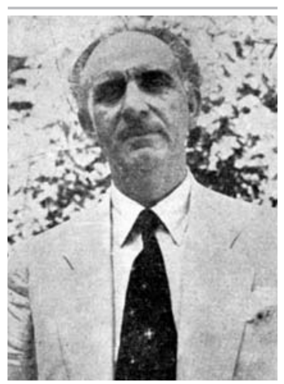
Churchill was keeping a close eye on developments and put pressure

on Wilson who, unable to provide the balance of the 46th Division decided to divert the 4th Division instead. ELAS had control of the city waterworks, power station, telephone exchange, and most of Piraeus. The 139th Brigade held the southern arm of the harbor at Kalliopolis, and the 5th Indian Brigade had a stiff fight to reopen the Piraeus docks. Its 1/4th Battalion, Essex Regiment opened this operation on December 10 along the north shore of the peninsula. On the 12th, the 1/4th cut across the neck to form a cordon while the two Indian battalions, the 3rd Battalion Queen Mary's Own, 10th Baluch Regiment, and the 1st Battalion, 9th Gurkha Rifles cleared the remainder supported by a handful of the ever-useful tanks of the 46th Royal Tank Regiment. On the night of the 14th, the Gurkhas cleared Kasyella Hill and its dominating heights, thus relieving the enormous pressure on the 16th Durham Light Infantry.

Having been in almost continuous action since May, the 4th Division was making its way through Italy en route to Palestine for rest. On December 9, its commander, Maj. Gen. A.D. Ward, received orders diverting his formation to Greece. From Taranto, parties moved to Pescara to collect guns and equipment previously left for the 5th Division to take over. A tactical headquarters was set up in Old Faliron southwest of the city on the 12th, while the 28th Brigade landed at Hasani airfield under small arms fire. These troops were transported in the bomb bays of 20 old Consolidated B-24 Liberator and Vickers Wellington bombers, with essential baggage brought in by nine Douglas C-47 Dakota transports. The 2/4th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment immediately secured the airfield, and the 2nd Battalion, King's Regiment (Liverpool) moved to join Arkforce.

The airfield was secure, and the road along the coast had been kept open, but all movement of humanitarian aid, of which the civilian population was in desperate need, had to be suspended while the merchant ships bringing it to Salamis Bay rode idly at anchor. Greek killed Greek, and ELAS tried to drive out the British.

Peter Holloway, an artillery observation officer, recalled, "My first shoot was with the guns of a Greek cruiser, with a British officer on board to translate my orders. This was for political reasons, as it was considered undesirable at that stage for British guns to be firing on Athens. I am possibly the only British officer to have directed the fire of a Greek cruiser and on Athens at that!"



ABOVE: Lieutenant General Ronald M. Scobie commanded British forces in Greece. BELOW: Giorgios Papandreou led the unstable Greek government in 1944. (Both National Archives))

Blowing in the doors with pole-charges and with direct fire support from the tanks, they killed some 20 of the garrison and sent the remainder fleeing.

Arkwright decided to abandon commitments outside the city center. He pulled men in from Sangros Prison and found them essential. In central Athens, the British were penned in. On the night of the 12th, ELAS launched an attack with the equivalent of a division. However, it was badly planned, coordinated, and executed and was driven off despite the infliction of 60 casualties and the capture of 100 ELAS prisoners. The British lost 30 dead and 40 taken prisoner.

The first task of the 4th Division was to secure a beachhead at the foot of the Leoforus Singros, followed by opening the road between Piraeus and the airfield. On the left, the 139th Brigade cleared the peninsula, and the logistic and operational base was set up to permit the drive to Athens. The 139th Brigade now took over the port, freeing the 4th Division to concentrate on this operation. While still in sight of the bay, it would be supported by destroyers offshore along with guns from the 4th Indian Division on an island in the bay. Tanks from the 40th (The King's) Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment would provide close support. The operation began on the night of December 17 with an advance up the Leoforus road by the 2nd Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry (Prince Albert's) from the 28th Brigade. They succeeded in reaching the first crest of the road, some two miles inland at dawn.

Ahead lay the strongly defended Fix Brewery, which the assault troops of the Hampshires took completely by surprise after an approach in rubber-soled shoes. Blowing in the doors with pole-charges and with direct fire support from the tanks, they killed some 20 of the garrison and sent the remainder fleeing. By 10 AM, the Brewery was secure and the houses 200 yards on either side were cleared. Meanwhile, the 2nd King's, supporting Arkforce, advanced toward the brewery from the direction of the Acropolis, some half a mile or so northward, and joined up with its parent formation. Meanwhile, the 173rd Brigade followed up, clearing the suburbs to either side of the Leoforu. It was followed in turn by the Greek National Guard. The Greeks cleared every house from attic to basement a second time.

This was a new type of warfare for troops used to fighting the formidable German Wehrmacht. Few ELAS fighters wore uniforms, and many that did wore British battledress or Greek National Guard patterns. They moved among the civilians, making use of the advantages that guerrillas have of blending into the background. Areas cleared by the British would be reinfiltrated by ELAS, requiring clearing once more by the National Guard. The Greeks were very effective at this task, but would probably have been of little use against a conventional opponent. They were particularly effective at winning the information battle so crucial to such operations, finding weapons caches, and discovering ELAS troop movements.

On December 20, the 10th Brigade moved up on the right of the Leoforus to New Smyrna to clear the suburbs between the city and the coast, and 12th Brigade closed up on the left. They cleared the streets between the Leoforus and the Ilissos Rivers to a point just short of the brewery as the 28th Brigade cleared around the Brewery itself. These operations were complete by December 22. The following day, 12th Brigade wheeled north and crossed the road moving forward a mile or so. On Christmas Eve, the 2nd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) holding a factory were subjected to a violent attack by ELAS, which poured fire through the windows and breached the wall with explosive charges. Those that got in, however, were swiftly ejected, though they continued their attacks throughout the night.

The poor bloody infantry spent Christmas day clearing snipers, roadblocks, and arms caches. Nonetheless, the 28th Brigade managed to put on a party for 150 hungry kids in New Faliron.

If ELAS hoped to catch the Tommies off their guard, they were disappointed. An attack across 12th Brigade's front beginning at midnight was heavily repulsed and died away after an hour. Around the same time, the 139th Brigade and Arkforce had advanced from the south to link up to the right of 12th Brigade, thus securing a strip of road joining Athens

and Piraeus. Having raised the siege of central Athens, the forces were regrouped for the next phase: clearing the southern part of the city. This commenced at dawn on December 28 with a silent attack. By nightfall, 10th Brigade had taken the Drougouti and Katsipodi districts.

ELAS did its best to disrupt these positions, including an attack by troops in National Guard uniform on the 2nd Battalion, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment. In the morning, however, the British advance continued with support from Arkforce and the 3rd Greek Mountain Brigade to the east of Zappion Gardens. The 28th Brigade struck eastward from the Brewery into Goura and Pankrati on December 31. The 3rd Greek Mountain Brigade also moved across the front of the 4th Division toward Byron, meeting up with the 1/6th Battalion, East Surrey Regiment and advancing through Imittos as the Bedfords penetrated Kopanas and the 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry pushed into Goura.

ABOVE: British troops who have recently taken part in the liberation of Athens take in the sights of the Acropolis. The British troops were also involved in combat with Communist ELAS guerrillas in the city. RIGHT: A British tank crashes through the door of the EAM Building in Athens during the effort to crush resistance by the Communist ELAS guerrillas. The Communists put up stiff resistance for several days. (All National Archives)

ELAS was now effectively driven from the south of the city. The north of the city would be subjected to a converging attack with the 28th Brigade coming from the east and 12th Brigade from the west. This began in the face of furious resistance on January 2 but broke through Averof, a mile and a half beyond its start line. Further to the right, the 4th Reconnaissance Regiment broke the ELAS cordon around the 97th General Hospital in the Psychiko Garden suburb. By January 6, the remnants of ELAS were streaming northward out of the city, pursued by British mobile columns. The Greek National Guard, now amounting to 11 battalions, was given responsibility for the cleared areas, which meant continually reclearing, searching, and rounding up the remainder of the stores, weapons, and explosives belonging to ELAS.

The pursuit was swift. By the evening of January 6, a squadron of the 4th Recce Regiment had reached Thebes and another opened the road to Lamia, 40 miles beyond Levadia, which was a dismal, brooding place and singularly loyal to EAM. Alternatively, the village of Petromagoula greeted the Royal Fusiliers with delirious pleasure. The Archbishop of Levadia rode in on the commanding officer's jeep and stood on the hood to make a passionate speech welcoming "our gallant British liberators."

The city's divided loyalties were symptomatic of rivalries dating back to ancient times. The physical nature of the country sustained a social and political independence that degenerated into bickering and isolationism so that persuading Athens, Thebes, Sparta, and Corinth to act together, even against the common foe, had proved practically impossible for the British. Having unified in to kick Mussolini out of the country, these differences resurfaced during the German occupation. Arms supplied to assist the resistance against the Germans were used in internecine strife or spirited away for use in a future civil war.

Once the strategically important towns were secured, and with ELAS scattered and disorganized, EAM was forced to face reality and a truce was signed on January 14. ELAS was to withdraw from Attica, Boeotia, Phocis, north Peloponnese, southeast Thessaly, the Ionian and Aegean islands, and Euboea. All combatants and British civilians were to be exchanged for an equal number of ELAS prisoners. On February 12, a final agreement was signed enabling the 4th Division to move into Thessaly and the Pindus Mountains to take over dumps of ELAS weapons surrendered under the agreement. This also permitted the resumption of relief work.

For the time being at least, things were resolved, but the Communists had other plans, and the British were to find themselves engaged in a bitter guerrilla campaign the following year. It would take three more years to subdue the Communists. □

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Following his successful campaign in Western Europe, the flamboyant commander had difficulty adjusting to peacetime and was fatally injured in an automobile accident.

THE Final Days of

THE COMMANDER OF THE U.S. THIRD ARMY, GENERAL GEORGE S. Patton, Jr., took no great pleasure in the end of the war in Europe; he already knew that despite his lobbying of many influential figures in Washington, D.C., he had no hope of being reassigned to the Pacific Theater to command combat troops there. As he put it to his III Corps commander, Maj. Gen. James Van Fleet, "There is already a star [MacArthur] in that theater and you can only have one star in a show."

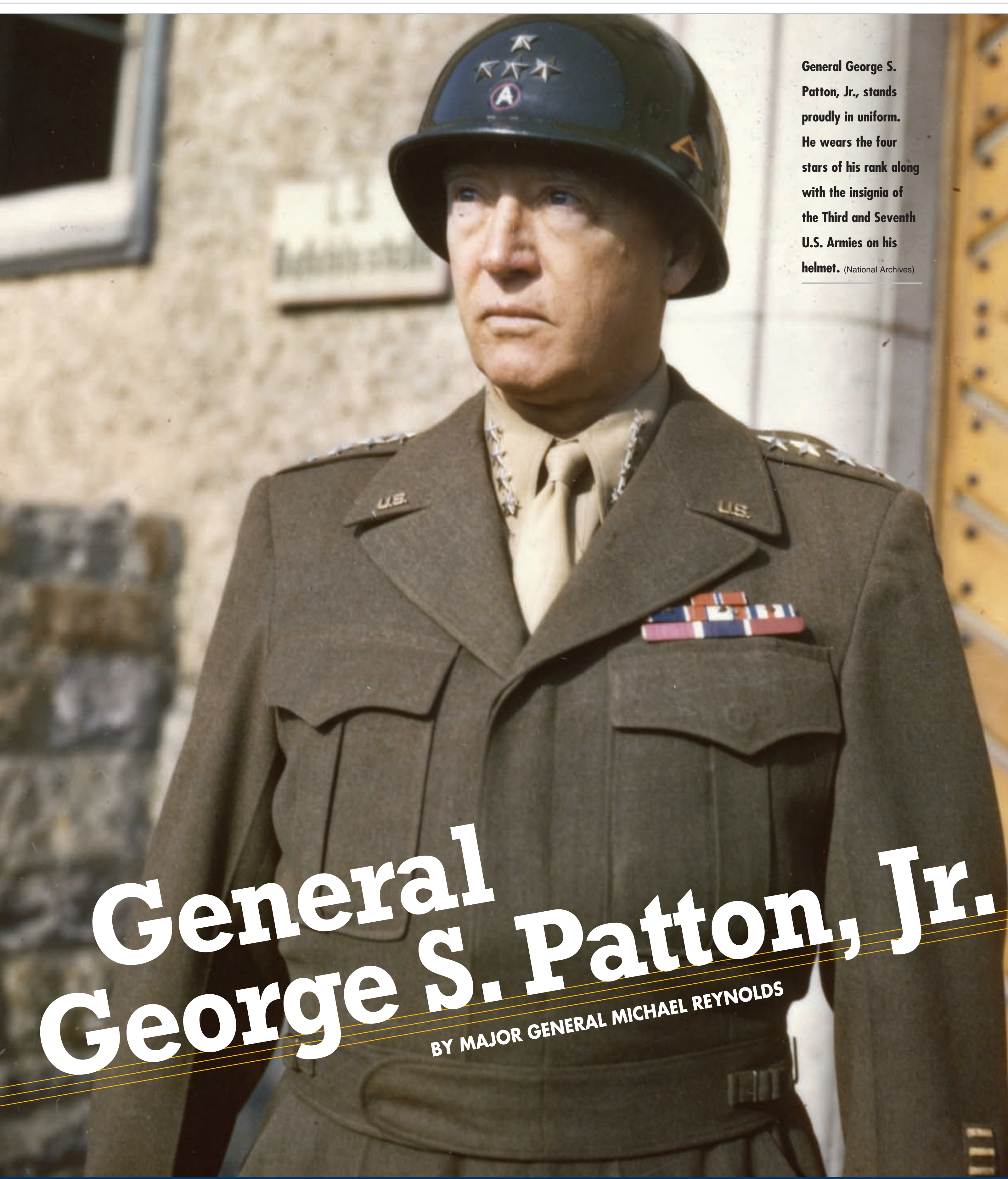
Patton was also depressed because he knew there would be a rapid reduction in the strength of the U.S. Army in Europe, and he believed this was inviting disaster. On May 7, 1945, he had pleaded with visiting Undersecretary of War Robert Patterson: "Let's keep our boots polished, bayonets sharpened and present a picture of force and strength to these people [the Russians]. This is the only language they understand and respect. If you fail to do this, then I would like to say to you that we have had a victory over the Germans and have disarmed them, but have lost the war."

When Patterson told him that he did not understand the "big picture," but asked Patton what he would do about the Russians, he allegedly replied that he would keep the U.S. Army in Europe intact, delineate the border with the Soviets, and if they did not withdraw behind it, "push them back across it." He went on: "We did not come over here to acquire jurisdiction over either the people or their countries. We came to give them back the right to govern themselves. We must either finish the job now—while we are here and ready—or later in less favorable circumstances." Needless to say, such ideas were totally unacceptable to the politicians in Washington—and indeed to most of the American soldiers in Europe; all they wanted to do was to go home.

Stories of Patton's encounters with the Russians are legendary, and some may well be apocryphal. On May 13, 1945, he reportedly entertained and decorated the commander of the Soviet Fourth Guards Army at a luncheon in Linz, Austria. Patton noted in his diary that after a bout of heavy whiskey drinking during and after the meal, the Russian "went out cold," while he himself "walked out under my own steam.... They are a scurvy race and simply savages. We could beat hell out of them."

The following day he in turn was entertained by Marshal F.I. Tolbukhin, a Soviet Army Group commander, who tried to get him drunk and whom he described as "a very inferior man who sweated profusely." He did admit that the Russian soldiers "put on a tremendous show ... [they] passed in review with a very good imitation of the goose step.... The officers with few exceptions gave the appearance of recently civilized Mongolian bandits."

The most notorious incident allegedly happened toward the end of May when an English-speaking Russian brigadier general arrived at Patton's headquarters to demand that some river boats on the Danube that had contained Germans who had sur-



General George S. Patton, Jr., stands proudly in uniform. He wears the four stars of his rank along with the insignia of the Third and Seventh U.S. Armies on his helmet. (National Archives)

General George S. Patton, Jr.

BY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL REYNOLDS

rendered to the Third Army be returned to the Russians. Patton opened a drawer, pulled out a pistol, slammed it down on his desk, and raged, "Goddamnit! Get this son-of-a-bitch out of here! Who in hell let him in? Don't let any more Russian bastards into this headquarters."

After the shaken Russian was escorted out, Patton is said to have exclaimed, "Sometimes you have to put on an act ... That's the last we'll hear from those bastards." And apparently it was.

Three days after VE-Day, Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower called a conference of all his U.S. Army commanders and told them that they were not to criticize publicly any of the campaigns that had won the war and of the need for solidarity in the event that any of them were called before any congressional committees. Patton's version of what Ike said at this conference can be read in his diary. He recorded that the supreme commander "made a speech

ABOVE: A million people lined the 25-mile parade route leading to the Hatch Memorial Shell in Boston, where General Patton delivered a war bonds speech. INSET: Dr. James K. Pollock, a psychiatrist, was ordered to conduct a covert assessment of General Patton. (Above: Library of Congress/Inset: National Archives)

which had to me the symptoms of political aspirations, on cooperation with the British, Russians and the Chinese, but particularly with the British. It is my opinion that this talking cooperation is for the purpose of covering up probable criticism of strategic blunders which he unquestionably committed during the campaign. Whether or not these were his own or due to too much cooperation with the British I don't know. I am inclined to think he over-cooperated."

On his return to Bavaria, Patton, as military governor as well as Third Army commander, moved into his new headquarters, a former Waffen SS officers' training school at Bad Tölz, 30 miles south of Munich. Patton renamed the barracks Flint Kaserne, after Colonel Paddy Flint, an old friend and one of his regimental commanders who had been killed in Sicily. Patton's personal residence was a palatial house on nearby Lake Tegernsee. It had a swimming pool, bowling alley, and two boats, and had once been owned by Max Amann, the publisher of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. It is also of interest that Gestapo chief Heinrich Himmler's wife had lived in another house on the lake, as had the wife of the infamous Waffen SS Kampfgruppe commander Jochen Peiper.

At the beginning of June came the news that Patton had been dreading. He was to return to the States for a 30-day bond sales tour. His plane, escorted by a formation of fighters and Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers, touched down at an airfield near Boston on June 7, where an honor guard, a 17-gun salute, and the governor of Massachusetts greeted him. The American press had guaranteed him a hero's welcome. Rather surprisingly, Patton chose to return the governor's hat-doffing salute by removing his own helmet, complete with its four stars and the emblems of the Third and Seventh Armies and I Armored Corps. Then, with the formalities over, he was finally able to embrace his wife Beatrice—it was their first hug in nearly three years. They were then driven through the suburbs of Boston to a ticker tape reception in the city itself.

The crowd along the 25-mile route was estimated at a million; people wept and girls threw flowers. Then, before a crowd of up to 50,000, he made a speech in which he said, "My name is merely a hook to hang the honors on. This great ovation by Boston is not for Patton the general, but Patton as a symbol of the Third Army." The following day, the *Daily Record* headlines announced: "FRENZIED HUB HAILS PATTON" and "GEN PATTON IN TEARS AT HUB TRIBUTE." This latter headline referred to Patton breaking down in tears during a speech at a state dinner held in his honor that night; he was completely overcome by the glowing tributes.

Beatrice is said to have declared, "I can hardly speak, I'm so overcome. This has been a proud and wonderful day." But, in fact, Patton had put his foot in it again. During his first speech that morning he had told his audience that the fact that a soldier was killed in action often made him a fool rather than a hero. What exactly he meant is unclear, but needless to say this remark enraged those who had lost relatives in the war and telegrams and letters soon began to flood into the War Department demanding an apology. They did not get it.

The day after his return Patton and his wife flew to Denver and then on to Los Angeles and Pasadena. He made emotional speeches in all three places, with 100,000 people, including many Hollywood stars, turning out to hear him in the Los Angeles Coliseum. And so it went on throughout his leave—adulation from family, friends, and the vast majority of the public. To his superiors, though, George Patton remained, as in the past, a potential embarrassment—a missile that might go off track at any moment —a missile that needed to be kept under tight control. No doubt with this in mind Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson did just that at a press conference in Washington on June 14; Patton was left merely to add a few comments about the Germans and the Third Army.

Fortunately, the official aim of Patton's month-long leave was achieved—his enthusiastic oratory helped to sell millions of war bonds and he received a letter of thanks from Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau. His personal ambitions, however, had not been achieved. His attempts to get an appointment in the Pacific had again failed. His name had been included in a list of six generals submitted by the War Department for consideration by MacArthur, but the Supreme Commander had rejected him out of hand.

Along with the faux pas committed during his Boston speech, Patton's past indiscretions continued to dog him. During a visit to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, he rounded on the press reporters fol-

lowing him with the words, "I'll bet you goddam buzzards are just following me to see if I'll slap another soldier, aren't you? You're all hoping I will!" His daughter, who worked in the amputee ward as an occupational therapist, recalled later that when her father saw the soldiers there he burst into tears and exclaimed, "Goddammit, if I had been a better general, most of you would not be here." The men, who were not looking for sympathy, cheered him as he left.

Patton is said to have predicted his own death to both his daughters, Ruth Ellen and Bee, during a visit to the latter's home in Washington shortly before his return to Germany. He told them, while his wife was out of the room, that he believed his luck had run out.

In early July in Paris, Patton again confided in his close friend Everett Hughes that he was glad to be out of the States and back in Europe. This was despite the fact that an Army order banning dependents had prevented Beatrice from accompanying him. Patton's morale, however, got a lift when his aircraft was given a fighter escort for its flight to Bavaria and troops and tanks lined the route from the airfield to Bad Tölz. He wrote in his diary, "It gave me a very warm feeling in my heart to be back among soldiers." Even so, Patton was pessimistic about the future of Europe, reluctant to get involved in the complexities of military government, and, perhaps more importantly, reluctant to purge the Nazis.

In the case of Europe, he was convinced it would soon become Communist, and in the case of the Nazis he saw practical problems. "My soldiers are fighting men and if I dismiss the sewer cleaners and the clerks my soldiers will have to take over those jobs," he reasoned. "They'd have to run the telephone exchanges, the power facilities, the street cars, and that's not what soldiers are for." In short, provided a German had the right qualifications for a particular job, Patton was prepared to ignore his former Nazi background. This was, of course, completely contrary to the political direction he had received from Eisenhower for the denazification of the American zone of Germany. Furthermore, his problems were compounded by the fact that Washington was intent on demobilizing its warrior soldiers as quickly as possible, thus reducing his pool of skilled American manpower.

By his very nature and background, Patton was unsuited to his role as military governor. He was not interested in the details of rebuilding a country. He had little patience with the thousands of displaced persons (DPs), whom he described as "too worthless to even cut wood to keep themselves warm," and his growing anti-Semitism coupled with despair over the fate of Germany led him to the depths of melancholia. He wrote in his diary, "If we let Germany and the German people be completely disintegrated and starved, they will certainly fall for Communism, and the fall of Germany for Communism will write the epitaph of democracy in the United States. The more I see of people, the more I regret I survived the war." He even accused the U.S. Treasury Secretary of "Semitic revenge against Germany."

On July 16, the Potsdam Conference convened, and Patton, resplendent with 20 stars and ivory-handled pistols, was in Berlin to see Truman preside over the raising of the American flag in the U.S. sector of the divided former German capital. The two men did not get on. Truman wrote in his diary, "Don't see how a country can produce such men as Robert E. Lee, John J. Pershing, Eisenhower and Bradley and at the same time produce Custers, Pattons and MacArthurs."

Patton did not enjoy his time there and on the 21st wrote to Beatrice, "We have destroyed what could have been a good race and we [are] about to replace them with Mongolian savages. Now the horrors of peace, pacifism and unions will have unlimited sway. I wish I were young enough to fight in the next one [war]. It would be real fun killing Mongols.... It is hell to be old and passé and know it."

In his despondency, Patton reverted to the things he liked and did best—overseeing the training and discipline of his Army, riding, hunting, and reading,—and for exercise he added a squash court to his residence. But the end of the war with Japan only added to his low morale; on August 10 he wrote in his diary, "Another war has ended and with it my usefulness to the world. It is for me personally another very sad thought. Now all that is left is to sit around and await the arrival of the undertaker and posthumous immortality."

Patton's biographer, Carlo D'Este, has suggested that his melancholy and increasingly extraordinary behavior may have been due to brain damage that resulted from a series of head injuries caused by a lifetime of falls from horses and road accidents—the most serious being an accident in Hawaii in 1936 that had resulted in a two-day blackout. He goes on to say, however, that we shall never know, for after his death Beatrice refused to allow an autopsy on the body despite a request from the Army.

In September, Patton returned to Berlin for a military review hosted by the legendary Marshal Georgi Zhukov. He had lost none of his quick wit or audacity. When his host pointed out a new, massive, and very advanced Stalin IS-3 tank and mentioned that its cannon had a range of 17,000 meters, Patton is said to have replied, "Indeed? Well, my dear Marshal Zhukov, let me tell you this. If any of my gunners started firing at your people before they had closed to less than 700 yards, I'd have them court-martialed for cowardice."

General George S. Patton, Jr., (left) strains to smile in company with Marshal Georgi Zhukov during a September 7, 1945, parade in Berlin. The two were present during activities celebrating the Allied victory over Japan. (National Archives)

Despite Patton's indiscretions and lack of interest in his overall duties, in August 1945 Bavaria was judged by Secretary of War Stimson to be the best-governed area in the whole U.S. European Theater of Operations (ETO), an opinion apparently shared by his deputy. But any satisfaction Patton might have derived from this report was to be short-lived. In September things began to go terribly wrong for him.

During the early part of that month he decided to visit some of the prison camps in his area holding hardened Nazis and former members of the Waffen SS. Camp 24 at Auerbach, 100 miles northeast of Munich, held former members of the 1st Leibstandarte and 12th Hitlerjugend SS Panzer Divisions, and there had already been complaints by the senior German

officer of "unbearable treatment of seriously disabled comrades."

These had, however, been rejected, and when references had been made to the Geneva Convention, the officer had been told: "What do you mean Geneva Convention? You seem to have forgotten that you lost the war!" However, Hubert Meyer, the ex-Chief of Staff of the Hitlerjugend, recalled that on the occasion of Patton's visit things had been very different. After satisfying himself about the correctness of the complaints, Patton immediately ordered action to rectify the situation and then went further, ordering that the starvation diet, which was described by one former senior German officer as "not enough to live on, but too much to die on," should be supplemented by American Army rations.

It was in Camp 8 near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 60 miles south of Munich, on September 8, 1945, that an incident occurred which was to have severe implications for Patton's future career. After inspecting the American garrison responsible for administering and guarding the camp, he met the German commander of the prisoners. He complained that some Germans were being interned there as political prisoners without justification. Patton is said to have told the American officers accompanying him that he thought it was "sheer madness to intern these people."

Not surprisingly, one of the American officers, a Jew, reported the incident to Eisenhower's headquarters, now housed in the IG Farben building in Frankfurt and known as Headquarters U.S. Forces European Theater (USFET). The complaint landed on the desk of Ike's civil affairs officer, Brig. Gen. Clarence Adcock. He briefed Ike's chief of staff, General Walter Bedell Smith, who sent the report of the incident to Eisenhower who was on leave in the South of France. It was accompanied by a cover letter saying Smith thought Patton was out of control in Bavaria and that Ike ought to come back and take the matter in hand before any further damage was done.

Eisenhower returned and went to see Patton at Tegernsee on September 16. They talked until three in the morning, but there is no record of any discussion about Patton's military governorship. They did, however, discuss Ike's successor. The former supreme commander was due to return home in November to take over as Army chief of staff at the end of the year. When Patton heard that Ike's likely successor was to be his deputy, General Joseph McNarney, he said he had no wish to serve under a man who had never heard a gun go off. The only jobs in which he was interested were commandant of the Army War College or commanding general of the Army ground forces. Ike told him they were both already filled. Patton wrote in his diary, "I guess there is nothing left for me but the undertaker."

Eisenhower returned to Bavaria a week later following reports of bad conditions in some of the DP camps there. The reports were true. Ike found not only appalling conditions but German guards, some of whom were former SS men. Patton tried to explain that the camp had been fine before the arrival of the present Jewish occupants who were "pissing and crapping all over the place." Despite being told to "Shut up, George," he apparently went on to say that there was an empty village nearby which he was planning to turn into a concentration camp for them. Eisenhower's response is unrecorded.

By now Bedell Smith, Adcock, and others had come to the conclusion that Patton was mentally unbalanced. Adcock's civilian deputy, Walter Dorn, was a history professor on leave from Ohio State University. Of German origin, he was determined to rid Germany of all vestiges of Nazism. When Patton eventually met him on September 28, he described him as a "smooth, smart-ass academic type." Academic or not, Dorn soon focused his attention on the success or otherwise of the denazification program in Bavaria. He discovered that the German organization set on behalf of Patton to administer Bavaria was riddled with former Nazis. Patton had taken so little interest in the new administration that he did not even recall meeting its Minister President, a Dr. Fritz Schaeffer.

As a result of Dorn's discoveries and the PW Camp 8 incident, he and Adcock, presumably with Bedell Smith's agreement, arranged for a psychiatrist, disguised as a supply officer, to be posted to Patton's headquarters to study his behavior—and, unbelievably, for Patton's phones

LEFT: General Eisenhower visited Patton at Bad Tölz and found that Patton had left SS soldiers in charge of concentration camp security. This visit, along with Patton's public statements, led to his dismissal as commander of the Third Army. RIGHT: General Patton receives the Order of the White Lion and the Military Cross, first class, from President Eduard Benes of Czechoslovakia, July 27, 1945. (Left: Library of Congress/Right: National Archives)

to be tapped and his residence bugged. It is not clear if or what the psychiatrist reported, but needless to say it was not long before the wiretappers heard their subject expressing violently anti-Russian views and even suggesting that ex-members of the Wehrmacht should be rearmed and used to help the U.S. Army force the Red Army "back into Russia." In one conversation with Ike's deputy, McNarney, he allegedly went as far as to say, "In ten days I can have enough incidents happen to have us at war with those sons of bitches and make it look like their fault."

Patton held two disastrous press conferences during the following month. At the first, in Frankfurt on August 27, he "spoke out against the Russians and signed a letter proposing the release of some Nazi internees." This apparently so angered Eisenhower that he is said to have demanded that Patton carry out the denazification program as ordered "instead of mollycoddling the goddamn Nazis." But Patton was not going to change; two days later he wrote in his diary, "The Germans are the only decent people left in Europe. If it's a choice between them and the Russians, I prefer the Germans."

Worse was to follow. On September 22, Patton agreed to answer questions from reporters after his normal morning briefing at Bad Tölz. When asked why Nazis were being retained in governmental positions in Bavaria, he replied, "I despise and abhor Nazis and Hitlerism as much as anyone. My record on that is clear and unchallengeable. It is to be found on battlefields from Morocco to Bad Tölz.... Now, more than half the Germans were Nazis and we would be in a hell of a fix if we removed all Nazi party members from office. The way I see it, this Nazi question is very much like a Democrat and Republican election fight. To get things done in Bavaria, after the complete disorganization and disruption of four years of war, we had to compromise with the devil a little. We had no alternative but to turn to the people who knew what to do and how to do it. So, for the time being we are compromising with the devil.... I don't like the Nazis any more than you do. I despise them. In the past three years I did my utmost to kill as many of them as possible. Now we are using them for lack of anyone better until we can get better people."

ABOVE: General George S. Patton, Jr., greets General Lucian K. Truscott, one of his most trusted divisional commanders. BELOW: General Patton visits his son-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel John Waters, while the latter recuperates in Walter Reed U.S. Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. Waters had been held in a German prison camp for three years. Patton was reported to have attempted a rescue operation at one time. (Both: National Archives)

Needless to say, the press ran with this story, particularly the Democrat versus Republican analogy. When it became clear to Eisenhower that the press reports were basically accurate, he was aghast and ordered Patton to report to him in Frankfurt. The weather was too bad to fly, and when Patton arrived on the 28th, after a seven-hour car journey in heavy rain, he was uncharacteristically dressed in an ordinary khaki jacket and GI trousers. His normal cavalry breeches, swagger stick, and pistols had been left behind.

Patton knew he was in trouble. During their two-hour meeting Eisenhower was "more excited than I have ever seen him," remembered Patton in his diary. At one stage the officer responsible for USFET Civil Affairs, Clarence Adcock, was summoned and he brought Professor Dorn into the room with him. The latter then skillfully and ruthlessly demonstrated that the Fritz Schaeffer administration in Bavaria was full of former Nazis.

When they were alone again, Patton suggested that he should "be simply relieved," but Ike said he did not intend to do that and had had no pressure from the States to that effect. "I then said that I should be allowed to continue the command of the Third Army and the government of Bavaria," remembered Patton. But Eisenhower's mind was made up. Patton was offered command of the Fifteenth Army— an army in name only since its sole mission was to prepare a history of the war in Europe! The only alternative was resignation.

He accepted the job with the Fifteenth Army, explaining this away in his diary by writing that in resigning "I would save my self-respect at the expense of my reputation but ... would become a martyr too soon." He went on in his diary to justify his acceptance of the Fifteenth Army command as follows: "I was reluctant, in fact unwilling, to be party to the destruction of Germany under the pretense of denazification.... I believe Germany should not be destroyed, but rather rebuilt as a buffer against the real danger which is Bolshevism from Russia."

Eisenhower ended the meeting by telling Patton that he felt he should get back to Bad Tölz as quickly as possible and that his personal train was ready to take him at 1900 hours. Patton's diary entry ended with the words, "I took the train."

The following day Bedell Smith phoned Patton and read a letter to him from Eisenhower. It told him he was to assume his new appointment on October 8. When this was announced on the 2nd, many of the newspaper headlines, including that in *Stars and Stripes,* read "PATTON FIRED." Some papers were sympathetic; the *New York Times* wrote: "Patton has passed from current controversy into history. There he will have an honored place.... He was obviously in a post which he was unsuited by temperament, training or experience to fill. It was a mistake to suppose a free-swinging fighter could acquire overnight the capacities of a wise administrator. His removal by General Eisenhower was an acknowledgement of that mistake.... For all his showmanship he was a scientific soldier, a thorough military student.... He reaped no laurels from the peace, but those he won in war will remain green for a long time."

Patton's letter to Beatrice, written the day after his meeting with Ike, indicates the turmoil in his mind: "The noise against me is the only means by which Jews and Communists are attempting and with good success to implement a further dismemberment of Germany." He ended it by saying that he had no wish to be "executioner to the best race in Europe."

With regard to the fateful September 22 press conference, Patton later wrote: "This conference cost me the command of the Third Army, or

rather, of a group of soldiers, mostly recruits, who then rejoiced in that historic name, but I was intentionally direct, because I believed that it was then time for people to know what was going on. My language was not particularly politic, but I have yet to find where politic language produces successful government.... My chief interest in establishing order in Germany was to prevent Germany from going communistic. I am afraid that our foolish and utterly stupid policy ... will certainly cause them to join the Russians and thereby ensure a communistic state throughout Western Europe. It is rather sad for me to think that my last opportunity for earning my pay has passed. At least, I have done my best as God gave me the chance."

Patton handed over command of his beloved Third Army to another cavalryman, General Lucian Truscott, on October 7, 1945. It was a wet day, and the ceremony was held, rather inappropriately, inside a gymnasium. Patton made a short farewell speech, which began with the words "All good things must come to an end" and ended with "Goodbye and God bless you." A band then played "Auld Lang Syne," the Third Army flag was handed over, and Patton left to the music of the Third Army march and "He's a Jolly Good Fellow." After a luncheon in his honor, he left in the Third Army train for his new headquarters in Bad Nauheim, 20 miles north of Frankfurt.

One of Patton's last acts before handing over command was to award a Silver Star to his driver of more than four years, Master Sergeant John Mims. The award of a Silver Star to Mims, who was returning to the States for demobilization, is surprising in that this medal was meant to be awarded "for gallantry in action ... not warranting the award of a Medal of Honor or Distinguished Service Cross." Clearly, as a general's driver, even Patton's, Mims had never been in direct contact with the enemy and therefore could hardly have been gallant in action.

One could perhaps be forgiven for suspecting that Patton saw this as an award to himself— the Silver Star was after all conspicuous by its absence among his many decorations. This suspicion is reinforced by a comment in a letter to Beatrice dated November 24: "I finally after a fight of three years got the DSM for all my people, ten in all. I think it is amusing that no one tries to get any [medals] for me. I got nothing for Tunisia, nothing for Sicily and nothing for the Bulge. Brad and Courtney [Hodges] were both decorated for their failures in this operation."

Patton arrived at his new headquarters in the early hours of October 8. He was met by the officer temporarily holding the fort—Maj. Gen. Leven Allen, Bradley's former chief of staff. Patton's opening words were, "Well, you know damn well I didn't ask for this job, don't you?"

General Patton's wife, Beatrice, follows his casket through the train station in Luxembourg City en route to the nearby cemetery in Hamm.

(National Archives)

The headquarters was in an old hotel in Bad Nauheim, and Patton's arrival in the mess for lunch was greeted by some 100 officers standing to attention. In a highly successful attempt to break the ice, Patton's first words were, "There are occasions when I can truthfully say that I am not as much of a son-of-a-bitch as I may think I am. This is one of them."

Allen wrote later: "The relieved staff roared with surprised delight. From then on it was as wholeheartedly for him as the Third Army staff had been." But Patton was not really interested in an Army without weapons or a combat mission and consisting mainly of historians and an administrative staff. He announced that he intended to return to the States by March 1946 at the latest and that he expected all the neces-

sary reports about the European campaign to be finished by then. Even so, he took little serious interest in the work other than to ensure, according to Eisenhower's son John, a lieutenant on the Fifteenth Army staff, that "Patton's Army was mentioned about three times as often as any other"—even though John Eisenhower himself "felt that the First Army had contributed more to victory than had the Third." Few unbiased military historians would disagree with that view.

So what did Patton do with his time? He toured France collecting, according to his aide, enough certificates of honorary citizenship from cities like Avranches, Rennes, and Chartres "to paper the walls of a room," and he had lunch with the unanimously elected president of the provisional French government, Charles De Gaulle, and dinner with the chief of staff of the French Army. Most of his time, however, was spent preparing his book *War As I Knew It*. Part of Douglas Southall Freeman's introduction to *War As I Knew It,* which was published in November 1947, reads: "He undertook this small book after the close of hostilities and he drew heavily from [his] diary for detail. Some pages of the narrative are almost verbatim the text of the diary, with personal references toned down or eliminated."

Although perhaps mentally satisfying, such activities did little for Patton's morale and he soon became moody and tense. General Hobart "Hap" Gay, a loyal friend and his chief of staff, and other members of the staff noticed that he became withdrawn, often taking long drives by himself, having little to say during meals and going home early. One staff officer wrote later: 'It was obvious he was undergoing deep and gnawing turmoil."

Sometime in October, Patton resolved to "quit outright, not retire.... For the years that are left to me I am determined to be free to live as I want and say what I want." This inevitably worried Gay, who surmised, almost certainly correctly, that Patton planned to speak out against Eisenhower's handling of the campaign in Europe and against other senior officers, like Bedell Smith, Hodges, and even Bradley. Gay counseled Patton to consult Beatrice and other family members before taking such a drastic step, but it seems his mind was made up.

On November 11, Patton's 60th birthday, he was thrilled to find his staff had arranged a surprise party. It took the form of a gala evening in the ballroom of the Spa Hotel in Bad Nauheim, and Patton found himself once again surrounded by friends and the center of attention. And then, two weeks later, he was again thrilled to receive an invitation to go to Sweden to address the Swedish-American Society. However, the trip, which involved traveling on a special train once used by German President Paul von Hindenburg, turned out to be much more than just a speaking engagement. Patton was greeted by the chief of staff of the Army and eight former members of the 1912 Olympic pentathlon team and was later received by the king and the crown prince. He also breakfasted with Count Bernadotte and was able to enjoy a specially staged ice carnival and hockey game in the Olympic stadium. The highlight was perhaps a reenactment of the 1912 Olympic pistol competition—Patton came second, "13 points better than I made in 1912."

The Swedish trip was the last highlight of Patton's life. His last diary entry, dated December 3, describes a luncheon hosted by Bedell Smith for Eisenhower's successor, McNarney. His bitterness is very evident: "General Clay [Ike's deputy] ... and General McNarney have never commanded anything, including their own self-respect.... The whole luncheon party reminded me of a meeting of the Rotary Club in Hawaii where everyone slaps everyone else's back while looking for an appropriate place to thrust the knife. I admit I am guilty of this practice, although at the moment I have no appropriate weapon."

Two days later, Patton wrote his last letter to his wife telling her that he was coming home for Christmas. "I have a month's leave but don't intend to go back to Europe. If I get a really good job I will stay, otherwise I will retire." The plan was to fly to London and then sail from Southampton aboard the cruiser USS *Augusta*. The *Augusta* had been the flagship of the Western Task Force in the invasion of Morocco.

On the evening of December 8, Gay suggested to Patton that they should spend the following day pheasant shooting in an area known to be rich in game about 100 miles southwest of the headquarters. Patton accepted with enthusiasm. He could think of no better way to spend his last Sunday in Europe than hunting with an old and trusted friend.

Patton and Gay left Bad Nauheim at about 0900 hours on December 9 in Patton's 1939 Model 75 Cadillac driven by Pfc. Horace Woodring. A jeep driven by Technical Sergeant Joe Spruce followed, carrying the guns and a gun dog. At about 1145 hours, in the northeast suburbs of Mannheim, an oncoming two-and-a-half-ton U.S. Army truck swung across the path of Patton's Cadillac in an attempt to turn into a Quartermaster depot. Woodring was unable to stop in time, and the two vehicles collided at a 90-degree angle, with the right front bumper of the truck smashing the radiator and bumper of the Cadillac.

"I have a month's leave but don't intend to go back to Europe. If I get a really good job I will stay, otherwise I will retire."

Neither driver was injured, and Gay received only slight bruises. Patton, on the other hand, although conscious, was bleeding profusely from head wounds received when he was thrown forward against the steel frame of the glass partition separating the front and rear seats and then backward again into his seat. There were, of course, no seat belts in those days, and whereas Gay and Woodring, having seen the oncoming truck, had braced themselves for the impact, Patton, who had been looking out the side window, had not. He knew he was seriously injured and apparently murmured, "I think I'm paralyzed," and later, "This is a helluva way to die."

The ambulance, which eventually arrived at the scene with two medical officers, took Patton to the 130th Station Hospital in Heidelberg, 15 miles away, where he was admitted at 1245 hours. He was paralyzed from the neck down and suffering from severe traumatic shock; his pulse rate was 45, and he had a blood pressure reading of 86/60. With blood covering his face and scalp from cuts that had gone through to the bone, he was diagnosed as having "a fracture of the third cervical vertebra, with a posterior dislocation of the fourth cervical vertebra." Whether or not the spinal cord had been transected or merely traumatized remained a matter of conjecture.

Patton was put in a crude and extremely painful form of traction that evening, and the U.S. Army Surgeon General in Washington recommended that a British neurosurgeon, Brigadier Hugh Cairns, and an orthopedic surgeon be brought in to assist. A plane was sent to London to fetch them, and after they arrived on the morning of the 10th, they advised some changes that turned out to be equally painful. Fortunately, Patton's condition began to stabilize. After nine days of agony, traction was maintained and the pain eased by encasing Patton's neck and shoulders in a special plaster jacket.

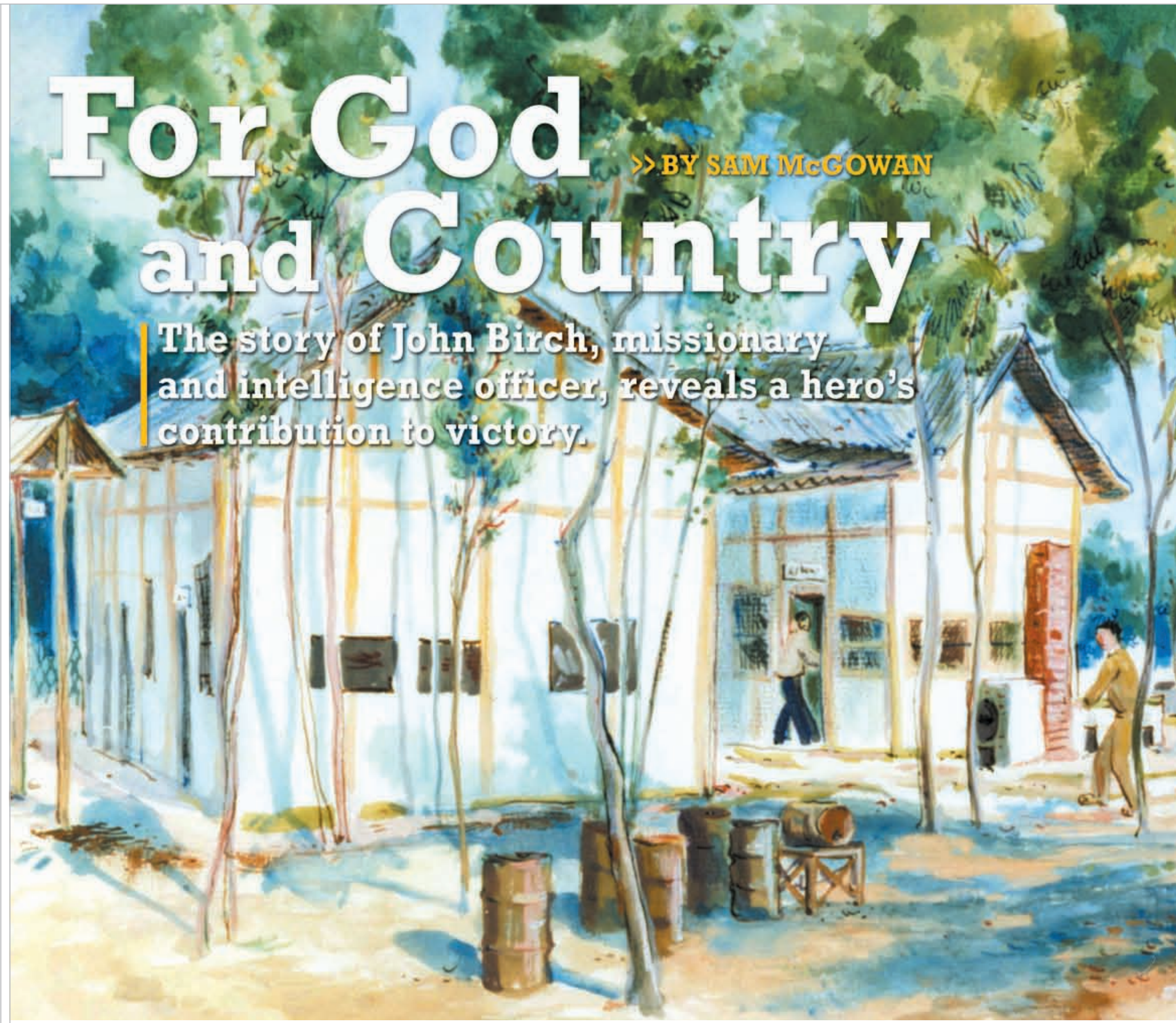
Beatrice and an American neurosurgeon, Colonel Geoffrey Spurling,

Continues on page 89

For God and Country

>> BY SAM McGOWAN

The story of John Birch, missionary and intelligence officer, reveals a hero's contribution to victory.



IN THE 1960S THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY WAS well known to most Americans as a right-wing political organization noted for its anti-communism and conspiracy theories. Yet few knew anything at all about the man whose name the organization bore. Most assumed that John Birch founded the society, and even members of the organization knew only that the real John Birch was a missionary who became an intelligence agent in China and died at the hands of Chinese Communists in the closing days of World War II.

While his death as the "first American soldier killed in the war against communism" was considered heroic by adherents of the society's principles, few knew that Captain John Morrison Birch not only was truly a hero, but that his actions in World War II rival those of the most swashbuckling Hollywood spymaster. Even fewer Christians realize that, even though Birch was an Army Air Forces intelligence officer, he was also a dedicated defender of the faith who continued to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in China even after he had undertaken a new mission serving his country.

John Birch was born on May 28, 1918, in India, where his parents were serving as missionaries. Two years later the family returned to the United States because of his father's ill health, first settling in New Jersey, then moving to Georgia when John was in his early teens. When the family decided to return to the Birch farm near Macon, John and his younger brother went down and cleaned up an abandoned house for the family to live in and planted the fields, which gave him a strong bond with the land and an appreciation for the outdoors.

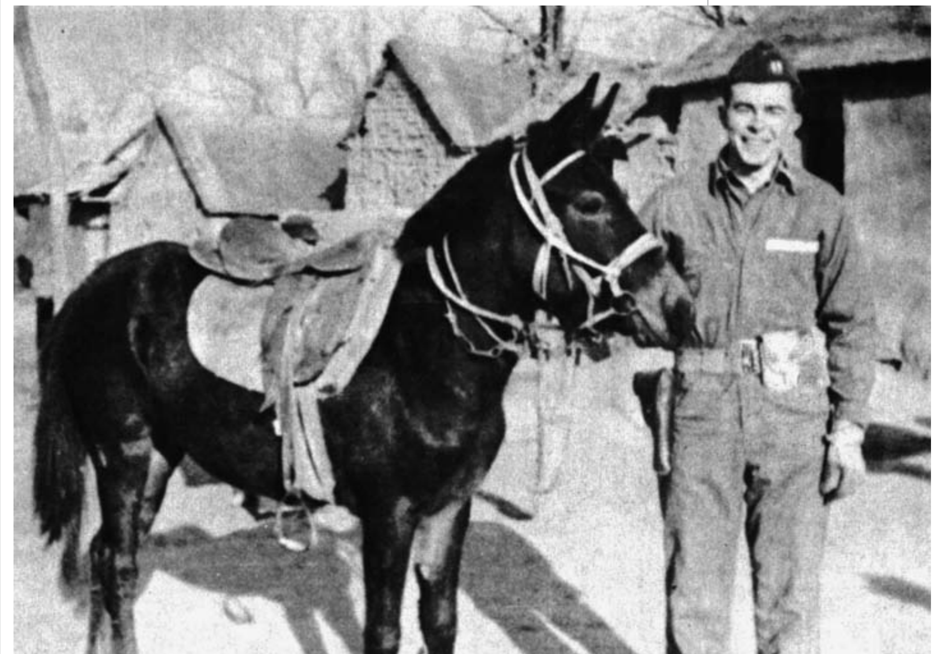
Born with keen intelligence, as a boy John was fascinated with airplanes and aeronautics. After the family moved to rural Georgia, he became interested in radios and designed and built his own set, using the cardboard centers from toilet paper rolls and copper wire to make coils. Raised in a devout Christian home, John was baptized into a Baptist church in New Jersey at the age of seven. His parents had left

Artist John G. Hanlen depicted the rather austere conditions that prevailed at the headquarters of an Allied army in China. John Birch, whose name has become synonymous with an anti-Communist organization in the United States, would have been familiar with such surroundings. (U.S. Army Art Collection)

their Presbyterian church because they believed the denomination had become modernist, and they joined a nearby Baptist congregation. When he was 11, John decided to become a missionary after hearing one describe his adventures in South America. After graduating from high school, John enrolled at Mercer University, a Baptist school in Macon, from which he would graduate first in his class.

Two major events occurred during Birch's years at Mercer. The young man fell under the influence of J. Frank Norris, a legendary and controversial Baptist preacher from Fort Worth, Texas. During a service in Macon, Birch heard Norris tell about the accomplishments of two missionary families in China and how they were praying for a strong young man to come to China to work with them. During the invitation at the conclusion of the service, Birch went forward and told Norris that God was calling him to China and he would go. Shortly afterward, Birch became involved in a campus controversy when he and other members of the ministerial student body brought charges against members of the faculty for teaching things that were contrary to Baptist doctrine. An uproar resulted, and fellow students branded Birch as the vilest person on campus. He was threatened with expulsion but held true to his convictions and refused to go along with demands made by the college dean to cancel a planned city appearance by Norris. The controversy was settled

Recognizing Lieutenant John Birch for his bravery in undertaking hazardous missions behind Japanese lines in China, General Claire Chennault, commander of the U.S. Fourteenth Air Force, pins a medal on the hero's chest.
(Courtesy of the John Birch Society, www.jbs.org)



ABOVE: Lieutenant Colonel and future General Jimmy Doolittle poses with several of his fellow survivors of the famed April 1942 raid on Tokyo. Also pictured is one of the friendly Chinese who risked their lives to shelter the raiders from the vengeful Japanese. TOP: John Birch poses with a Mongolian pony he once rode for 60 miles through a snowstorm over rough terrain in one day. (Top: Courtesy of the John Birch Society, www.jbs.org/Above: National Archives)

when Norris inexplicably canceled the meeting.

True to his word, immediately after his graduation from Mercer, John Birch began the journey to China by enrolling at Norris's Fundamental Baptist Bible Institute in Fort Worth. He completed the two-year seminary course in a year, and in the summer of 1940 set sail for Shanghai, along with another graduate named Oscar Wells. They arrived to find a country in disarray, with thousands of refugees from the country crowding the streets and disease and starvation on every corner. China was literally divided, with Japanese troops occupying much of the central coastal areas, Communists in the northern mountains, and Free China to the west. They were met by Fred Donnelson, who took the two new missionaries to his apartment, where they met the other members of the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship team in China, which consisted of Donnelson and his wife, Effie, an elderly missionary affectionately known as Mother Sweet, and her partner in the mission field, Margaret Fitzgerald.

Birch and Wells enrolled in the Adventist Chinese Language School in Shanghai, where Birch's zeal and intelligence allowed him quickly to gain a working knowledge of the language. He felt called to minister in the distant towns and villages away from Shanghai and the coast. Hangchow was the city that was on his mind, and he finally got the opportunity to visit it when J. Frank Norris's associate, Beauchamp Vick of Detroit Baptist Temple came to China.

John was convinced this was where he should minister and he returned to Hangchow in early 1941. From then on, his ministry was in the inland regions of China as he ventured out from Hangchow to preach in the villages and towns in the surrounding no-man's-land where Chinese guerrillas fought Japanese troops. In August, he was visited by his friend Oscar Wells, who was ministering in Shanghai, where he had met and become engaged to a young female missionary from the Reformed Church. Along with Pastor Du, the Chinese pastor in Hangchow, the two young men set off on a journey to Shangjao, a city in the mountains in Free China almost 200 miles away. Journeying by bicycle and on foot, they slipped through the Japanese lines then made their way westward until they were well into the mountains. As they left Japanese territory, they realized that the food was better and the people happier. When they reached Shangjao, they were directed to the Baptist church and were invited to conduct services that evening. The local Christians were eager to host the missionaries and told Birch that there were many places to the west where they could establish churches. He promised to come back.

Birch made friends with dozens of Chinese pastors during the next few months and established relationships that would later prove beneficial. Many Chinese Christians were involved in the guerrilla movement, while others were members of the Nationalist army. Chiang Kai-shek and his wife, Madame Chiang, were both Christians, and Chiang had written a tract about his belief in Jesus Christ that was passed through the ranks of the army. Birch was more than welcome among the Nationalist troops, and he was encouraged to preach to them. But clouds of war were gathering, and American missionaries were told to get out of the country. Many decided that their place was in China, and even though they knew that if the United States entered the war they would be interned, the Donnelsons, Mother Sweet, the Wellses, and Birch all elected to stay.

In November, John was scheduled to take a language exam in Shanghai, so he journeyed through the Japanese lines to Hangchow and caught the train to the city. He finished the exams on a Friday and left the next day for Shangjao. He arrived in Hangchow and visited some Presbyterian missionaries, who encouraged him to spend the weekend. Birch felt he should be on his way and refused the offer; he told his friends that if he did not appear at breakfast with them the next morning, he would have already slipped through the lines on his way into Free China. The next day was Sunday, December 7, in China and Saturday in the United States. Had Birch accepted the invitation to remain in Hangchow for the weekend, he probably would have been interned by the Japanese. He got word of the attack on Pearl Harbor from Chinese soldiers he met on the road.

Over the next six months, John Birch was a stranger in a foreign land, cut off from his friends, who had been interned by the Japanese, and with little funds. He had some traveler's checks, but the Chinese banks in Shangjao refused to cash them. Still, he continued his ministry, preaching in homes and churches in the mountains around the town. In April 1942, he wrote a letter to the U.S. military mission in Chungking inquiring about the need for someone with his qualifications. His first choice was to be a chaplain, but he offered to do whatever was needed. In the letter he mentioned his knowledge of radio and stressed his ability to withstand physical hardship. Three days later, the Chinese Army cashed his checks and he sent most of the money to his friends through a courier who had made the long journey to inform him that they were interned and in need of funds.

On April 27, John Birch was sitting in an inn in a remote river town when a Chinese man sat down at his table and asked if he was an American. Sensing that he might be watched, Birch silently nodded that he was. The Chinese told him to finish his meal, then follow him, but to be careful that they were not seen. The man led the missionary to a sampan sitting low on the water. He nodded toward the boat and said, "Americans." Birch was incredulous—how could any Americans be out here in the middle of China? As far as he knew, he was the only American within hundreds of miles. He knocked on the door of the cabin and called out, "Any Americans in here?" After a moment of silence, a voice from inside said, "No Japanese could mimic an accent like that," and the door swung open. He looked inside and saw five Americans dressed in military uniforms. The leader stuck out his hand and said, "I'm Jimmy Doolittle. We just bombed Tokyo."

Birch was with Doolittle and his crew for barely 24 hours, but the young missionary made an impression on the veteran pilot. Doolittle told Birch to write down any notes or letters he wanted delivered, and he would take them back to the United States. Birch stayed with the sampan until it reached its destination, then guided Doolittle and his crew to a Chinese Army post at Lanchi. He told the officer in charge who the men were and asked if they had word of any other fliers. The officer asked Birch to inform Doolittle that the Chinese Army was doing everything possible to prevent any of the airmen from falling into Japanese hands. Birch continued on to Shangjao where he found a telegram from the Army telling him to report to the nearest air base at Ch'u Hsein and await further orders.

When he arrived at the airfield, Birch found two other American bomber crews who were badly in need of an interpreter. Birch made arrangements for a flight to take them to Chungking. He received a phone call from a missionary in Yang Kou, who told him that Doolittle had left money and instructions. Another crew arrived as he was preparing to leave to pick up the money. Doolittle had left $2,000 in Chinese money and instructions to arrange for the burial of Corporal Leland Faktor and any others whose bodies might be brought in, to arrange for medical aid, to obtain all information pertaining to survivors, and to serve as an interpreter for crews who came to the field. When the last crew left, Birch was to go with them and report to the U.S. military mission at Chungking. Over the next several days, Birch was able to account for 60 of the Doolittle Raiders. When Birch asked the military commander about purchasing a burial plot, the Chinese said he would not sell it to him but would give it for a hundred years or as long as needed. The Chinese also paid for the coffin and the cost of the marker. Birch conducted a memorial service for Faktor with 13 Doolittle Raiders present, then two weeks later conducted a graveside service.

Men of the U.S. Fourteenth Air Force attend Sunday church services at their base in China. John Birch was initially drawn to the Asian mainland as a Christian missionary. (National Archives)

Birch did not make it out on the last plane; instead he made his way to Kweilin by truck, on foot, and by train looking for Claire Chennault, who he had been told was there at his forward operating base. He found the American Volunteer Group (AVG) commander in his operations cave on the side of a mountain. When he introduced himself, Chennault revealed that Jimmy Doolittle had spoken of him and the aid he had provided to the members of the mission to bomb Japan. Birch replied that he wanted to be a chaplain, and Chennault asked which denomination. When Birch said he was a fundamental Baptist, Chennault replied that he was a Baptist himself, a member of a congregation in Louisiana.

Birch told Chennault that he wanted "to serve God and my country." Chennault said he already had one chaplain but might be able to make him an assistant. Birch asked Chennault for a ride to Chungking and was told to meet him at the airport. Birch was there at the appointed hour, and he climbed aboard the airplane with Chennault himself at the controls. When they landed, Chennault took the young missionary to Hostel A, where he and his pilots stayed, and arranged for a room.

Birch arrived in Chungking in late May, at a time when the U.S. military role in China was developing. Although he held the rank of general in the Chinese air force, Chennault had yet to be brought back into the United States Army, from which he had retired a few years previously. After seeing that the young missionary had a place to stay, Chennault turned him over to a U.S. Army officer for a debriefing on his activities with the Doolittle Raiders.

It was at this point that Birch detected an air of superiority among the Americans, an attitude that directly affected the conduct of the war in China. When Birch turned in the $2,000 Doolittle had left for him and related that the Chinese Air Force had paid the costs of the burials, the debriefing officer was incredulous. Birch had grown to love the Chinese and was offended when the American commented, "All of the Chinese we've dealt with have their hand out." Such an attitude was common

among the Americans who made up the China military mission. Birch was soon to learn that many Americans, including their commander, Lt. Gen. Joseph Stilwell, preferred Mao Tse-tung's Communists over Chiang's Nationalists. Birch could not believe his eyes when he visited the American Office of War Information and found a pamphlet praising Mao's revolutionaries.

Birch also learned that most of Chennault's AVG men would soon be leaving. With the exception of a few who agreed to accept induction into the U.S. Army, most refused to serve under Colonel Clayton Bissell, the U.S. Army officer who replaced Lt. Gen. Lewis Brereton as commander of Tenth Air Force in India and whom General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold had picked to command U.S. air operations in the theater. The pilots and mechanics of the AVG were all former military personnel who had been recruited from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, and the former naval aviators were particularly turned off when they were told they would become part of the Army instead of returning to their previous branches of service.

When Birch arrived in Chungking, the transition to the Army was still a few weeks in the future, so he decided to delay his entry. As an ordained minister, he was exempt from the draft and could not be inducted. His impression of Chennault had been highly favorable, and he decided he would prefer to serve directly under him. The admiration was a two-way street; Chennault had been equally impressed with the young missionary, and while he was willing to let him go through the motions of applying for an appointment as a chaplain, he realized he could be far more important in another role.

Over the next few weeks, Chennault and Birch were frequently together. On an occasion when Chennault invited him to ride into town, he brought up a new subject. He told Birch he had a need for field intelligence officers with experience in China, men who had lived there before the war, spoke the language, and were familiar with Chinese customs. He told Birch how important the work would be to the winning of the war and that it would be extremely dangerous. The punch line was when he told the young missionary that he would be free to preach on Sundays if he chose to accept a commission as an intelligence officer. There was one thing Chennault wanted, and that was total commitment. He told Birch that if he decided to accept the job, he would give him an immediate field commission. Birch said he would pray about it.

On July 4, Birch attended a barbecue hosted by the first lady of China, Madame Chiang (formerly Soong) herself, and General Chennault, held at the home of the Chinese president, Lin Sen. Birch was surprised to get an engraved invitation. Madame Chiang's sister, the widow of the founder of the Chinese Republic, Sun Yat Sen, was also present. When Birch came through the receiving line, Chennault introduced him to the Soong sisters as "a missionary who helped General Doolittle and his flyers." Birch and the Soongs had something in common; the sisters' father was a Methodist minister, and as young women they had attended Wesleyan College in Macon. They were thrilled to learn that Birch was from Macon and greeted him warmly.

Another member of Chennault's entourage was also from Macon. Colonel Robert L. Scott, who would take command of the 23rd Fighter Group, was a Macon native. Although the two knew each other—Birch was part of the 23rd Fighter Group—the young missionary was not the inspiration for the title of Scott's famous book, *God Is My Copilot*. The title came from a comment made by another missionary, Dr. Fred Manget, who treated Scott for minor shrapnel wounds.

On July 5 at breakfast, Chennault again approached Birch about becoming an intelligence officer. Birch told Chennault that he thought he knew what the delay was; although he met most of the requirements for being a chaplain, J. Frank Norris's school was not accredited, and graduation from an accredited seminary was a requirement. The senior chaplain in Chungking had told Birch he would request a waiver, but no word had come down. Chennault told Birch he could accept a commission as an intelligence officer and transfer to the chaplaincy later if an appointment came through. The concession excited Birch, who immediately accepted. Chennault had the paperwork drawn up and commissioned John M. Birch as a second lieutenant assigned to the 23rd Fighter Group as the group intelligence officer.

ABOVE: A bomb hit on a Japanese patrol boat is recorded by a photographer aboard an American aircraft. During the same mission in which they sank this vessel off the Shantung Peninsula, pilots of the U.S. Fourteenth Air Force destroyed 45 Japanese planes on the ground and damaged 55 others. TOP: Major General Clayton Bissell (left), commander of the U.S. Tenth Air Force, and Major General Claire Chennault (right) were bitter rivals. This meeting at Tenth Air Force headquarters in Delhi, India, was strained. (Both National Archives)

Although he had been commissioned as an intelligence officer, Birch volunteered to assist Chennault's chaplain, Paul Frillman, another missionary who had joined Chennault's staff in the Chinese Air Force and had come into the U.S. Army as a chaplain. Frillman would later become an intelligence officer himself. Frillman was Lutheran while Birch was a fundamental Baptist, and although there was disagreement between the two over issues of personal conduct, Frillman made Birch his assistant and assigned him to preach at Sunday services when he was absent and to orient new personnel to the theater.

Birch was still focused on becoming a chaplain, and when he learned that the chief of chaplains for the CBI was coming to Chungking, he requested that his file be reviewed. The request was approved. When he went to tell Chennault the good news, the Old Man told Birch he wanted him to go on a mission for him. Birch agreed, under the condition that if the appointment came through, he would be allowed to transfer. Chennault countered by asking Birch whether he would remain as his intelligence officer if the appointment did not come through. Birch said he would, and the two shook hands.

Birch's mission was to journey into southeastern China to inspect clandestine airfields that Chennault had ordered built two years previous and had stocked with gasoline and ammunition. Chennault wanted to know the condition of the airfields and supplies so he would be able to use them as forward airfields if the need arose. Birch and a Chinese soldier named M.L. Wang left on the mission in mid-September. It was the first of many long treks into contested territory. They took only what they could carry. Birch also carried maps, a list of contacts, and a

roll of gospel tracts written in Chinese to pass out along the way. They covered more than 1,000 miles on the two-month journey, traveling by land, water, and air. When they were in Japanese-controlled territory, they moved by night. Birch's contacts, many of whom were Chinese Christians, allowed them to sleep in their homes, and on Sundays he was usually offered the opportunity to preach in homes and local churches.

Birch and Wang inspected the airstrips and asked the contacts to show them the supply caches, which had been ingeniously concealed. Gasoline cans and ammunition boxes were buried under pagodas, hidden in corn cribs, suspended on ropes in wells, hidden in caves, and buried underground. Birch was pleased to discover that local villagers had kept the airstrips in good condition. When they returned, Chennault read Birch's report and immediately wrote a letter of commendation for his personnel file and recommended that he be promoted. It was the first of several recommendations for Birch's promotion made by Chennault, along with recommendations for decorations, but the convoluted command structure in the CBI required that they be approved by Tenth Air Force Commander Clayton Bissell, who was quick to disapprove just about any recommendation Chennault made.

ABOVE: Questioning a local villager as to their position, members of Y Force stop in a remote Chinese village for the night. Utilizing a map, they attempt to orient themselves during their foray into northern Burma and work to establish radio communications. RIGHT: Laden with Chinese commandos, sampans make their way down the Liu River en route to attack Japanese positions in the hills near Tanchuk. Following the defeat of the Japanese, the Communist and Nationalist factions in China renewed their civil war. (Both National Archives)

The command arrangement in the CBI caused many problems. Although the War Department apparently originally saw China as a base for an aerial bombing offensive against the Japanese home islands, the Japanese victory in Burma and the offensive in China in the wake of the Doolittle Raid caused the theater to lose its importance. General Stilwell went to China as the senior American officer, but he had little regard for Chiang and the Nationalists and was focused entirely on avenging his defeat in Burma. Stilwell and nearly everyone else in any position of authority were jealous of Chennault's relationship with Chiang and the military successes of his shoestring forces in the Chinese interior.

Hap Arnold hated Chennault and had been forced by the White House to accept him as the senior air officer in China. He had seen to it that Chennault's authority was diminished by making him subordinate to Bissell. He wrote the orders promoting both of them to brigadier general so that Bissell outranked Chennault by one day. He also placed Chennault's China Air Task Force (CATF) under Bissell's Tenth Air Force and required that Chennault go through Bissell with every request. Birch's family would learn after the war that he had been recommended for every combat decoration up to and including the Medal of Honor, but the recommendations were all mishandled except for the Legion of Merit and Distinguished Service Medal. Bissell and his staff disapproved most of the recommendations for decorations submitted from China on the basis that the men were "just doing their duty." The attitude led to great resentment against Bissell and his staff, who were safe in offices in Delhi.

Birch learned that no authorization for him to become a chaplain had come through, so he accepted the position as Chennault's intelligence officer. Chennault told him that he was his "intelligence department" and would answer directly to his command. Birch's office was a shack a few yards from Chennault's headquarters. His first duties were to make corrections to aerial maps and debrief pilots returning from missions. He would be in charge of all intelligence, no matter from what source. A few weeks later he discovered that Bissell had decided to take over the intelligence department as well, without consulting with Chennault.

On December 10 two officers arrived at Kweiling, where Bissell had ordered Chennault to relocate his headquarters, and informed Chennault that they had been sent by Bissell to become his chief intelligence

officer and assistant. After his initial meeting with the two officers, Chennault ignored them for more than a week. He told them that he did not appreciate Bissell picking his staff and that he already had an intelligence man, Lieutenant John Birch.

The two officers were actually well qualified and did not appreciate being caught in the middle in the war between Bissell and Chennault. Lt. Col. Jesse Williams had been in Shanghai for 18 years as an oil company executive, while Captain Wilfred Smith was the son of missionaries and had studied oriental history at the University of Michigan. Neither had the kind of experience Birch did, but they were well qualified to serve as intelligence officers in China. They finally decided to ignore Chennault and go to work. They went to Birch's office and told them who they were. It was an uncomfortable moment as Birch answered directly to Chennault on his order, and he commented to the two officers that Bissell was not too popular in that part of the world. Yet, he recognized that they were superior officers and told them to pull up a chair and he would show them what he was doing. The three men got along well together and soon all were laughing over the feud between the two generals.

Lieutenant John Birch (second from left) and a pair of fellow Americans pose with officers of the Chinese Army. Birch risked his life on several occasions, establishing communications and gathering vital intelligence on Japanese positions. (Courtesy of the John Birch Society, www.jbs.org)

Although he was an intelligence officer, Birch still had the opportunity to preach. He was amazed to discover that the American military personnel responded to him better than they did to the chaplain. The young soldiers and airmen realized that Birch did not have to be in the Army because as a member of the clergy he was exempt from the draft, yet he was undertaking dangerous assignments far from friendly lines. He had thought that he could best serve God as a chaplain but discovered that he was more effective in the spiritual role in a different status. He was also able to continue ministering to Chinese Christians when he went out on intelligence-gathering missions in the countryside.

In early 1943, Chennault was finally promised reinforcements. He went to Williams and Smith and told them he needed intelligence from the coast. He wanted his own intelligence network in China so he would not have to rely on Stilwell's headquarters, which usually was a week or more late in passing on reports that would have been important to mission planning if they had been more timely. When Smith commented that they were not the Office of Strategic Services and did not have the resources for such a program, Chennault responded that they had John Birch. He told them to send Birch out with some radios on a mission to set up a network of reliable Chinese agents who would pass intelligence regarding Japanese shipping back to him. Chennault realized that Japanese supply routes to Formosa were just off the coast and believed that his CATF could interdict shipping. When Smith informed Birch of the mission, Birch only had one question—could he preach in Chinese churches on Sunday? Smith responded that he could preach on Monday if he wanted, as long as he got the job done.

Birch left Kweiling and flew to the CATF's easternmost airfield, from which he set out on foot. He hired a coolie to assist him with his cargo of radios and prepared to trek to his first destination in Fukien Province. He would have to cover more than 300 miles in Japanese-controlled territory, so he decided to disguise himself as Chinese. He dyed his brown hair black, then donned traditional Chinese peasant garb and put on sandals. His initial trek was over mountains, and as he climbed he taught the coolie an old children's spiritual, "Climbing Jacob's Ladder."

After they descended the mountains and reached a river, Birch sent the coolie back home and obtained a sampan from a guerrilla. He repeated the process of using a coolie when trekking overland and sampans on rivers when he could, a system that allowed him to average nearly 40 miles a day. He kept in touch with Smith by radio. He frequently encountered Chinese Christians who were incredulous to see a missionary so deep inside Japanese territory, and he preached to several congregations as he came across them on his way to the coast. On one occasion he and his coolie hid their cargo in a dung pot and carried it through a Japanese checkpoint as the guards held their noses and turned away.

When he reached a village near the coast, Birch sought out a Christian he had been told to contact. The man took him to the leaders of the local church, where Birch explained his mission and told them he needed two fishermen who were "willing to risk their lives for China." One of the deacons said he was a fisherman and that he had a friend who would help. Birch interrogated the two men to be sure they were dedicated to defeating the Japanese and then showed them how to work the radios. He also promised them $10 a month apiece to cover their expenses and compensate them for their time away from their livelihood. He gave them a radio and a codebook that was set up so they could translate their messages into English.

Birch devised his own system of mixing up the pages to confuse the Japanese who monitored the transmissions. Meanwhile, Captain Smith had set up monitoring/relay stations in Free China to pick up the messages from the coast and pass them along to his headquarters. By the time Birch returned to Free China, Smith was receiving as many as 50 messages a day.

The intelligence was priceless. The coast watchers transmitted reports of ship sightings that were relayed to CATF. Chennault set up a Teletype system at his main base to pass along mission orders to his dispersed bases. In some instances, CATF aircraft were in the air on their way to intercept Japanese ships within 10 minutes after the coast watcher transmitted the report. Some ships were attacked less than an hour after they were reported. Smith also compiled a daily report that was transmitted to Navy personnel at Stilwell's headquarters in Chungking, which then transmitted the information to U.S. Navy submarines and ships oper-

ating in the China Sea. Chennault was elated at the quality of the intelligence and recommended Birch's promotion to first lieutenant for the third time.

Although Arnold still considered him a crackpot, in early 1943 Chennault was allowed to break out from under Tenth Air Force control as the CATF became the Fourteenth Air Force. Chennault's staff members were elevated in rank, and John Birch was promoted to first lieutenant while his immediate superior, Captain Smith, jumped two ranks to become a lieutenant colonel. Chennault was promised a force of 500 planes, and Stilwell was ordered to transfer control of the Hump airlift from Bissell to Chennault. Stilwell refused.

In the spring of 1943, Japan launched a new Chinese offensive, and Smith sent Birch to serve as a liaison between Fourteenth Air Force and Chinese Marshal Hsueh Yo's army on the Yangtze River. Birch's mission was to set up air support for the Chinese ground forces. He would seek out targets and guide air strikes in on them and set up a rescue network to retrieve downed airmen. It was a pioneer effort, and Smith and the Fourteenth Air Force staff hoped to establish tactics for a larger effort with new agents who would be trained to take his place.

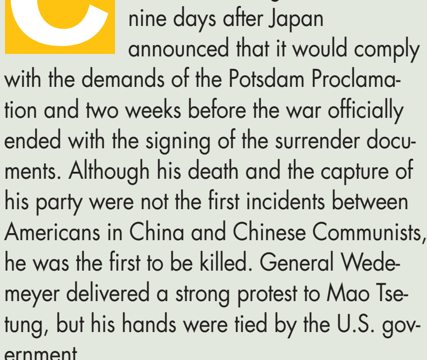
Birch went by train and sampan to Changsha, where Yo had his headquarters. After familiarizing himself with the area, he set out with a team of Chinese soldiers on a 300-mile hike to the front lines, where he was turned over to guerrillas who took him deep inside Japanese territory. Once again, he disguised himself as a coolie. He and Smith had worked out a plan under which Birch would mark targets with white cloth panels pointing in the direction of the target. His first target was a pagoda that had been converted into an ammunition dump.

A Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk fighter came in for a strafing run that set off the ammunition. Then Birch directed the fighter onto a Japanese artillery piece. He and his guerrillas slipped back into the forest and crawled on their bellies in the darkness of night to locate their next target, a fuel dump at a Japanese camp. Early the next morning a pair of Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers hit the dump, causing fires that spread through the camp. Birch remained at the front for more than a month, calling in air strikes that enabled the Chinese troops to drive the Japanese back into their previous positions.

In mid-1943, Birch was summoned back to Kunming, where he was to take part in the commissioning of a new batch of intelligence agents, including his friend Arthur Hopkins, who had served briefly with him the year before, and Chennault's former chaplain, Paul Frillman. Birch briefed the men on his experiences, and Williams pointed out that he was the first U.S. agent to live and work with Chinese troops. The commissioning of the new agents gave Birch the opportunity to ask Chennault for permission to apply for pilot training. He had been interested in aviation since childhood, and seeing the Fourteenth Air Force fighters and bombers in action at close range had rekindled his interest. Chennault agreed to pass the application forward but would later tell Birch that he was more valuable to him in his present capacity than 10 pilots would have been.

Birch's next mission was to set up a network of agents along the Yangtze to keep watch on river shipping. Arthur Hopkins and Sergeant Leroy Eichenberry would assume his previous role with Marshall Yo. They would fly together to Changsha. Then, Birch was to continue northward to contact General Heuen Yoh, commander of the Second Guerrilla Brigade. Birch remained in Changsha for a few days before

The details John Birch's death were withheld for some time.



Captain John Birch's death occurred on August 25, 1945, nine days after Japan announced that it would comply with the demands of the Potsdam Proclamation and two weeks before the war officially ended with the signing of the surrender documents. Although his death and the capture of his party were not the first incidents between Americans in China and Chinese Communists, he was the first to be killed. General Wedemeyer delivered a strong protest to Mao Tse-tung, but his hands were tied by the U.S. government.

An investigation into the death, which included testimony from Lieutenant Tung, was conducted, but the results and John Birch's military file were classified Top Secret. His family was told that he had been killed by a stray bullet and that he was not entitled to a Purple Heart. His mother found out the truth by accident, when she visited OSS headquarters in Washington a few months later and caught a glimpse of a note on her son's file that read "Killed by Communists." She began a long quest to find out what had really happened to her son.

In 1950, Mrs. Birch convinced California Senator William F. Knowland, a former officer who had served in Europe, to obtain the file. Knowland, a strong critic of the Truman administration's Asia policies, was incensed by what he saw. Claire Chennault's memoir had been published the year before. In it he devoted several pages to Birch and recounted how he had been killed by Communists. Birch's file confirmed the rumors. On September 5, 1950, two months after the outbreak of the Korean War, Knowland made a speech before the Senate, describing how Birch had been killed by Chinese Communists and his death classified at the highest level. When Robert Welch, a wealthy industrialist, decided to establish an anti-Communist organization, he got permission from the Birch family to name it after John.

By the 1960s John Birch's name had become associated with the John Birch Society, and critics of the organization sought to discredit not only the organization but also the man for whom it had been named. Although Jim Hart, an OSS veteran who served with Birch, attempted to publish a biography of Birch, only two installments appeared in print in *SAGA* magazine. Birch's file was finally declassified and given to a journalism professor in Washington under the Freedom of Information Act; he then passed it to a leftist named Wesley McCune. McCune, who was a critic of the John Birch Society, concluded that Birch had brought on his own death, provoking a strong response from the Birch family and Birch's associates from China.

Birch is occasionally mentioned within fundamentalist Baptist circles of which he was a part, but only one book has been published about his life. Although his name is well known, few know who he really was or the important and heroic role he played in the war in China, both as an intelligence officer and in his calling as a Baptist missionary.

There is a footnote to the life of John Birch. When Chinese society opened somewhat in the 1990s, the world learned that Christianity still flourished in rural China in spite of Communist efforts to stifle it. Seeds planted by the young missionary had sprouted and grown into huge trees.□

continuing his journey to visit members of the China Inland Mission and deliver supplies he had brought for them. Accompanied by two Chinese radio operators and a team of coolies, he then set off on a 10-day trek in scorching heat through swamps and over hills to link up with General Yoh. The guerrillas planned a route for Birch and his two radio operators down the Yangtze in a series of junks. Once again, Birch set up a system for rescuing downed airmen. While on the Yangtze, he learned that the Japanese were drawing considerable material from the iron mines at Shihweiayo and arranged an air strike against them.

Birch's determination was revealed when he got wind of an ammunition dump at Hangkow that had been established in a former residential area. He infiltrated through Japanese positions and located the dump, then radioed directions back to the Fourteenth Air Force. The area was too congested to risk laying his customary white panels, and when the formation of bombers came over, the crews were unable to identify the target. Birch then made his way back to a remote landing strip where he was picked up by a light airplane and flown to the bomber base. He went up in the nose of the lead airplane and pointed out the target to the bombardier. The first bombs set off the dump, and the series of explosions spread through the Japanese camps. Guerrillas operating in the area reported that bodies of dead Japanese were hauled away by the truckload.

Keeping a sharp lookout for movement by the Japanese enemy, Chinese soldiers have taken cover in deep and lengthy trenches just beyond the Burmese frontier.
(National Archives)

In the spring of 1944, Birch went on "a trip," as he called his missions, to the plains of the Yellow River. There he found huge numbers of Japanese troops massing for an offensive. Riding on horseback, he set out to locate the enemy lines of supply. Birch saw thousands of Japanese marching southward from northern China. He wondered why Mao's Communists had made no attempt to stop them. After setting up observation teams to keep watch on the railroad, he boarded a sampan for the journey down a tributary of the Yangtze to Lao Ho Kow, where he was to link up with two other members of the intelligence team.

On May 17, Birch joined Lieutenant William Drummond and Sergeant Eichenberry, then set out with them to search for a place to set up an intelligence base before proceeding north to Shantung Province to establish a network of Chinese agents. As they proceeded northward, they came into an almond-shaped valley on the Yellow River, which had been bypassed by the Japanese. An army of 100,000 Chinese soldiers had been cut off in the valley for over a year. Birch immediately recognized the 100-mile-long valley as a natural location for a forward base, with a radio station and secret airfields at each end. Birch visualized the airfields being used as emergency landing strips for airplanes returning from missions to the north and as refueling stops for bombers and fighters going on missions into Manchuria—and perhaps even Japan. They could also serve as gathering points for downed aircrews to be picked up by Fourteenth Air Force transports.

Birch radioed his headquarters for approval, then explained his idea to the Chinese general in command of the troops and received permission to go ahead. After setting up the radio station, Birch took a squad of Chinese soldiers looking for sites for airstrips. Relying on experience gained during a summer in which he measured cotton in Georgia, he laid out a 3,500-foot runway himself. Thousands of Chinese soldiers worked with picks and shovels to level out a dry streambed and then packed the runway with sand and gravel. With the airstrip complete, they constructed a small terminal and radio shack nearby. A second strip was laid out in a pasture. The first airplane into the valley came to evacuate Sergeant Eichenberry, who had come down with cholera. The two airfields were constructed entirely by Chinese military personnel and without any assistance whatsoever from U.S. sources other than Birch's supervision. They had not cost the U.S. Army one thin dime.

John Birch also suffered from serious medical maladies, particularly malaria, the same disease that had forced his father to leave India. In early August, he was picked up at one of the secret airfields and flown to Kunming to be decorated with the Legion of Merit.

Recognizing that Birch was ill and tired, Chennault told him to take a 60-day furlough and go home for a rest. Birch refused, telling his commanding general that he did not want to take up a slot that some other soldier could use. Birch was true to his word when it came to furlough. He never took leave the entire time he served in China, not even to visit a young Scottish Red Cross worker he met in China, but who transferred to India shortly after they met. Birch proposed marriage to the girl, but then retracted the proposal when he realized that his postwar plans were to take the gospel into either Tibet or Turkestan, remote areas that would make life rough on a woman. The woman remained single for the rest of her life.

A Japanese offensive in mid-1944 cost the Allies considerable territory in eastern China, a defeat that Chennault and many others blamed on Stilwell's obsession with Burma and neglect of China. Stilwell's days in China were numbered, although he attempted to gain complete control over the theater. He is believed to have drafted a plan giving him command of all the Chinese armies and sent it to Washington, where it was presented to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. When a message came back ordering Chiang to turn command over to Stilwell, "Vinegar Joe" made the mistake of delivering the message himself—"to break the Peanut's face" as he expressed his feelings in his diary. The plan backfired. Although Chiang had been willing to relinquish command, Stilwell's arrogance not only caused him to change his mind, but he also wired Washington that he was through with Stilwell and demanded that he be replaced.

The arrival of General Albert C. Wedemeyer brought about a change

in the fortunes of the Fourteenth Air Force. Chennault began receiving support that Stilwell had withheld, and Fourteenth Air Force returned to offensive operations throughout the country, striking targets in northern China and south into Indochina. Chennault supported Birch's plan to use the new base on the Yellow River for intelligence operations in north China and ordered the delivery of supplies to the airfield at Anhwei.

Birch returned to duty and went north with the supplies. Shortly after he got there, he took a squad of Chinese soldiers and radios and headed further north. As was his practice, he carried a New Testament and a supply of gospel tracts. He was gone for two weeks. In early November, the effort paid off. One of the new agents radioed that he had discovered the crew of a Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber, who had bailed out of their airplane six months before and had been hiding in the mountains. Guerrillas brought the men to the new base, and they were flown out in a C-47. On the day the transport came, an intense thunderstorm struck the valley and the airplane arrived in the middle of a heavy downpour. Birch ran out to the radio shack and got a bearing on the airplane, then talked the pilot in for a landing in nearly zero visibility.

Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, overall Allied commander in China and chief of staff to Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai-shek, chats with the Generalissimo. Under Wedemeyer's command, General Claire Chennault and the Fourteenth Air Force assumed a renewed offensive posture. (National Archives)

In early 1945, Birch arranged the evacuation of a number of missionaries who had been ministering in northern China. Mostly elderly, they were American, British, and Dutch who had ministered in rural towns that had been bypassed by the Japanese. As the war intensified, they began to fear for their lives. Some of those in the Anhwei area got wind of Birch's base and sent word through guerrillas that they wanted to be rescued. Birch advised them to come out of the mountains and that he would evacuate them somehow. Several stranded airmen were also in the valley waiting for a plane.

In late December, the missionaries began arriving. Birch called Kunming but learned that Colonel Smith had been called back to the United States for an urgent meeting. No one else in Kunming was sympathetic to the missionaries' plight. Birch was told that they were not running an airline for missionaries. There were not enough downed airmen to justify sending a transport, and even when Birch sent word that they were running out of supplies, he was told he would have to wait.

Birch finally got Kunming's attention when he told them that he had a bag of sensitive intelligence that needed to be sent back. He was finally promised that an airplane would arrive when the weather broke. Birch rode a pony the 50 miles to the airstrip and discovered a snow-covered runway. He went to General Wang, the Chinese commander, and told him he needed men with shovels. Wang asked how many, and Birch said about 800 would do. The Chinese soldiers quickly cleared the runway, and the plane came in and picked up the stranded airmen and all but one of the missionaries, who had to wait for another month. The pilot gave Birch what he considered to be distressing news. Birch and his men were going to be transferred to the OSS, which was why Colonel Smith had been called to Washington.

This was something Birch had feared. A planeload of OSS colonels and majors had arrived at Kunming before he left and started throwing their weight around. A few days after the pilot told him of the rumor of the impending transfer, Birch received a message sent under Chennault's name that he and the other Fourteenth Air Force intelligence men would be transferring to the OSS and that the move would be beneficial for them. Birch was not buying it. He was convinced that the OSS would cause nothing but problems and that they would mess up the entire intelligence program he and the agents who followed him had been working for years to set up and maintain. He sent a return message in which he said he would rather be a Fourteenth Air Force buck private than a full colonel in the OSS and have access to Wild Bill Donovan's slush fund, knowing that the message would be intercepted and read by every OSS man in China.

Birch's opinion of the OSS changed when Lieutenant Bill Miller, a recent West Point graduate, came to visit him at Ankang where he had been hospitalized during another bout with malaria. The young officer told Birch that he was famous in the OSS and that everyone back in Washington had heard about him. Birch replied that it was probably because of the message he had sent. Miller confirmed that he knew about it but that Birch was widely respected for the magnificent job he had been doing in China for the past three years. He told Birch that he had been assigned as an escape and evasion agent to the airfield at Foyuang about 50 miles from Birch's base at Linchuan. Deciding he liked Miller, Birch offered to help him all he could.

When Smith returned from Washington, he brought Birch back to Kunming to attempt to talk him into accepting the transfer to the OSS. Birch was adamant in his refusal and insisted on remaining with the Fourteenth Air Force. Smith was not surprised. The rest of his staff had also been opposed to the transfer, but he had managed to talk all of them into accepting it. All, that is, except Birch. Chennault himself joined in the effort to convince Birch to accept the transfer, but the officer, who had been promoted to captain, remained obstinate. They finally worked out a compromise. Birch would work for and with the OSS but would remain on the Fourteenth Air Force roster. Chennault attempted once again to convince him to take a furlough in India, and Birch was tempted since it would offer him an opportunity to spend time with his former fiancée. Birch told Chennault that the war was almost over, and he intended to stay until "the last Jap is out of China."

Birch was now a captain, and the Chinese had given him a name, Bey Shang We, which literally meant Birch Captain. Although his activities were classified, John Birch was well known throughout China, especially

among the Chinese military and the Christian community. He was also known to the Communists, who occupied a mountainous region in northern China and had done very little to oppose the Japanese. Birch was a strong anti-Communist and had been before he came to China. When he got there, he learned from the veteran missionaries that the Communists were considered to be more of a menace than the Japanese.

After three years in China, Birch had come to believe that Mao and his Communists were merely waiting for the Allies to defeat the Japanese, and were depending on combat to wear down the Nationalist forces so that they would be unable to resist a Communist takeover after the war. Birch was not one who kept his views to himself and frequently admonished his friends and associates of what he believed were Communist intentions—to take over China, then move into Korea.

Birch had been in the war since the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, first as a missionary wandering through remote regions and existing on starvation rations, then as an intelligence officer operating in enemy territory. He was emotionally if not physiclly worn out, and was tired of the war. He also felt that he, like Chennault, was being shoved aside. He had discovered the Anhwei pocket and set up operations there, but now there were three bases in the area he had pioneered and he had been made subordinate to an OSS major. When he got word that his family was thinking about selling the farm he had worked so hard to establish, he became even more morose. He wrote an essay reflecting his emotions entitled "The War Weary Farmer."

Birch's intelligence network brought news of Communist activities in northern China and Manchuria. Chinese Communist troops were occupying territory that had been abandoned by the Japanese, who were in full retreat now that the end of the war was near. Communists in Henan Province tore up dikes that held back the Yellow River, causing flooding in the Anhwei pocket that destroyed what had promised to be a bumper crop. Birch was at his base at Linchuan when he got word of the detonation of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima. He also received orders telling him to make preparations to move north into Japanese territory to accept the surrender of Japanese garrisons.

Immediately after the Japanese surrender announcement, Mao's Communists came out of the hills where they had been hiding and moved into Japanese territory as quickly as possible before American and Nationalist forces could come in. Their intention was to capture arms and ammunition and disrupt Allied lines of communications. General Wedemeyer ordered OSS offices in China to make plans to get their agents to Japanese installations as quickly as possible to make arrangements for surrender to the proper authorities. Birch and his friend Bill Miller were ordered to Süchow. Miller made plans to go by junk and suggested that Birch and his party go with him, but Birch replied that it was too risky and that he hoped to get a plane. The two talked openly in their regular morning radio conversation since the war was over and they felt no need to speak in code.

The plane did not come through so Birch made plans to hike overland to Kweiteh and catch the east train on the Lunghai railroad. His friend and fellow agent Captain Jim Hart warned him that the Communists might already be in control of the railroad and suggested he go with Miller instead. Hart later reported that Birch went into a tirade about how the Antichrist would soon take control of the world and that Communists were his servants.

The following morning Birch and his party departed. Three other Americans—Lieutenant Laird Ogle, Sergeant Albert Meyers, and Albert Grimes, a civilian OSS operative—five Chinese officers, and two Japanese-speaking Koreans along with Birch made up the party. One of the Chinese, Lieutenant Tung Fu Kuan, was assigned as Birch's aide. When they arrived at Kweiteh, they were joined by two Chinese who had collaborated with the Japanese, a general and his orderly. The general was to escort them to his counterpart in Süchow, where they would accept the Japanese surrender. A Japanese officer received the party at Kweiteh and assured them they would be well received at Süchow, but that there were Communist guerrillas along the railroad to the east.

Forty-five miles down the railroad the train halted at the station at Tangshan. The Japanese stationmaster informed the Korean interpreters that the railroad had been sabotaged up the line and that Communists, Japanese, and Chinese puppet troops were fighting in the area. The train was going to remain in the town until the rails had been repaired and the fighting ended. Birch and his party discussed their options. Ogle proposed that the four Americans go on alone. Birch decided they would all go and commandeered the locomotive and a baggage car. After only 10 miles, the locomotive came to a halt when the engineer saw that the rails ahead had been removed. Ogle and Birch went into a village to hire coolies but learned that Communists had come in the night before and killed most of the men. A Japanese work crew arrived with new rails. Birch commandeered the handcar and told the Japanese commander to have his men move it over the break.

After spending the night in a village about a mile down the tracks, Birch and his party got under way again early the next morning, with each man taking turns pumping the handcar in the hot China sun. Sometime before noon they ran into a group of about 300 Communists, all carrying arms. The Americans and Chinese were all in uniform, and Birch wore the well-known Flying Tiger insignia of the Fourteenth Air Force on his arm. There was little doubt who they were. Birch took Lieutenant Tung ahead of the party to meet the Communists, identifying himself as Captain John Birch of the American intelligence services on a mission under the orders of General Wedemeyer. He asked to be taken to their "responsible man."

One of the Communists said he would take them to their leader, but they must first disarm. Birch refused, responding that the Americans and Chinese were allies and must respect each other. The Communist argued for a time, then gave in and took Birch to a man he identified as their commanding officer. The officer demanded that he be allowed to examine the men's equipment, and Birch refused, replying that their equipment was the property of the U.S. government and not for personal use. He advised the Communist that the United States dealt harshly with thieves and demanded that they be allowed on their way.

Over the next few hours the party encountered several groups of Chinese Communists but managed to make its way through them. Birch

griped constantly about the Communists, referring to them as nothing but common thieves and bandits. His men realized he was agitated and feared for their lives. When a pair of North American P-51 Mustang fighters flew over at low altitude, they attempted to signal them, but without success.

Lieutenant Tung proceeded ahead of the party to deal with the Communists. When they reached the town of Hwang Kao, Tung entered the railroad station and found it occupied by hostile-looking Chinese. He advised them that they were on a mission to Süchow for General Wedemeyer and asked to speak to their "responsible man." When one of the Communists blurted out that they must disarm the Americans, Tung replied that if they attempted to do so it would cause a serious misunderstanding. The senior officer told Tung he would send someone with him back to the party, but Tung heard him advise the man to take his gun along and if anything happened to shoot Tung first.

By this time, Birch was thoroughly incensed at the treatment he and his men were receiving from their reputed allies. When Tung and the Communist joined the party, he asked the Communist if he was "another bandit." General Peng, the Chinese collaborator, and Albert Grimes advised Birch to take it easy. When Tung told Birch that the Communists intended to disarm them, Birch exploded, blurting out that Americans had liberated the entire world, but now the Communists wanted to disarm him and his men! The Communist told Birch that he was not the "responsible man" but that he would take them to him, but that since they refused to disarm, he would not be responsible for anything that happened. Tung later reported that he and Birch expected the Communists to let them pass, then shoot them in the back.

ABOVE: Major Chu, a Chinese officer, confers with a group of soldiers and individuals who have volunteered to gather intelligence for use in upcoming operations. Chu is instructing the men from the relative safety of a dugout 200 feet from the banks of the Salween River. OPPOSITE: Colonel Jong, a Chinese interpreter, Lieutenant John Wylie of the 1st Tactical Communication Squadron, and Colonel Chew Fong Liang, commanding officer of the Chinese Army's 57th Regiment, 15th Division direct the deployment of troops via field telephone. (Both: National Archives)

Finally, a Communist wearing the Sam Browne belt that identified him as an officer told Birch that he could see their responsible man. Ogle and Grimes insisted that they go along, but Birch told them to wait with the rest of the party and he and Tung would proceed alone. Tung later reported that Birch told him that he wanted to see how the Communists were going to treat Americans and that he did not care whether they killed him. If they did, America would punish them with atom bombs. At one point Birch grabbed their guide by his collar and said, "What are you people? If I say bandits, you don't look like bandits. You are worse than bandits." Tung told the Communists that Birch was joking.

A little later someone called out, "Look, here is our leader." Birch and Tung turned and saw that they were referring to the man in the Sam Browne belt. The officer told his men to load their guns and disarm Birch. Tung had taken off his sidearm earlier and told the Communists to let him get Birch's gun in order to avoid "a serious misunderstanding." The officer ordered one of his men to shoot Tung, which he did. He then told a soldier to shoot the American. The Communist hesitated, then fired a shot into Birch's leg. Shortly afterward, Tung passed out from loss of blood. When he woke up, he was lying in a ditch next to Birch's lifeless body.

Word of John Birch's death soon reached other OSS operatives. When Bill Miller arrived in Süchow, he was informed that Communists had killed his friend. Japanese soldiers and friendly Chinese found Tung and Birch's bodies and took them to Süchow, where Tung was hospitalized. Both Tung and Birch had been badly beaten, and an autopsy found evidence that after Birch had been shot in the leg, he had been bound and then shot in the back of the head. His face had been slashed beyond recognition by bayonets. Miller was able to identify the body by Birch's general build and from photographs taken when it was found.

The senior Japanese officer at Süchow had refused to surrender to the Communists and waited for someone from the Nationalists to arrive in the city. He was sympathetic to Miller for the loss of his friend and offered his services to conduct an appropriate military funeral. Miller, the Japanese, Chinese puppet officers, and Jesuit missionaries who were in the city planned the funeral together. Two other Americans, pilots who had been killed in a crash near the city, would be interred along with Birch. A Catholic high mass was held for the young fundamentalist Baptist, and after the mass the entourage of Japanese and Chinese officers and Jesuits led a procession through the city to the music of a Japanese military band. The coffins were carried by 24 coolies. The three bodies were interred in a plot on the side of a mountain just outside the city. A Chinese Protestant conducted a graveside service. Japanese soldiers fired the traditional volley as the bodies were lowered into their graves. □

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Splashing a

VMF-113 Corsairs escort a B-25 assault on the Japanese coastal defense gun atop Jokaj Rock at Ponepeh. The Corsair, which the Japanese nicknamed "Whistling Death," was easily distinguished from other aircraft due to its full wing configuration. (Jack Fellows Aviation Art, www.jackfellows.com. Opposite: Amber Books)

Dinah

During a mission near Okinawa, Marine F4U Corsair fighter pilot Willis "Bud" Dworzak engaged in aerial combat.

When the Marines put Willis "Bud" Dworzak into the cockpit of a Vought F4U-1C Corsair fighter aircraft, they expected him to provide close air support to fellow leathernecks who were slugging it out on Okinawa. Dworzak did. But he also used the blue, gull-winged, radial-engined Corsair to rack up an aerial victory. On May 11, 1945, Dworzak fought a kind of "one-man war" with a Japanese twin-engined Mitsubishi Ki-46 Army Type 100 fighter and reconnaissance plane, known in Allied parlance as a "Dinah."

It was an extraordinary shootdown, coming very late in the war when many believed air-to-air combat had ended. Dworzak, who looked even younger than his 22 years, saw himself as "just a young guy who wanted to fly" but had also told a recruiter he wanted "to kill Japs." The Marines enabled him to fly and fight at the controls of one of the best-loved aircraft of the war.

RFD: So you were one of those young kids who always wanted to fly?

BD: That's me. My sister and I took our first airplane ride in Oakhurst, New Jersey, when we were about eight or nine years old. I don't know what kind of plane it was. It was a bi-plane, probably a Waco or a Standard. That hooked me on flying. Growing up in New Jersey during the Depression years, I read airplane magazines and built model airplanes.

RFD: Do you have a memory of how you learned the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor?

BD: Well, first I should tell you that I was in uniform before that. I got a very early start.

BY ROBERT F. DORR

RFD: Before Pearl Harbor? Weren't you too young?

BD: Yes. I was born in 1923 in Asbury Park, New Jersey. When I was in high school in 1938, a buddy told me about National Guard service. "You go down to the armory and drill once a month," he told me. "They issue you a rifle and a uniform. It's very neat. It's like the real thing."

I was 15 years old. They never checked birth certificates in those days. So I went with my buddy and, suddenly, here I am, in the New Jersey National Guard.

In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt activated the Guard. I'm still under age, but now I'm a member of the United States Army. We hung around the armory as part of Company G, 114th

Infantry, 44th Division. It was "hurry up and wait" as we wondered what they would do with us.

My mom said, "You've got to finish high school." I went to my commanding officer, Captain Harris, and told him I needed to go back to high school. He looked at me and said, "How old are you?" He wasn't mad or anything. I was now 17 but did not have my parents' consent. Harris said I was too young and sent me home. I got an honorable discharge from the United States Army that year.

RFD: Can you recall how you learned the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor?

BD: I graduated high school in June 1941 and started junior college. I was living in Asbury Park. I heard about it on the radio. I had studied geography in school. I knew where the Hawaiian Islands were and what they were talking about. I also knew that I never wanted to be a rifleman again. I wanted to fly.

RFD: What happened then?

BD: In the first days of World War II, you still needed four years of college to become a pilot. I went to Monmouth Junior College. In 1942, I also started pilot training at Asbury Park under the Civil Pilot Training (CPT) program. This was a government program encouraged by the Roosevelt administration that introduced aviation to thousands who later flew in the war. I was working in a blueprint shop, studying, and getting flight training during my lunch hour in the CPT program. I soloed a Piper J-3 Cub after eight hours of instruction, which was about average.

The government paid for 10 hours of flying training under this program. A private pilot's license required 35. A local Rotary Club stepped forward to pay for the full 35 hours for the best student pilots in our group. One guy beat me out for the top of the class. He had a score of 95.5, and I had 95.4.

Part of the requirement for a pilot's license was a cross-country flight in a triangle in which at least one leg was 100 miles long. Because of our location near the New Jersey shore, we couldn't fly a 100-mile leg because of wartime flight restrictions, so I made a cross-country flight of lesser distance and got a restriction on my license, which didn't mean much.

When I finished my first year of college, they reduced the requirement for military pilot training to two years of college. I figured, "I've got one more year. I can do that coasting." I was in my second year of college when they reduced the requirement to high school only. That was in August 1942, and I immediately went to 120 Broadway, the Navy recruiting office, and was sworn in as an aviation cadet. They told me to go home and wait to be called.

RFD: Was that the program that covered training for all naval aviators—Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine?

BD: Yes. But almost immediately, I learned of a better program that required a private pilot's license, which I had. I went back to 120 Broadway and talked to a chief petty officer. Now it's September or October of 1942, and I said, "I can't wait any longer. I want to go in."

He said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "I want to kill Japs."

He said, "Wait a little longer, kid. If you want to kill Japs, this isn't the program for you. Under this program, you'll go for 90 days to Officer Candidate School. You'll go to Pensacola and get your wings. And you'll become a flight instructor. You'll be teaching all those young men who will go out and kill Japs while you stay in Florida." He said, "Go home. I'll call you when we have the job you want." So I went home, and at the end of December 1942, I was told to report on January 1, 1943. Initially, it was like being a volunteer. The naval aviation program was like a contract. You had an obligation. The government had an obligation. You were free to quit any time you wanted. I was in training when they changed all that with a measure called "Sign or Resign." You could quit on the spot or you signed away your right to quit. I got my wings in October 1943. I had already decided that the best way to kill Japs was go into the Marine Corps.

LEFT: The USS *Breton Wood* (*CVE-23*) prepares to launch VMF-441 F4U-1Ds and VMF-311 F4U-1Cs for the first aircraft landings on Yontan Field, Okinawa, April 7, 1945. INSET: Bud Dworzak still vividly remembers his aerial combat with the Japanese Ki-46 fighter aircraft, codenamed by the Allies as "Dinah." (Left: National Archives/Inset: Robert F. Dorr)

RFD: Many with an interest in aviation will envy you for flying the Corsair, one of the great fighters. Did you know from the start that you would get the Corsair?

BD: Not at first. After winning my naval aviator's wings, I went to El Centro, California, and studied bombing in the [Douglas] SBD Dauntless. Then, they formed a new squadron, VMF-462, in June 1944. It had the FG-1D, the Goodyear-built version of the Corsair. I was in 462 briefly and transferred out. We went overseas as replacements. I spent Christmas Day 1944 in Pearl Harbor. We floated around the Pacific for a while. We joined squadron VMF-441, also called the Black Jack Squadron and part of Marine Air Group 31, or MAG-31, in January 1945 on Roi-Namur, Kwajalein atoll, Marshall Islands.

Colonel Charles Lindbergh flew with VMF-441 as a technical adviser for United Aircraft [which owned Vought-Sikorsky, later called Chance Vought], several months before I arrived. The pilots who flew with Lind-

bergh said he was a very professional, precision pilot and after each mission landed with more fuel remaining in his tank than any of the other pilots. He also redesigned the Corsair bomb racks to carry a 2,000-pound bomb on the centerline rack and a 1,000-pound bomb on each of the two pylon racks, giving the Corsair a bomb load capability of 4,000 pounds.

While on Roi-Namur, the squadron participated in training missions, including introduction to aircraft rockets, and bombing and strafing strikes against bypassed Japanese islands. When we were briefed for dive-bombing missions, we were told not to get below 2,000 feet on our bombing runs because the Japanese antiaircraft gunners were deadly at that range.

They decided to put 441 aboard the escort carrier USS *Sitkoh Bay* (*CVE 86*), which transported us to Okinawa.

RFD: So, the *Sitkoh Bay* was being used as a ferry, in effect, just to get you there?

BD: Yes. But we did pull catapult alert while en route. I was designated as an alert pilot. Every morning at daybreak, they would sound general quarters. I would report to the ready room. I got briefed. I sat on the catapult there in my Corsair. If a Japanese plane was spotted, I would be launched in my Corsair to shoot it down.

One day, shortly before the invasion, we got the order: "Alert pilots, man your aircraft!" I grabbed my charts and ran up to the deck. I scrambled into the cockpit. That's when I saw Lt. Col. Munn, the CO of MAG-31.

He said, "Get the hell out of my airplane." Then, he relaxed a little and said, "That's all right, son, I'll take this one." He was taking my job away from me! But before he even got his engine fired up, the Japanese aircraft turned away and they called off the alert.

RFD: How did you get along with the sailors on the *Sitkoh Bay*?

BD: Before we left the USS *Sitkoh Bay*, the ship's crew fabricated medals for the pilots from 5-inch gunfire shells, and the cloth was from LSO signal paddles. Stamped on the polished brass cross was, 'VALOR—SITKOH BAY—COST—1 JAP.' It was formally presented to each pilot with a written citation. Mine said that Lieutenant Dworzak "did, without regard for his personal safety and convenience, and far beyond the call of duty, deposit himself upon various bunks of this vessel for long hours during the day and night in the face of concerted opposition from wind, sea, and subversive elements," whatever they were. It also said that I "zealously and rigorously reported to the Wardroom at meal times." The funny thing is, the "Valor Cross Sitkoh Bay" looks like a real medal when it's really just a nice gesture of affection from the crew.

RFD: Tell us about the Corsair.

BD: The Marine Corps was lucky to benefit from the hard luck the Navy had with the Corsair. It was manufactured by three companies, Vought-Sikorsky, the prime contractor, as the F4U; Goodyear, as the FG; and Brewster, as the F3BD. They came out with six 50-caliber machine guns, although I later flew the F4U-1C with four 20-millimeter cannons.

It started out with wet wings [prototypes] that leaked. They put a 240-gallon fuel tank right behind the engines. The tank on the fuselage did leak a little. They put pink-edged tape over it. They put it there with airplane dope. When the pilot was approaching to land on the carrier, he would lose sight of the landing signal officer, or LSO, just as he was on his final approach. The British learned how to use the Corsair on a carrier before we ever mastered it. They would keep it in a turn until they'd just approached the LSO on the flight deck. Just as they got over the edge, they would come out of the turn all lined up.

ABOVE: An imposing flight of Vought F4U Corsair fighter aircraft wings toward targets on a Japanese-held Pacific island. The Corsairs were formidable dog-fighting aircraft but were equally adept at engaging ground targets. LEFT: A carrier flight operations crewman directs an F4U Corsair fighter plane during its approach to land aboard an aircraft carrier. (Both: National Archives)

The Corsair was not the easiest plane to fly, but it was comfortable enough. I'm six feet tall and weighed about 150 pounds then, and I never had any trouble getting into the Corsair cockpit. The rudder pedals were a little difficult to reach. Otherwise, it was a pretty sensible design.

RFD: The battle for Iwo Jima was already taking place in February 1945, as you prepared to embark on the *Sitkoh Bay*. Did you know where you were going?

BD: No. I knew only that our squadron, VMF-441, the Black Jack Squadron, was going to be land based. In March 1945, they loaded our airplanes on scows at Roi-Namur and took them out to Jeep carriers, and off we went to Okinawa.

RFD: Did you get to witness the invasion of that island?

ABOVE: Firing a volley of rockets at a ground target on Okinawa, this Vought F4U Corsair delivers tremendous firepower. The Corsair was distinctive for its elongated nose as well as its gull wing structure. LEFT: Caught in the gun camera of an attacking U.S. fighter, this Japanese Ki-46 Type 100 fighter, known to the Allies as a "Dinah," jigs to avoid devastating fire from American machine guns. BELOW: Second Lieutenant Willis A. "Bud" Dworzak was shy of his 22nd birthday when he flew an F4U-1C Corsair on a memorable mission over Okinawa.

(Above and Left: National Archives/Below: Courtesy of Willis A. Dworzak)

BD: No. Invasion day was April Fool's Day in 1945. Our ship wasn't off Okinawa when they were doing the invasion. We got there a few days later. We catapulted off of *Sitkoh Bay* on April 7. The battle was still going on, of course. There was fierce Japanese resistance on Okinawa.

RFD: So it was a relatively routine flight, going smack into the middle of an island where a major battle was going on?

BD: No Japanese fired upon us that day. But we faced serious airmanship challenges. The *Sitkoh Bay* was still about 100 nautical miles south, so it was about a one-hour flight. We needed control trim tab settings for takeoff on the catapult, but the *Sitkoh Bay*'s catapult officer had never launched Corsairs before.

One of our pilots said he had catapulted before and as best as he could remember you needed normal tab settings except for the elevator trim. There, you used five degrees back tab. We were the second four-plane division to take off. The first plane went dangerously upward after clearing the cat. After seeing that, I rolled the elevator tab forward to only four degrees back tab. I felt the following pilots would make a similar correction, but because the next two Corsairs climbed excessively I made additional corrections on the tab settings. I think by the time I took off, I had neutral elevator tab.

RFD: And you went into Yontan airfield?

BD: Yes. As I said, MAG-31 went into Yontan on April 7. A few days later, our sister air group, MAG-33, went into Kadena. Decades later, when I was a civilian working in Vietnam, my plane made a refueling stop at Kadena and it looked entirely different, built up.

The Battle of Okinawa continued long after we arrived there. MAG-31 arrived with three Corsair squadrons, VMF-224, -311 and -441. On Okinawa, our air group picked up a night fighter squadron, VMF(N)-542 equipped with the Grumman F6F Hellcat. That was the other great U.S. Navy fighter of the war, and in a minute I'll tell you how I think the Corsair and Hellcat compare. I flew F4U-1Ds in April and May. They were replaced with cannon-armed F4U-1Cs some time before June when Okinawa was declared secure.

RFD: Meanwhile, what were conditions like for you?

BD: At Yontan things were rather primitive. We lived right on the airfield, on the other side of the taxiway from where our aircraft were deployed. At first, we each shared a shelter half with another pilot. Later, pyramidal tents were provided, which we shared with three or four other Marines. Sometime in May the Seabees replaced our tents with Quonset huts.

I won't say we lived like ground-pounding Marines, but it wasn't the Ritz, either. Our flight schedules prevented eating at scheduled mealtimes, so meals were provided at odd times at the alert shack. The meals were "GI" but I don't remember anyone complaining. One morning when scheduled for dawn combat air patrol, or CAP, several of us were having breakfast at about 0400 in the alert shack. Pistol Pete, a Japanese howitzer, was lobbing shells up from down around Naha, and they were exploding on the field, and each one was getting closer. We knew if he continued, the next one would be really close, but no one was getting excited. The next round landed on the ground behind the alert shack with a thud. We were lucky. The darn thing was defective and didn't explode.

RFD: You were going to compare the Corsair and the Hellcat?

BD: My high school buddy, Ensign Paul Glasser, was flying F6F Hellcats with the Navy on the carrier USS *Randolph* (*CV 15*), and one day he dropped in at Yontan to visit me. My F4U-1C Corsair was mired in mud, but they parked Paul on pavement. I remember I was wearing rubber boots, and he had nice, polished shoes. I thought, "He'll be having a steak dinner on the *Randolph* and sleeping between clean sheets tonight. I'll be sleeping in a tent, in my skivvies, on an Army cot with a green Marine Corps cover, with a loaded .45 automatic under my pillow."

We were going to fly against each other, but it didn't happen. We experienced a curious and bizarre moment when I could not climb into my Corsair because of the mud. I tried to climb up on the wing, the first step toward crawling into the cockpit, and my muddy boots slipped and slid. I tried it several times and fell off the wing twice. Finally, I had to straddle the rear fuselage and shimmy up to the cockpit. Paul stood there in his nice, polished shoes, holding his hands at his sides, laughing.

Not long after that embarrassing moment, our hard-working ground crews built a wooden stand with a three-step ladder on one side and a platform on top. This way, we could get in the cockpit and kick off most of the mud on our boots before stepping in on the parachute that was already in place on the seat.

I later flew the F6F Hellcat briefly after the war. The Hellcat was very stable but not as nimble as the Corsair. You could do a real snappy roll in the Corsair, but not the Hellcat.

The Hellcat was much easier to fly. The Corsair wasn't easy at all. When you landed it, you had to fight it to a standstill. You put your wheels on the ground and congratulated yourself for defeating gravity again, and suddenly you realized that your Corsair wasn't slowing down. It had a tendency to veer off the runway. The F6F, in contrast, would just about land itself.

RFD: Mud. A plane that's difficult to land. It was not a piece of cake on Okinawa, was it?

BD: As in any war, there were the mishaps you regretted. Some killed people. Some didn't. One of our planes accidentally dropped a belly tank on the runway when we were all taxiing out. A Corsair taxied over it and chewed it up with the propeller blade, carving out slices four to six inches apart and sending fuel and metal fragments all over the place. I was able to make an S-turn and taxi around it.

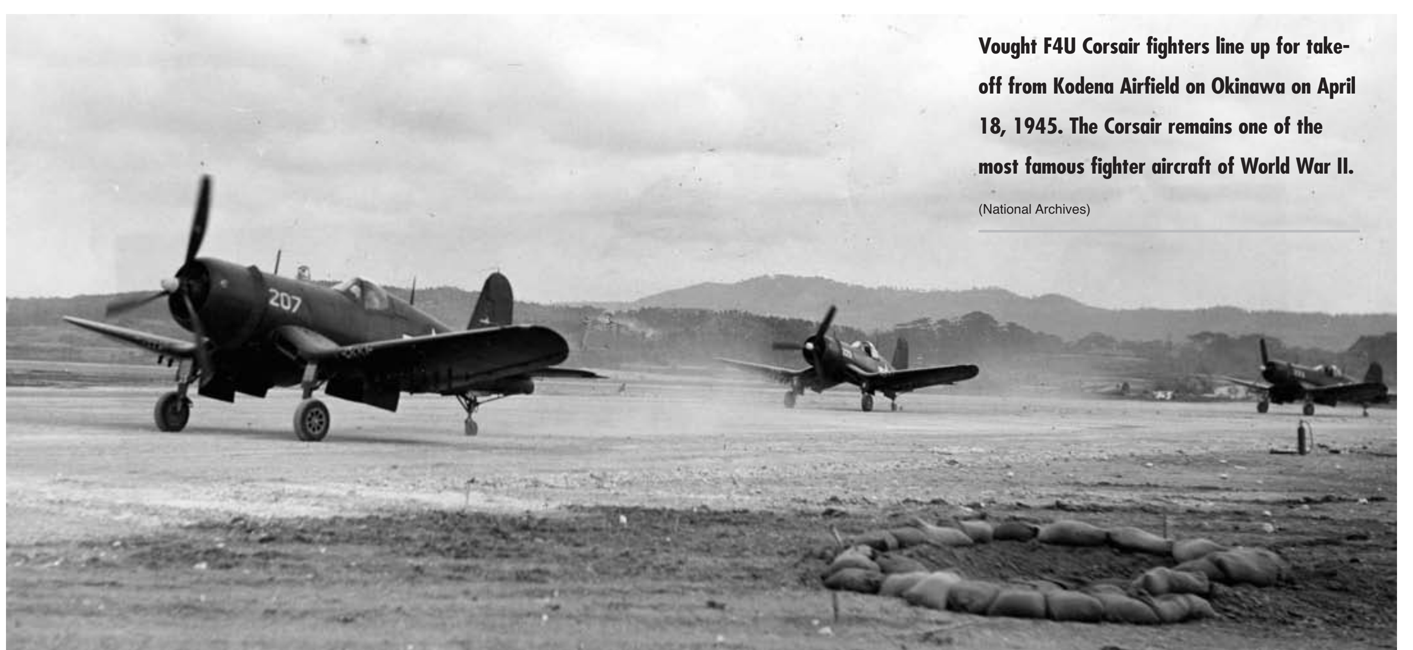
RFD: Did you support Marines on the ground in combat?

BD: We always took pride in that. The Corsair turned out to be a very effective air-to-ground weapon. Captain Roswell "Rob" Raber, who was usually leading my buddies and me, especially liked the 5-inch high-velocity aircraft rockets, or HVAR, we slung under the wings.

We carried eight 5-inch HVAR rockets. If you fired it in salvo, you had the equivalent in firepower of a broadside from a destroyer. I received very little training in rocket firing. I didn't know what to expect. On my first run, I was not satisfied that Raber was lined up on the right target. Still, we made three runs. Each time, I wasn't satisfied that we were on the right target and therefore withheld fire On our fourth run, the controller told us it would be our last run. We knew there were Japanese troops dug in, hunkered inside a building straight ahead of our flight path, and this time there was no doubt we had a real and valid target.

The Vought F4U-1D fighter, a later version of the type flown by Bud Dworzak, saw an extensive service career, which included combat operations during the Korean War. (Amber Books)

The controller said, "Expend all your weapons." I set my switch on Salvo. On Salvo, they fire in pairs from inboard to outboard. I was the last one in on the target and therefore was very intent on destroying it. I came in at treetop level, and when on target I squeezed the trigger. The rockets fired in pairs, one after the other, all eight of them. They went right into the front door of the building. I wasn't planning to fly through



Vought F4U Corsair fighters line up for take-off from Kodena Airfield on Okinawa on April 18, 1945. The Corsair remains one of the most famous fighter aircraft of World War II.

(National Archives)

the building, but that's exactly what happened. The building exploded and was completely demolished. And I went right through it.

I burned up the rear of my Corsair by firing all those rockets. The leading edges of the wing and tail of my Corsair were severely damaged. The tail wheel, which hangs out in the open while you're in flight, was burned flat. I brought my Corsair back to the flight line and my plane captain said, "Lieutenant, take that right down to salvage at the end of the parking area." Salvage was the wrong term, though. By that time in the war, we had plenty of airplanes, and I'm sure that one never flew again.

RFD: You did a great job with air-to-ground work. But you also had a chance to go after a Japanese aircraft.

BD: Many of the fighter units in and around Okinawa were tied up trying to intercept and shoot down the Japanese suicide pilots, the kamikaze, who were attacking constantly and inflicting heavy damage on the fleet. My own squadron only engaged kamikaze once or twice, but we were aware of them constantly. Today, not many people remember how much harm they did, but they were a persistent threat and they caused high American casualties.

RFD: Did you have an encounter with a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft?

BD: I did. On the morning of May 11, 1945, I was flying a combat air patrol mission with my division leader, Raber. A division is the naval term for a flight of four aircraft. First Lt. Charles Whipple was flying wing on Raber. First Lt. Robert Kane was leading the second section, a section being the term for a flight of two, and I was flying wing on Kane. I was flying a brand new F4U-1C.

We were approximately 30 miles east of Okinawa flying at 12,000 feet in a wide orbit around our radar picket station, which was made

> **"When I came out below the clouds, I could see the Dinah was in a flat spin as it hit the water and exploded. I was credited with the kill. I got an Air Medal for that."**

up of two destroyer escorts, or DEs, and four "small boys." The small boys consisted of various types of landing craft such as landing ships tank, or LSTs, and landing craft infantry, or LCIs.

Shortly after we arrived on station, our shipboard radar operators picked up a bogey on their search gear and vectored us on a northerly course to intercept it. We asked our controller for the altitude of the bogey, but they were unable to provide us with that information because of the limitations of their early equipment. However, they were able to give us approximate distance to our target.

RFD: It's morning. It's daylight. But radar controllers are vectoring you. You don't have visual contact with the bogey, right?

BD: That's right. As we closed in, our controller told us the bogey was five miles ahead of us. Whipple spotted an unidentified aircraft several miles off his left wing. Radar confirmed it to be our intended target, and Raber brought our division around behind the bogey, which by now was several miles ahead of us.

Raber signaled for us to form into a pursuit formation, which brought

The Kamikaze took a heavy toll in American lives and ships.

The act of killing oneself to achieve success in battle has never set well with Americans, but the act is painfully familiar to U.S. Marines and sailors who fought in the Pacific in the final phase of World War II. They withstood attacks by Japan's "Special Attack Force," or kamikaze—military aircraft rebuilt into flying bombs with suicide pilots at the controls.

"The sky was full of them," said Al Noll, 81, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, who was a loader on a stern gun tub of tank landing ship LST 949 during the invasion of Okinawa in 1945. Noll's 40mm Bofors antiaircraft cannon threw out a constant stream of flying steel that joined gunfire from hundreds of ships, "and yet they kept coming at us, like nothing was going to stop them. They had incredible determination."

In October 1944, Japan's Admiral Takijiro Onishi suggested using military planes as manned flying bombs. "They weren't nuts," said Howard Johnson, 56, of San Francisco, California, a historian who studied the era. "They believed in their course of action. They were making one last effort to save their empire."

The kamikaze, or "divine wind," were named for the typhoon that destroyed Kublai Khan's fleet and halted his invasion of Japan in 1281. As the war drew closer to Japan, fighters and bombers were converted into flying bombs. When an aircraft exploded and killed 25 men, wounding 106, aboard the carrier USS *Randolph* (*CV 15*) on March 11, 1945, it was a twin-engine bomber known to the Allies as a Frances that plunged into the ship. Near war's end, Japan developed both a small airplane and a piloted rocket bomb for suicide missions.

A popular myth is that Japan's suicide pilots were ineffective. "Just ask any sailor," said Noll.

"I was on the radar picket line off Okinawa for two months," said retired Captain H.E. "Bucky" Walters, 83, of Springfield, Virginia. "They crashed all around us, constantly."

Walters was engineering officer on the destroyer USS *Bache* (*DD 470*). "On May 13, 1945, a total of 10 airplanes came after us. We shot down nine. The tenth was a Val dive-bomber that came right up our stern. He cut off the number 2 smokestack and crashed on the main deck. His explosion blew a big hole in the deck above the waterline." *Bache* was gravely damaged and suffered 42 killed, 14 missing, and 32 wounded.

A Japanese history published in 1974 says that Japan lost 2,525 aviators, 1,204 Navy and 1,321 Army pilots, in kamikaze attacks. The Japanese claimed 81 Allied ships sunk and 195 damaged. Other sources give the actual figure as 34 sunk and 368 damaged. Suicide attacks caused 80 percent of American losses in the final year of the Pacific War. Kamikaze pilots sank 26 U.S. combat ships, including three escort carriers, and killed 3,000 sailors. □

In the painting above by Dwight C. Shepler, a flaming kamikaze descends toward the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS *Bunker Hill.* The carrier was hit by two kamikazes on May 11, 1945, off the coast of Okinawa.

all four aircraft in-line, abreast, and several hundred yards apart. That put me on the extreme starboard end of the formation.

For some unknown reason, the bogey made a 90-degree turn to starboard. Now, in the division formation, I was in the position closest to the bogey. I called Raber on the radio for permission to attack the bogey but got no answer. Rob Raber frankly wasn't as aggressive as I felt he should have been. After I repeated my call, Whipple came back with, "Go get him Bud!"

I immediately applied significantly more power and dropped my belly tank. When I got closer, I was able to identify the bogey as a Dinah, an armed high-altitude, twin-engine aircraft.

RFD: That would be a Mitsubishi Ki-46 Army Type 100 fighter. The Allies assigned code names to Japanese airplanes, sometimes inspired by famous people. The Ki-46 may have gotten its code name from the singer and entertainer Dinah Shore.

BD: Yes, and we had been briefed on it. But I wasn't sure if the Dinah had a rear gunner, so I squeezed off a few rounds while still well out of range and said, "Oh, son of a bitch!" I was horrified to see that my cannons had not been bore sighted. My ammo was belted with armor piercing, tracer, ball, and high-explosive/incendiary shells, so I could see some of the tracer and high explosive/incendiary rounds hitting way out on the left wing tip.

There were some broken clouds below at 5,000 feet, where he could hide until it was safe for him to complete his mission of reconnaissance and kamikaze. When I fired, the Dinah started down to the clouds below, so I moved the pipper [sight] over to the starboard engine and held the trigger down.

I could see tracers going out all over the place, instead of forming a V with the apex at the target. I'm closing on him now. He's heading down for a bank of clouds. There are ships off to my left. It might have been the picket ship that was vectoring us. I didn't want this guy getting down and hitting any ships. I just held down on the trigger. Then things started happening all of a sudden. Lots of pieces started flying off the Dinah. I was overtaking the Dinah rapidly.

My guns quit. I had used up all 200 rounds per gun, and as we were going into the clouds the left wing of the Dinah broke off. I had to put a violent input into my control system as I was overtaking him, to avoid hitting him. His left wing was completely shot off by that time. He was spinning in. When I came out below the clouds, I could see the Dinah was in a flat spin as it hit the water and exploded. I was credited with the kill. I got an Air Medal for that.

A few miles south of us there were several ships that probably included our radar controller. The ships had already sent up several rounds of antiaircraft fire and were ready to take on the Dinah if it had come out of the clouds in one piece.

RFD: That is every fighter pilot's goal—an aerial victory. But the war continued for you, didn't it?

BD: Yes. May 24 was an exciting day (and night). On Okinawa a pilot was always on duty in the control tower. That day, I was assigned as the control tower duty officer. A night fighter pilot relieved me before dusk just when enemy activity was noticeably increasing.

We might have thought the enemy's air force was knocked out, except for the kamikaze aircraft that made such a huge impact during the Okinawa battle. But that night, Japanese aircraft bombed and strafed our airfield for three or four hours. Then, Jap planes loaded with suicide troops attempted to land at Yontan. Our intense antiaircraft fire shot down seven of them. However, one came in silently, with engines cut, for a perfect belly landing about 100 yards from the tower.

At first, the night fighter pilot in the tower started using the signal lamp, with a clear lens, to spot the Japs for the Marines who were resisting the attack as the suicide troops left their aircraft for designated targets. Unfortunately, the night fighter pilot who had relieved me just a few hours before was killed by one of the suicide troops as he climbed down from the tower to get closer to the action.

RFD: That attack was kind of a last gasp, wasn't it? After things settled back to normal following the attack, did your squadron fly missions against the Japanese mainland?

BD: Having new Corsairs gave our squadron high aircraft availability for assignment to choice missions such as fighter sweeps on Kyushu. Our squadron did, in fact, fly up to Kyushu to attack targets on the mainland, but I didn't get in on any of those missions. The war ended before I could see combat over the Japanese mainland.

ABOVE: The first Allied aircraft to land after the island of New Georgia was captured from the Japanese, a U.S. Navy F4U Corsair fighter touches down on a newly operational airfield. (National Archives)

RFD: Tell us about your life afterward.

BD: I continued flying in the Marine Corps and made the postwar transition to jets. In addition to Corsairs and Hellcats, I piloted the F9F-6 and F9F-7 Cougar at Floyd Bennett Field, New York, in a reserve squadron.

Later, I was a civilian working for the Army at Fort Monmouth near my home in New Jersey. They sent me to Vietnam. After I persuaded my bosses that a civilian could fly airplanes in combat, I flew 14 combat support missions in a DeHavilland U-6A Beaver. It had dual controls, and I always had a co-pilot with me.

I retired from my Army career in 1977 and still live in my hometown with my family. When I think of my experience in World War II, I realize I was too young and dumb to be scared. □

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

By Mason B. Webb

Pilots of the AVG's Hell's Angels Squadron pose in front of a P-40 painted with menacing shark's teeth and their insignia, a nude angel.
(National Archives)

Swashbucklers of the China skies

The legendary Flying Tigers come to life in a book by Daniel Ford.

DURING THE DARK, EARLY DAYS OF WORLD WAR II, WHEN THE IMPERIAL JAPAN-ese army, navy, and air force were running roughshod over Asia and the Pacific, it seemed that nothing could stop them. Only a small band of American mercenary fliers based in Burma and known as the Flying Tigers, led by a leather-faced fighter named Claire Chennault, seemed able to challenge and defeat the Japanese.

For a fabulous salary of $600 a month (the equivalent today of $144,000 a year), plus a $500 bounty for every enemy plane they shot down, the cocky, swaggering men (most of whom resigned their commissions in the Navy and Air Corps to sign up) who flew the Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk fighter aircraft with the fearsome shark face painted on the nose tangled with Japan's Imperial Wild Eagles in the skies above China and Burma and won immortality.

The exciting story of this legendary fighting force that wore American uniforms but Chinese insignia is told in Daniel Ford's ***Flying Tigers: Claire Chennault and His American Volunteers, 1941-1942*** (Smithsonian Books, Washington, D.C., 2007, 368 pp., photographs, maps, index, bibliography, softcover, $15.95), the definitive history of the legendary Flying Tigers. Every page contains a new tidbit of information and rich, long-forgotten detail.

Most importantly, Ford's prose—and the use of dozens of first-person accounts by the pilots who made up the AVG (American Volunteer Group, known variously among themselves as the Panda Bears, Adam & Eves, and Hell's Angels)—puts human faces and flesh on a unit that everyone has heard of, but about which very few people know.

For example, one of the pilots was hard-drinking Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, who would later, as a Marine pilot, win the Medal of Honor in aerial combat. Among many other unforgettable characters are Jim Howard, Tom Cole, Charlie Bond, Moose Moss, Sandy Sandell, and Bob Neale who, with remarkable candor, confessed to his diary that he was scared to death on missions. "I can remember times where I'd be sick to my stomach before combat, just from nervous tension," he wrote.

Another flyer, Charlie Bond, recalled that he and Bob Neale once pounced on a single Japanese fighter who showed remarkable bravery and skill, even charging Bond head on. Bond said, "Bob and I fought that little devil some five to ten minutes. He must have known he was done for, but he was a game little guy."

The book is so full of stories of derring-do and close calls that it seems like fiction—a tall tale of brash young men in a bygone era—yet it is all true.

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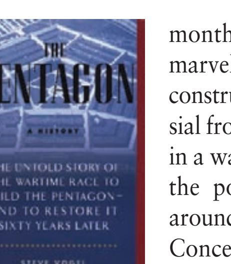
As one of the news reports quoted in the book said, "Last week ten Japanese bombers came winging their carefree way up into Yunnan, heading directly for Kunming, the terminus of the Burma Road. Thirty miles south of Kunming, the Flying Tigers swooped, let the Japanese have it. Of the ten bombers ... four plummeted to earth in flames. The rest turned tail and fled. Tiger casualties: none."

Anyone who loves stories of aviation combat and wants to learn more about the under-reported war along the China-Burma border will love *Flying Tigers*. A riveting read.

The Pentagon: The Untold Story of the Wartime Race to Build the Pentagon—and to Restore It Sixty Years Later, by Steve Vogel, Random House, 626 pp., photographs, index, bibliography, hardcover, $32.95.



The Pentagon in Washington, D.C., home of the U.S. Department of Defense, is the five-sided symbol of America's military might. As such, it was targeted by Muslim terrorists on September 11, 2001, as one of their foremost targets. But it is not easy to destroy the world's largest office building. As Steve Vogel points out in his terrific "biography" of the Pentagon, the creation of the building (over six million square feet at a cost of $85 million) was one of the greatest public works feats in American history.

Begun in September 1941 and occupied 17 months later, the Pentagon was a marvel of wartime engineering and construction. It was also controversial from the start—from its location in a wasteland along the Potomac to the political battles that erupted around its design and costs.

Conceived by General Brehon B. Somervell, who pushed all opposition aside, the Pentagon was a larger-than-life project brought into existence by larger-than-life personalities—everyone from President Franklin Roosevelt to Secretary of War Henry Stimson to Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall to Colonel Leslie R. Groves, overseer of construction. For months, Groves simultaneously oversaw the building of the Pentagon and the Manhattan Project—the operation to build the atomic bomb—driving both to completion far faster than anyone thought possible.

From start to finish, Vogel's *The Pentagon* is filled with fresh details never previously reported, including the oft-comical efforts of Somervell and Groves to hide the true cost and size of the Pentagon from Congress and the press, construction accidents and mishaps, the story of how a small group of black employees forced the Pentagon to integrate soon after it opened, the 1967 antiwar demonstration told from the perspective of those defending the building, the deterioration of the building over the years, and chilling new details about the September 11 attack and the inside story of the

Publisher Profile: Zenith Press

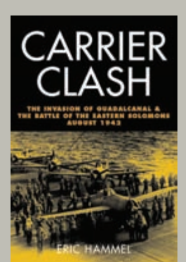
When one thinks of "publishing houses," it is natural to think of New York City, the center of the publishing world. If St. Paul, Minnesota, does not immediately come to mind, it is not the fault of Zenith Press, headquartered in Minneapolis's twin city.

Launched as an imprint of MBI Publishing Company in June 2004, Zenith Press has been putting out first-class books covering a wide array of military history and aviation topics. From gripping and informative narratives on both historical events and contemporary issues to breathtaking full-color illustrated histories of famous battles, units, and weaponry, the Zenith Press library includes titles that are fully accessible to readers who are new to the genre, as well as titles that will satisfy the most knowledgeable students of history.

At Zenith's helm is Richard Kane, director of publishing. A 25-year veteran of military history book publishing (he is the former president of Presidio Press), Kane has brought his valuable and respected expertise to build Zenith into one of the world's leading publishers of military history and aviation books.

Many of the titles Zenith publishes, besides being factually sound and superbly written, are visually stunning, with an abundance of photographs and maps reproduced by the latest high quality printing technology. Kudos also go to Zenith's Creative Director Becky Pagel and her team of in-house designers for their consistently high standard of graphics.

The goal of everyone at Zenith Press is to set the standard by which all other military and aviation publishers are judged—a goal which they have reached and continue to exceed. To learn more, check out the Zenith website at www.zenithpress.com. □



race to repair the building.

Vogel throws in a final irony. Convinced that the Army would not need the Pentagon after World War II, Roosevelt insisted it be built for conversion to an archives after the war. The extra steel and columns used so that floors could support heavy file cabinets gave the building reserve strength that helped it withstand the blow of a hijacked jetliner 60 years later.

Based on official documents and hundreds of interviews and oral histories from the builders, first occupants, and more recent historic figures, *The Pentagon* is a big, satisfying book filled with intriguing facts and behind-the-scenes stories that will not soon be forgotten. A "must read."

Guadalcanal: The U.S. Marines in World War II, by Eric Hammel, Zenith Press, 2007, 160 pp., photographs, index, bibliography, hardcover, $34.95.

From Zenith Press and Eric Hammel comes another handsome, profusely illustrated tribute to the United States Marine Corps, this time focusing on the first major land battle involving American troops in the Pacific.

Following his earlier achievements with *Iwo Jima: Portrait of a Battle* and *Pacific Warriors: The U.S. Marines in World War II,* Hammel thrusts the reader into the hell and stench of battle on this Solomon island with both words and photographs, many of the most gruesome kind. Obsessed with Guadalcanal, Hammel pays tribute to the Marines' spirit in his fourth book on the subject.

As this was the first fight for the half-trained Marine Corps against an experienced enemy, the fighting was savage, the conditions often unbearable. Even starvation was a very real threat. Men either learned swiftly the ways of jungle warfare or they did not survive. The six-month-long battle was the longest and most complicated operation the Marines would undertake during the entire Pacific campaign, and the lessons learned on this tropical battlefield would be applied by the leaders during the remainder of the war.

As the whole idea of assigning combat photographers to a battlefield was new to the Marines, relatively few photographs exist of the struggle. Hammel has spent years locating every known photograph of Guadalcanal, making this book, in his words, "the largest collection of Marines on Guadalcanal that has been published to date, or maybe ever will be published."

Guadalcanal is truly an outstanding effort to document the sacrifice and struggle in Amer-

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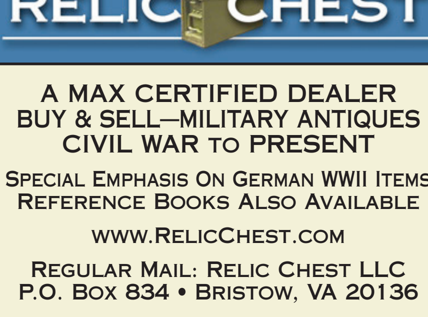

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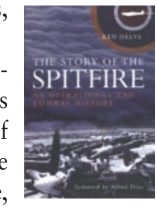
ica's first stepping-stone on the path to victory over Japan.

The Story of the Spitfire: An Operational and Combat History, by Ken Delve, Greenhill Books, 272 pp., photographs, index, hardcover, $25.95.



To many people, the Supermarine Spitfire fighter aircraft is seen as the embodiment of British resolve during the Battle of Britain. Fast, maneuverable, and powerful, the Spitfire, the Hawker Hurricane, and a small band of brave pilots are generally credited with turning back the Luftwaffe's formidable aerial armada and forestalling Hitler's invasion of Britain.

But how justified was the legend? British aviation author and historian Ken Delve, using official sources and firsthand accounts, has written a superb history of this remarkable aircraft from its origins in the late 1930s to its last combat role during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

Fighter Command pilots were thrilled with their new, state-of-the-art plane, but in terms of tactics and training the Royal Air Force was out of date. As air combat doctrine changed with the times and circumstances, the Spitfire and its pilots changed, too. Often, pilots with only a handful of hours in a training cockpit were thrown into battle; they either learned in a hurry or fell victim to the enemy's firepower. Delve's book tells all about what it was like to fight and survive at the controls of this remarkable aircraft.

Fortress Third Reich: German Fortifications and Defense Systems in World War II, by J. E. and H.W. Kaufmann, DaCapo Press, 2007, 369 pp., photographs, maps, technical drawings, index, bibliography, softcover, $22.95.

When one thinks of German military fortifications, images of the huge concrete bunkers of the Atlantic Wall and Siegfried Line (West Wall) come immediately to mind. But there is so much more to what Germany accomplished in an unprecedented but ultimately unsuccessful effort to ensure its own defense.

The Germans of the World War II era were some of the most remarkable builders and engineers of all time, and much of their expertise went into the planning and creation of immense, innovative static defensive works made of nearly indestructible reinforced concrete—many examples of which survive to this day.

From the Arctic regions of Norway to the French-Spanish border, throughout Italy and the Balkans, and along the Eastern Front, Hitler and his construction team known as Organization Todt had transformed the Third Reich into the most fortified territory in history. Yet, despite the technically advanced ideas and superior construction techniques, even these fantastic fortresses could not stave off defeat.

Covering the gamut from individual armored foxholes to huge underground installations, Fortress Third Reich provides the reader with insight about how and why thousands of these formidable works—everything from concrete casemates, bunker lines, observation posts, resistance nests, air raid shelters, flak towers, beach defenses, submarine pens, "dragon's teeth" antitank walls, V-1 and V-2 rocket-launching sites, and more—were built and how they were defeated.

The Kaufmanns, a husband and wife team, have captured the scope of German fortification building in this highly readable volume replete with fascinating and detailed engineering drawings by Robert M. Jurga. Very highly recommended.

Karl Brandt, The Nazi Doctor: Medicine and Power in the Third Reich, by Ulf Schmidt, Hambledon Continuum, 2007, 496 pp., maps, photographs, index, bibliography, hardcover, $29.95.

Some 60 years after the end of World War II and the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal, interest in the major figures of Nazi Germany continues unabated. Here is the first full-scale biography of Karl Brandt, Adolf Hitler's personal physician and one of the most powerful, behind-the-scenes figures of the Third Reich.

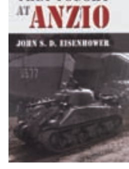
Ulf Schmidt recounts the meteoric rise of one of Hitler's most trusted advisers, Reich Commissioner for Health and Sanitation Dr. Karl Brandt. It was Brandt who was a leading figure in the Nazis' euthanasia program, the plan to exterminate physically and mentally handicapped children and adults, and who also played a key role in the use of concentration camp inmates as human guinea pigs for fiendish medical experiments. Schmidt examines the factors that led Brandt, and hundreds of other German physicians, to repudiate their Hippocratic oath and become instruments of torture and sadism for the sake of a twisted ideology.

The author also presents an incisive study of Brandt's seizure of political power and explores the contradictions of Nazi medicine in which the care for wounded soldiers and civilians existed side by side with the brutal treatment

and murder of tens of thousands of innocent, "unwanted" people. Brandt's eventual capture and trial at Nuremberg in 1947 are also described in detail.

Schmidt's book is a chilling, lasting reminder of the horrors perpetrated by the Third Reich.

They Fought at Anzio, by John S.D. Eisenhower, University of Missouri Press, 2007, 306 pp., maps, photographs, index, bibliography, hardcover, $34.95.



Written by the son of the Supreme Allied Commander of World War II, *They Fought at Anzio* is a gripping tale of every aspect of one of the most costly and controversial of all military operations.

Drawing upon official documents and first-person accounts of soldiers who were there, Eisenhower offers a new look at the Italian campaign with an emphasis on Operation Shingle, the invasion of Anzio, just 40 miles from Rome. The operation, conceived by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill as a way of outflanking the stalemate that had developed across Italy and was centered on Monte Cassino, was visualized as an amphibious "end run" behind German lines in January 1944 that would force the enemy to evacuate Italy and head for the Alps.

As events proved, however, Anzio became a second stalemate, and the invading force of British and American troops came close to being wiped out. Only with indomitable courage shown by the individual soldiers were the Allies able to prevail and break out from their surrounded beachhead five months later, spearheading the successful drive to capture Rome.

Eisenhower brings his trained military eye to reconstructing Anzio's difficult terrain, and approaches the Anzio battle as a contest between opposing commands striving to anticipate and counter each other's moves—not as a field exercise but as a deadly struggle for survival and victory. He analyzes the command decisions that brought about the stalemate, interspersing his account with personal experiences of the men in their water-filled foxholes. His book adds to the growing body of literature about one of the most frustrating, least understood battles of World War II.

French Resistance Fighter: France's Secret Army, by Terry Crowdy, Osprey Publishing, 2007, 64 pp., photographs, index, bibliography, softcover, $17.95.

Although small in terms of number of pages, this book is

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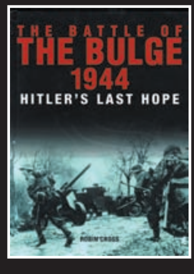
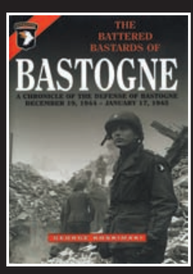


The Battle of the Bulge 1944 Hitler's Last Hope • Superbly Illustrated with rare photographs and detailed maps • Written by Robin Cross • 176 Pages Copyright 2002 • 8.5" x 11.5" • $34.95. In December 1944, the German Army launched an attack through the Ardennes forest to seize the port of Antwerp and cut the Allied supply lines. They were hoping to force the Western Allies either to delay their advance on Berlin or agree to a peace settlement. The book's authoritative text is illustrated with rare photos and detailed maps that explain the troop movements during the battle.



The Battered Bastards of Bastogne • Written by George Koskimaki • Fully Illustrated with Photos and Maps • 484 Pages • Copyright 1994 • $32.95. Through the eyes of the US 101st Airborne Division, The Screaming Eagles, *The Battered Bastards of Bastogne* relives the land and air war around Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge. Firsthand accounts bring the battle back to life, for a look at this battle as viewed by the soldier, not the historian. George Koskimaki weaves the memoirs of each of these men into a cohesive whole. The memories of one soldier fit with those of another unit or group in another nearby piece of terrain to present a gripping account of the battle.

Hell's Highway-Chronicle of the 101st Airborne in the Holland Campaign • Written by George Koskimaki • Fully Illustrated with Photos and Maps 453 Pages • Copyright 1989 • $32.95. Members of the US 101st Airborne Division, The Screaming Eagles, fought in Operation Market Garden to liberate the Netherlands. *Hell's Highway* is the personal account of the 612 members of this force who risked their lives for the freedom of the world. George Koskimaki expertly weaves together individual accounts of the battles and makes them into a cohesive whole. *Hell's Highway* helps us relive the battle by giving us a true picture of the war as seen through the eyes of the men who fought it.

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A Paratrooper's Panoramic View

By Robert L. Wilson & Philip K. Wilson

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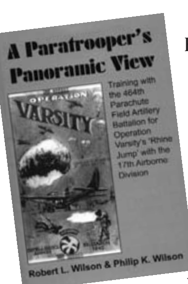

On March 24, 1945, paratrooper Robert L. Wilson jumped with the 17th Airborne Division as part of Operation Varsity – the largest airborne assault in history. Landing near Wesel, his artillery airborne outfit was the first to land, reassemble and fire their howitzers east of the Rhine river.

Varisty successfully prevented the Nazis from securing a Rhine stronghold and thrust Allied forces across Germany's northern plains en route to Berlin, accelerating the Nazi collapse.

A Paratrooper's Panoramic View provides a historical perspective of Varsity from one of the Operation's participants. Wilson, aided by his son, a historian, vividly recounts the attractions of airborne training and retraces his path from Parachute School, to Camp Mackall, to Europe's "Cigarette Camps" to Wesel, in preparation for the "Rhine Jump."

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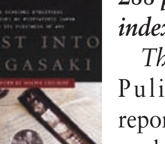
packed with information and details about a military force that has historically received little coverage. Working as an underground force, the Maquis, or French Resistance, was initially formed spontaneously from scattered groups of the displaced and discontented after the 1940 German invasion and occupation.

As the war progressed, the resistance developed into Charles DeGaulle's secret army, terrorizing the occupying forces and would-be collaborators alike. Although they were not protected by the Geneva Convention and faced torture, execution, or deportation to concentration camps if captured, the Maquis fought on, sabotaging German installations and lines of communication, often helping to save downed Allied airmen, and working to liberate Paris and other cities before the Allied armies marched in.

Striking photographs and full-color illustrations by Steve Noon, coupled with firsthand accounts of the dangers faced by the resistance fighters, create a personal portrait of men and women willing to risk everything to free their country. Crowdy details the military achievements, tactics, backgrounds, and motivations of the brave patriots whose assistance helped ensure the success of the D-Day landings and eventual French liberation.

First Into Nagasaki: The Censored Eyewitness Dispatches on Post-Atomic Japan and Its Prisoners of War, by George Weller, edited by Anthony Weller, Crown Publishers, 2007, 288 pp., maps, photographs, index, bibliography, $25.00.



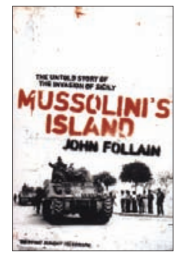
The Chicago Daily News's Pulitzer Prize winning reporter George Weller was, as the title of his book says, the first American reporter and outside observer into the atomic bomb-blasted city of Nagasaki. In defiance of a military imposed news blackout, Weller disguised himself as a U.S. Army colonel and began to document what he saw.

His initial dispatches were stoic and dispassionate, but as he observed the effects of radiation on human beings, his tone changed. He then entered the nearby POW camps, where American and Allied prisoners had been confined and tortured. General MacArthur was furious at Weller for violating censorship rules and he heavily censored his reports. Weller somehow misplaced his only surviving carbon copy of the dispatches, and he died in 2002, thinking the copy was lost forever.

After his death, Weller's son Anthony, himself an award-winning journalist, discovered the missing carbon copies along with numerous unseen photographs in a crate full of his father's papers and knew they had to be published. Fortunately, George Weller's eloquent accounts of what he discovered in and around Nagasaki have been resurrected to provide a unique perspective about the final stages of World War II, about the fate of a Japanese city and its residents, and about the brutal treatment of prisoners of war by their captors.

Weller's story is a reminder of the media's most important responsibility: to uncover facts and inform the public of the truth. The publication of *First Into Nagasaki* accomplishes the mission Weller began six decades ago: to tell a story that for too long has gone untold.

Mussolini's Island: The Untold Story of the Invasion of Sicily, by John Follain, Hodder & Stoughton, 2007, 288 pp., maps, photographs, index, bibliography, softcover, $15.95.



In July 1943, following their hard-won triumph in North Africa, the Allies launched their first assault against Hitler's "Fortress Europe" by invading the Italian island of Sicily.

In many ways, the invasion of Sicily, Operation Husky, was a dress rehearsal for the Normandy invasion—a triphibious (air, land, and sea), multinational coalition effort involving 180,000 troops, 3,200 ships, and over 4,000 aircraft, with armies commanded by General Bernard Montgomery and General George S. Patton (and General Omar Bradley as a corps commander) and the whole show orchestrated by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander.

Given the amount of manpower and firepower, Operation Husky should have been a brief, violent assault that quickly subdued enemy opposition. As it turned out, it was a month-long ordeal that involved tragedy, fiascos, infighting between the Allies, and a lost opportunity that allowed thousands of German and Italian troops to slip across the Strait of Messina and onto the Italian mainland, thereby prolonging the contest in the Mediterranean.

Using first-person accounts from U.S., British, Italian, and German participants in the campaign, author Follain weaves gripping personal accounts into the overall battle scheme to vividly paint a detailed picture of how things go right and wrong in war.

Mussolini's Island is a powerful new history of this important but often overlooked battle, with unforgettable stories about the horrors and heroism that take place on the battlefield. □

Insight

Continued from page 33

haphazard, some men simply being issued a rifle mounting a telescopic sight, pronounced a "sniper," and sent into the field. Dedicated schools were set up at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in December 1942 and at Green's Farm near San Diego, California, in January 1943, each running a five-week course.

Graduates earned the title "scout-sniper," reflecting the Marine philosophy that put greater emphasis on the information-gathering role of the sniper. In the war across the Pacific, these were employed largely in countersniper operations, having less opportunity than elsewhere for direct engagement of the enemy. They were also used to lead attacks on Japanese strongpoints. During the sustained fighting for Okinawa in 1945, snipers were called upon to eliminate pockets of resistance. Private David Webster Cass, Jr., knocked out a machine-gun emplacement that was holding up an advance at a range reputed to be 1,200 yards.

In spite of these demonstrable successes, the Operations and Plans Section of the Marine Corps dismissed sniping from postwar training schedules in a report as early as April 23, 1945. The Army's view was much the same, as I Corps Headquarters reported on January 5, 1945: "Sniper training has not been prescribed for I Corps for over a year, as their employment has not been considered practical."

These attitudes became standard throughout the U.S. military in the postwar period, and in other Western forces interest fizzled out as well. Only the Soviets continued their sniper training, recognizing the enormous contribution that snipers had made to their success during the Great Patriotic War and retaining snipers in every company of the Red Army. The formation of the German Bundeswehr in the 1950s saw a fixation with large numbers of armored vehicles to counter the perceived threat from Warsaw Pact forces.

The British dropped sniping only to rediscover its value during the ensuing wars of decolonization, relearning the process from scratch more than once. The only exception was the Royal Marines, who maintained a standard of excellence that would become the beacon that led the way. Others once again saw the light, including the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam. □

Jon Latimer is the author of several books on World War II. His most recent work is Burma: The Forgotten War. *He lives, writes, and teaches in Great Britain.*

Patton

Continued from page 61

flew in from the States on the 11th. Patton's medical records for that day read, "Prognosis for recovery increasingly grave." Spurling and the other doctors knew that it was impossible to operate to relieve the pressure on his badly damaged spinal cord to eliminate the paralysis. Patton, too, seems to have known that his injuries were irreversible, if not terminal. His first words to his wife were, "I'm afraid, Bea, this may be the last time we see each other."

Needless to say, rumors soon began to circulate that the accident that had led to Patton's death was no accident. Carlo D'Este dismisses this idea succinctly: "Those who suggest that Patton was somehow murdered have failed to provide the slightest evidence of how anyone could have planned such a caper or ensured that Patton's Cadillac would be momentarily stopped for the passage of a train at the crossing just down the street from the scene of the accident. Other than a handful of men on his personal staff, no one even knew where Patton would be, what route he would follow, or what time he would arrive at his destination."

George Patton died peacefully at 1755 hours on December 21, 1945. The previous afternoon it had been necessary to give him oxygen to restore his breathing and X-rays revealed that a small pulmonary embolism had obstructed his upper right lung. Beatrice spent most of the final afternoon with him but left to have supper when he fell asleep at about 1715 hours. A doctor summoned her at about 1800 hours, but it was too late. Another embolism had struck his left lung.

Patton's body, draped with his personal four-star flag, lay in state for two days in the Villa Reiner, a 19th-century mansion overlooking Heidelberg and the Neckar River. Beatrice initially wanted him flown home for burial at West Point but was persuaded that this would be totally inappropriate since no American soldier had, up to that time, been sent home for burial.

She was then given a choice of three large U.S. military cemeteries in Europe and chose the one at Hamm, three miles east of Luxembourg City. On the 22nd, the day *Stars and Stripes* carried the headline "PATTON DIES," she drove to Bad Nauheim to oversee her husband's effects being prepared for shipment back to their home in Massachusetts. His beloved dog, Willie, was to follow later. Tributes were already beginning to flow in and would eventually include messages from President Truman, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, and the French National Assembly.

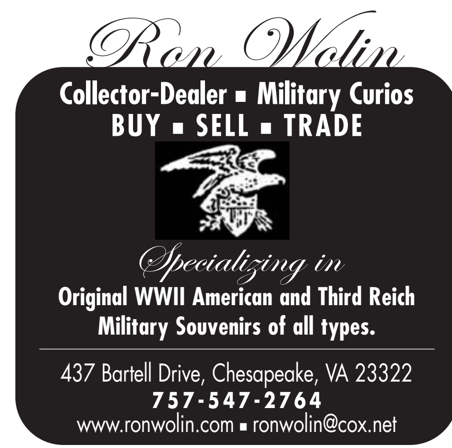
On the afternoon of the 23rd, Patton's coffin was taken on an Army half-track to the Protestant Christ Church in Heidelberg for a short Episcopalian service conducted by two Army chaplains during which there were no eulogies. It was escorted by a platoon of the 15th Cavalry, the unit in which Patton had begun his career in 1910. Bedell Smith did not attend the service, which is hardly surprising since Patton carried his dislike for both him and Eisenhower to his grave. Only two months earlier he had told Ike, "I cannot eat at the same table with Beetle Smith," and before he died he told Beatrice that he did not want either of them to attend his funeral. Patton could never forgive Ike for removing him from command of the Third Army.

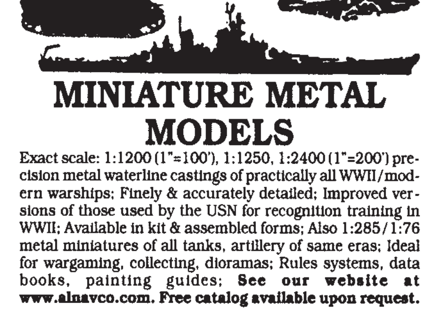
Following the service, the coffin, accompanied by Beatrice who was supported by Patton's old friend General Geoffrey Keyes, was taken to Heidelberg station along a route lined by some 6,000 U.S. soldiers. At 1630 hours it began its journey to Luxembourg where it arrived at 0400 hours on the 24th. The train stopped six times during the journey to allow honor guards, bands, and mourners, despite the freezing weather and heavy rain, to pay homage.

The route from Luxembourg City station to the U.S. cemetery was lined by troops from the United States, Belgium, France, and Luxembourg, and the cortège was followed by Prince Felix of Luxembourg, two French, one Italian, and numerous American generals, including Gay and Truscott.

George S. Patton, Jr., was buried at 0930 hours on December 24, 1945, among other American soldiers, many of whom had died while under his command. The ceremony lasted 25 minutes. In the final minute of the ceremony, Master Sergeant William G. Meeks, the man who had served Patton faithfully as his orderly since April 1942, presented Beatrice with the flag that had draped the coffin. There were tears in Meeks's eyes. A 12-man squad raised its rifles, and a three-round volley of salutes echoed into the Luxembourg hills. The bugler played the soft, sad notes of "Taps."□

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. Reynolds is a recognized expert on the Battle of the Bulge. He initially directed and later appeared as a guest speaker on some 50 British Army and NATO battlefield tours in the Ardennes. Since retiring from the Army, he has written several well-received books on the subject.





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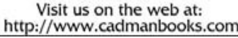

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Top Secret

Continued from page 39

a molded bucket seat and used a conventional stick and rudder bar to control the aircraft. Instruments consisted of an altimeter, airspeed indicator, clock, turn-and-bank indicator, and an arming switch for the warhead. The pilot was also provided with guidelines for calculating diving angles, which would prevent him from overshooting or falling short of his target.

The Reichenberg was not meant to be ramp-fired. Reitsch agreed that launching the manned flying bomb from a ramp would be too dangerous for the pilot. He would have no chance to escape if the guidance system failed, as often happened with the conventional FZG-76, resulting in a crash just after takeoff. A Heinkel He-111 would take the Reichenberg to within launching distance of its target, just as in the initial test flight by Reitsch. An intercom system allowed the pilot to talk to the Heinkel's crew during flight. Because there was no way to enter the Reichenberg's cockpit after takeoff, it was slung under the Heinkel's port wing, not under the bomb bay. The pilot had to board the missile before taking off.

When the Heinkel reached the vicinity of the target, the Reichenberg's pilot started the pulse-jet engine. Targets earmarked for the Reichenberg included bridges, shipping, small but vital installations (such as Battersea Power Station in London), and military bases that might be too heavily defended for a conventional aircraft to attack. The Heinkel would climb to about 20,000 feet and, after getting the approval of the Reichenberg's pilot, would drop the missile.

After being cast off, the Reichenberg pilot was on his own. His first task was to get his aircraft to level off—no mean feat, considering the FZG-76's history of malfunctioning. After gaining control of the missile, he would point it in the direction of his target and, finally, would arm the 1,900-pound warhead. The Reichenberg would be traveling at about 450 miles per hour at this point.

After arriving over the target, the pilot would aim the missile and push over into his final dive. The pilot did have the option of bailing out. The Reichenberg program was not specifically suicide-oriented, and there was a procedure for the pilot to jettison the cockpit hood and jump clear. However, chances of getting clear of the diving aircraft were slim, at best. The procedure for detaching the cockpit hood was fairly complicated, especially at 450 miles per hour, and the intake of the pulse-jet engine would probably have pulled the pilot right in. It would have been highly unlikely for the pilot to be able to jettison the hood, much less jump free of the missile.

Training the instructors for the Reichenberg project had already begun, and a program for recruiting pilots had also been approved. To crash into a target with nearly a ton of high explosives required a fanatical determination on the part of the pilot, as well as a personality that verged on the manic. However, Nazi Germany produced a good many individuals who possessed these attributes in abundance. Sixty pilots from KG 200 along with 30 of Otto Skorzeny's commandos volunteered for the Reichenberg project. Other recruits could have been found, as well, from the ranks of other Luftwaffe units and the Waffen SS.

By October 1944, a total of 175 FZG-76 flying bombs had been modified with cockpits and manual controls. Reitsch carried out a test of an unpowered version and brought the Reichenberg I to a successful touchdown on its wooden landing skid. However, during that month, command of KG 200 was taken over by Oberstleutnant (lieutenant colonel) Werner Baumbach, who had no faith whatsoever in the Reichenberg project and let his views be known. He thought that the program was a total waste of both manpower and matériel, which were becoming increasingly scarce in Germany. Shortly after he took command, the project was scrapped.

Had it been allowed to continue, the Reichenberg Project would almost certainly have had at least some degree of success. Japan had a similar project, which employed a similar aircraft—the rocket-powered Ohka (cherry blossom) kamikaze. The Ohka was a single-seat, wooden aircraft. It was carried to the vicinity of its target by a twin-engine Mitsubishi G4M Betty medium bomber, and it carried an 1,800-kilogram warhead. The Ohka program was employed successfully against U.S. shipping in late 1944 and in 1945. Among the many ships that were sunk by these piloted missiles was the destroyer USS *Mannert L. Abele* on April 12, 1945, off the coast of Okinawa.

The Reichenberg manned V-1 flying bomb could have been Germany's ultimate cruise missile—literally a missile with a man in it. Although it was the Luftwaffe's most unorthodox weapon, it was never used operationally. The degree of damage inflicted if the "German kamikaze" had been used against Allied targets is still open to speculation. □

David Alan Johnson is the author of the book The City Ablaze, *which is an hour-by-hour eyewitness account of the December 29, 1940, fire blitz on London. He resides in Union, New Jersey.*

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