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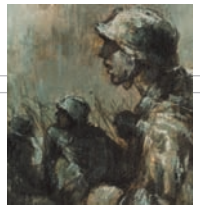
Contents

WWII HISTORY

Features



Cover: Battalion commander Alexei Yeremenko, who was killed in battle in 1942. urges his fellow soldiers on during fighting near Voroshilovgrad, Soviet Ukraine. Photograph by Max Alpert. Courtesy of ullstein-bild/The Granger Collection, New York. See page 66 for an article on the Red Army's attempt to relieve Leningrad.

Columns

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Editorial

The summer of 1942 doomed the expansion of Imperial Japan.

SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, THE FORTUNES OF WAR IN THE PACIFIC CHANGED irreversibly for the Japanese. Since 1931, Japan's army had asserted control over territory on the continent of Asia, brushing aside Chinese resistance, condemnation and political pressure from other nations, and most recently, the Allied military. Further, Japan had gained control over a vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, creating an outer ring of defenses extending thousands of miles from the home islands.

Japanese aggression and territorial expansion had been justified as a crusade to rid Asia of European and American colonialism. Their slogan "Asia for the Asians" actually meant "Asia for Japan." Years of conquest led to the creation of the so-called "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," a weak attempt to legitimize Japan's preeminent position in the region.

As the Japanese government debated the future of relations with the United States, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto warned that the prospect of a protracted war would surely end in defeat for his country. Yamamoto had visited the United States. He had served as a naval liaison officer and even attended Harvard University, studying English and petroleum management. He had seen firsthand the industrial might of America and warned that the only hope Japan had for ultimate victory would be to strike at Pearl Harbor, crippling the U.S. Pacific Fleet, and following that up with a string of rapid victories.

Yamamoto prophesied that in the wake of Pearl Harbor he would run wild in the Pacific for six months. After that, he made no guarantees. That prophecy proved eerily accurate. Following great victories in Burma and the fall of Singapore and Hong Kong, the terrific blow to Allied morale with the sinking of the battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* and the battlecruiser HMS *Repulse,* the seizure of the Philippines, the capture of thousands of American soldiers on Corregidor, and the Bataan Death March, Yamamoto was poised to seize Port Moresby at the tip of the island of New Guinea. From there, he would threaten Australia.

During the first week of May 1942, however, the Japanese endured their initial setback as the Port Moresby invasion force was obliged to retreat following the Battle of the Coral Sea. A month later, Yamamoto again went on the offensive, this time with Midway Atoll as his objective. The capture of Midway would provide a staging area for a potential invasion of Hawaii, just 1,100 miles to the southwest.

During the first week of June, the complicated Japanese plan of attack unraveled. At Midway, the loss of four aircraft carriers and hundreds of combat aircraft compelled the Japanese to relinquish the initiative. From that time on, the Imperial forces would be fighting a defensive war. Yamamoto's prediction was accurate almost to the day.

During the first week of August, American troops splashed ashore on the island of Guadalcanal in the Solomons. Their task was to capture the island, particularly its unfinished airfield, from which the Japanese had hoped to provide aircover for operations in the Southwest Pacific. The Guadalcanal campaign was the first offensive land action by U.S. soldiers during the War in the Pacific. The loss of the island after six months of bloody struggle sealed the fate of Japan.

Halted at the Coral Sea, soundly defeated at Midway, and confronted at Guadalcanal, the Japanese were astonished that their timetable of conquest could be upset so thoroughly and so quickly. Yamamoto did not live to see the final defeat of his nation. In April 1943, two months after the loss of Guadalcanal, his bomber was ambushed by a flight of American fighter planes and sent crashing into the jungle on the island of New Britain.

Twelve years of unabated Japanese military triumph came to an end during a period of only 90 days. The island road to Tokyo was long and costly for the Allies; however, from the summer of 1942 forward, the outcome was never in doubt.

Michael E. Haskew

WWII HISTORY

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Americans at the Bulge

Dear Editor:

As the author of *Patton's Vanguard: The United States Army Fourth Armored Division,* I read with great interest Major General Michael Reynolds's article (March 2007 issue) regarding the 1st SS Panzer Division's attack against the east side of the Bastogne relief corridor. Reynolds places much focus on some of the personal accounts from the German side of the hill. I am certain your readers would find the American point of view to be of equal interest. There is one account that sticks out in my mind as being particularly worth telling.

On that 30th day of December, Lieutenant John Kingsley was the commander of B Company, 35th Tank Battalion. It was Kingsley's understrength company of six Sherman tanks that artfully ambushed the Mark IV's of the Leibstandarte (B Company had arrived at the Bulge with 14 tanks, and had seen its numbers whittled down to six after eight days of continuous action). Recalling his unit's achievement after the action was completed, Kingsley stated, "If that German tank company commander isn't dead I wish they would make him a battalion commander. I wish they were all that dumb." The achievements of the 35th Tank Battalion were often overshadowed by the more famous exploits of their sister tank battalions in the division (Creighton Abrams's 37th Tank Battalion, and Albin Irzyk's 8th Tank Battalion). The blunting of the 1st SS Panzer Division's attack is among the 35th Tank Battalion's most significant achievements (the masterful attack at Troyes, spearheaded by C/35 under the command of Captain Crosby "Dick" Miller, also being near the top of the list). I am sure the veterans of the battalion will, in this case, appreciate Kingsley and his men receiving their due.

As an additional note, I should point out that the reference to the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion during this same action is a mistake in the record. The 701st was, of course, in Italy at the time, attached to the 1st Armored Division. The TDs supporting CCA/4 in this case belonged to the illustrious 704th TD Battalion.

Don Fox
Author, *Patton's Vanguard*

Sherman versus Tiger Redux

Dear Editor:

I just had to respond to Barry Ward's letter in the May 2007 issue. It is amazing that any single person could have so many things wrong in such a short space. First, he contends that the American delay in breaking out of the Normandy bridgehead was due to the superiority of German tanks to the American Sherman tank. Individual tank versus tank superiority was not the issue there. The problem was the terrain. The hedgerows gave the German defenders a terrain advantage that took longer than expected for the Americans to overcome. The handheld Panzerfaust and the concealed antitank gun were the Sherman's real nemeses at this point in the campaign. Most of the German armor formations in Normandy were concentrated opposite the British where the terrain was more suitable for armor operations.

Mr. Ward is also critical of the Americans for not upgrading the Sherman's "peashooter" with the British 17-pounder. He contends that this is because "they couldn't accept a non-American gun on an American tank." This is wrong for a couple different reasons. First, not even the British equipped all of their Shermans with 17-pounders. Out of each British troop (platoon in U.S. parlance) of three Sherman tanks, only one was converted to the 17-pounder-equipped "Firefly." Apparently there were not enough of these gun tubes to equip all of the British Sherman tanks let alone the American tanks. The Americans did have a more effective 76mm gun available at the time of the Normandy invasion, but were leery of employing it too widely because its high-explosive round was not as effective as the high-explosive round for the 75mm gun that equipped most Shermans at the time. As they gained combat experience, and realized the need for a more effective antitank capability on the Sherman, the Americans increased the number of 76mm-equipped tanks in the field. They also continued to work on more effective antitank projectiles.

Mr. Ward also states that we should have simply copied the T-34. I would point out that the T-34, while a good tank, was no more a match for a Tiger one on one than was the Sherman. Much like the Sherman, the T-34 was simple, robust, and easily mass produced. The Sherman was also much more automotively reliable than any German tank. At any given time, a large proportion of German tanks were unavailable because they were broken down.

I would also like to ask Mr. Ward why he thinks the British didn't copy the T-34. If I have read the history correctly the British in North Africa were very happy to get the Sherman for their forces. It was superior to anything they had in service at the time. The tanks with which the British had fought the North African campaign were so poor that even the American M-3 medium tank was welcomed as superior. American tank crews in Tunisia continued to fight in inferior M-3 medium tanks while the better M4 Sherman went to Montgomery's forces.

Whether Mr. Ward likes it or not, World War II was a war of materiel and the T-34 and Sherman are both manifestations of the triumph of mass production over an opponent who could not keep pace. That said, the Allied crews who crewed the Sherman deserve a lot more credit for skill and bravery than they typically get from those who are in love with Tigers and Panthers.

Throughout his letter, Mr. Ward shows a complete disregard for logistical considerations. The Allies were trying to conduct a war on a global scale, and the supply and materiel problems were tremendous. Someone could not just snap their fingers and have all the guns on all the tanks changed, never mind the considerations of ammunition and spare parts. There was intense competition for production resources and raw materials. Someone had to make the hard decisions on whether to prioritize production of tanks, airplanes, landing craft, combat ships, or any of the million other things it took to fight the war. Mr. Ward seems to think those decisions were made based on some concept he has of American ego. While not perfect, I think the U.S.-British alliance in WW II was truly remarkable for the relative absence of ego, and the focus on winning.

Finally, I can't see how Mr. Ward connects the dots from the breakout in Normandy to policy in Iraq or Somalia especially as it relates to decisions about tank design. The current American main battle tank, the M1A1 Abrams, is anything but all-American. The spaced laminate armor, also called "Chobam armor," is a British invention. The Abrams' 120mm canon is of German design. The key elements in any tank design are firepower, mobility, and armor protection. In the M1A1 two of the three are of foreign design. I can hardly see how Mr. Ward can see it as proof of some overriding American ego.

Guy DeYoung
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Battle for Cassino

Dear Editor:

The article on the battle for Cassino by David Lippman (May 2007 issue) is one of the most

revealing accounts of the war in Italy, especially the Cassino debacle. Most World War II accounts cover the D-Day landings and the subsequent fighting on the way to Berlin. It was in Italy that the Allies first faced the Germans in Europe some 10 months before the D-Day landings.

At the time the Germans still had hopes for victory and consequently used some of their best troops in Italy. Many of the German divisions were made up of veterans of the Russian Front and rotated to Italy along with the paratroopers, who were without peer.

After the war I had several opportunities to visit the Cassino battlefield and could see firsthand how the Germans were able to stall the Allied drive. The Germans had excellent observations over the whole area. The river crossing over the Rapido was doomed for failure with the Germans having the whole area preregistered for their artillery and those GIs of the 36th Division who made it across found themselves in a large, sodden meadow area with no protective cover.

The terrain behind the Abbey sloped down into a large bowl area that then went up to the ridge known as Snakeshead Ridge. The GIs of the 34th Division first gained access to the ridge and after two weeks of close combat came up 100 yards short of their goal. Grenades were the weapon most used as the close-in fighting made the use of mortars and artillery dangerous to both sides. The fighting in Cassino Town was equally difficult as the Germans made each building a strongpoint with German tanks embedded in the ruined buildings. The fighting was typical of the battle for Italy: one mountain after another with every village pulverized by bombing and artillery. It was a shame that the top Army brass of the Americans and British took so long to realize that frontal attacks were not the way to go.

Donald G. Weimer
88th Division, World War II
Williamsville, New York

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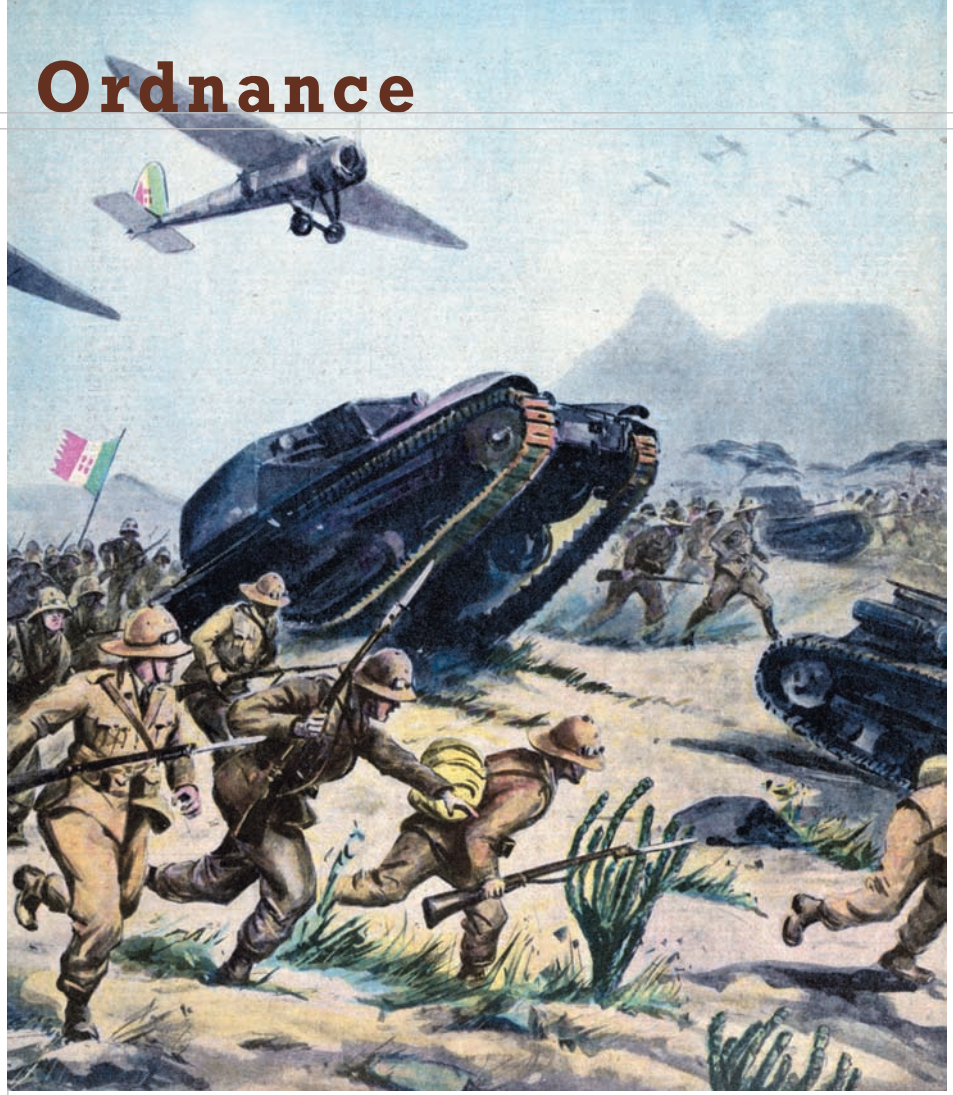
By Arnold Blumberg



Bigger and better, but still not spectacular

Brave crews and a practical armored warfare doctrine could not make up for the poor quality of Italy's tanks.

ALTHOUGH IT SUFFERED, LIKE ALL COMBATANTS, FROM THE COSTLY STALEMATE and horrendous casualties of trench warfare during World War I, Italy never used tanks during that conflict. The mountainous terrain that dominated the front along which Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire fought each other was unsuited for such vehicles, and none saw action during the war in the Italian theater. Nevertheless, the use of this military innovation on the Western Front did not go unnoticed by the Italian Army.

From September 1916 through the end of the war, Major Alfredo Bennicelli, an Italian officer serving in France, kept his government informed of the use of tanks by the British and French, thus fueling an interest in the new weapon within the Italian General Staff. During the war, at Bennicelli's urging, the Italians ordered a number of Schneider and Renault FT17 tanks from France in order to explore the possibility of forming their own armored force. The result was the country's first experimental tank unit, the Reparto Speciale Dimarcia Carri d'Assalto, or Special Detachment of Assault Cars, created in the summer of 1918 from the 60 available French machines still operational. Soon afterward the Italians started manufacturing their own Renault FT17s, known as the Fiat 3000, under license.

Entering service in 1921, the Fiat 3000 weighed 5.5 tons, had a top speed of 15 miles per hour, and carried two machine guns. As the only Italian tank built for many years, by default it formed the basis of the country's initial armored doctrine. Its sole purpose was the close support of the infantry, such as breaking down barbed wire obstacles and cleaning out enemy machine-gun nests so the foot soldiers could advance. The tanks were not initially organized to fight in concentrated units. They were parceled out to the infantry commands to be used as circumstances warranted.

As more Fiat 3000s became available, the first tank unit in the service, the company-size Reparto Carri Armati (Tank Detachment), was formed in 1923 and expanded to a regiment, the Reggimento Carri Armati, or Tank Regiment, in 1927. It comprised five companies, each containing 20 Fiat 3000s and 100 men.

During the early 1920s, Italian armored doctrine was evolving, although not straying far from its roots as an infantry support element. Colonel Enrico Maltese, chief of the Tank Detachment, formulated the early ideas about the proper use of tanks. While still advocating that they be firmly tethered to the slow-moving infantry, in 1924 he did recommend the development of self-propelled artillery, as well as suggesting the use of tanks of different sizes—heavy, medium, and light—for different combat missions.

Between 1925 and 1928, Maltese wrote about tanks acting as scouts for the cavalry, reducing antitank defenses, and their deployment in the initial assault phases of an attack. What was absent from his commentaries was any mention of tank versus tank combat and how to conduct it. The constricted nature of the Italian terrain and the predominant mindset among commanders that infantry and artillery were the primary weapons of land warfare before and after World War I, made it highly unlikely that the Italian General Staff thought much about offensive mobile warfare. Thus, the rather passive and defensive armored doctrine emerged in the 1920s. It was not until the 1930s that this began to

Italian troops, tanks, and aircraft invade and capture Adua, putting the ill-equipped Ethiopian army to flight. This painting appeared in the publication *Illustrazione del Popolo* on October 13, 1935.
(Mary Evans Picture Library)

Observing maneuvers near the Austrian border in August 1935, Italian King Victor Emmanuel and Mussolini view a new light tank. Italian armor, though somewhat improved between the world wars, remained inadequate under combat conditions during World War II.
(Imperial War Museum)

change with the advent of Italy's newfound territorial ambitions.

In 1933, Benito Mussolini, Italy's Fascist dictator, declared that his nation was going to become "a warrior state" and forge an army with which to reconstitute and maintain a new "Roman Empire" encompassing the Mediterranean, the Balkans, and northeastern Africa. What Il Duce needed was an army that could go on the offensive with tank forces and deliver speedy and decisive victories. What he had was an army high command that was not confident in the merits of motorization, let alone mechanization. This reluctance would retard the growth of a viable armored doctrine and the weapons to implement it right up to the time Italy participated in World War II.

Throughout the 1930s, the senior Italian army leaders debated the worth of motorization for the army. When it was finally adopted, it was only applied to the moving of men, supplies, and equipment prior to battle, but not using transport assets in actual combat. Having disposed of that problem, the high command deferred any final judgment on mobile battlefield operations. There were, however, some forward-thinking officers who stressed the need for an aggressive armored doctrine. One such person was Colonel Sebastino Visconti Prasca, who in 1934 published *La Guerra Decisiva,* which called for armored units aided by artillery and air power, although still only acting in a supporting role, to break the enemy's front, allowing friendly infantry and cavalry to pour through the gap created.

However, an instrument to achieve the desired mobile battlefield results as envisioned by Prasca was lacking. In 1933, the main Italian armored vehicle was the Carro Veloce CV33, or Fast Tank, later renamed the Carro Armato L3/33. A version of the 1929 British Carden Lloyd Mark V tank, it weighed three tons and was powered by a gasoline engine with a top speed of nine miles per hour. Its crew of two manned two Fiat 6.5mm machine guns fitted in the front of the hull. Its 13.5mm riveted armor plating at the front and rear was complemented by side armor of 8.5mm and 6mm of armor on the top and undercarriage. It could travel up to about 90 miles without refueling.

Cheap to build, the L3/33 design allowed for large numbers to be manufactured and put into service quickly. It also was the basis for experimenting with variants like flamethrower and bridge layer models. In 1935, it was upgraded in the form of the CV35 (later the Carro Armato L3/35), with two hull-mounted Breda 8mm machine guns, a little more armor plating, and a cross-county speed of 26 miles per hour. It was powered by a Fiat-Spa CV3 four-cylinder diesel, liquid-cooled 43 horsepower engine. Essentially tankettes due to their comparatively small size, both CV series—the 500 used in the 1935 Ethiopian War and 120 in the Spanish Civil War—proved vulnerable to close-quarters combat and enemy artillery, antitank weapons, and tanks.

The events in Spain in 1936-1937 had convinced the Italian authorities that a better tank had to be developed, but a number of major problems stood in the way. First, over 1,800 L3 types had been built (over 2,500 by 1941) since 1931. The vast number and low cost of the model made the government reluctant to move to another tank type. Second, lacking many raw materials such as iron, oil, and steel, Italy's industrial base was too weak to sustain the manufacture of a large number of quality armored fighting vehicles, let alone maintain them in the field, even if such a design were present.

At its peak, the county's tank producers, the automobile manufacturer Fiat and the shipbuilding company Ansaldo, could produce no more than 150 tanks a month. Further, much of the nation's war production resources went to the pride of the nation's armed forces, the Navy, or to the Air Force, which was a Fascist Party creation. The Army got what was left. The artillery branch was given priority in men and materiel, leaving the relatively new armored force to make do with what remained of the yearly Army appropriations.

Regardless of these problems, it was apparent to Rome by 1938 that a new and more powerful tank had to be designed and built. A new machine, the M11/39, the M standing for Medio or Medium, had been in the works for few years. It was built to be a breakthrough tank in support of attacking infantry and the mainstay of the two Italian armored brigades that existed in 1937. In reality an upgraded L3, it weighed 11 tons and had a rear-installed Fiat SPA 8T V-8 liquid-cooled 43 horsepower diesel engine which allowed it to travel at 21 miles per hour with a range of 124 miles. Armed with one low-velocity 37mm Vickers-Terni cannon placed in the right front hull, with only a minimal traverse up and down, and two Breda Model 38 machine guns, it was shielded by only 30mm of riveted plate armor. Sporting a high profile, standing seven feet, four inches high, the M11 was quickly spotted and so poorly protected that it was easy prey to any Allied tank or antitank weapon it faced. Like the L3, it had no radio, a poor suspension system, and was mechanically unreliable. The M11 did not enter service until 1939, but it was quickly determined that it would only serve as an interim tank until a more powerful weapon could be developed.

With new, more potent armored fighting vehicles expected in the late 1930s, Italian armor doctrine continued to mature. In 1938, General Edoardo Quarra, commander of the Tank Regiment from 1933 to 1936, urged the use of tanks en masse with artillery and infantry support to both break the enemy's line and exploit that penetration. In 1937, General Carlo di Simone, chief of the 2nd Armored Brigade, advocated the addition of more truck-borne or mechanized infantry to the armored unit. He also suggested the attachment of

motorized artillery and antitank weapons and ready air support. He stopped short of calling for the creation of an armored division since the absence at that time of a medium or heavy tank precluded such a formation from having the punch it needed.

If General Simone was wary of forming full armored divisions, his ideas did spur the Italian Army to embrace mechanization, which would greatly impact its future armor doctrine. In late 1938, General Alberto Pariani introduced the concept of *guerra di rapido corso* (high-speed mobile warfare). It announced a new doctrine, which put the tank, used en masse, at the heart of all offensive operations. Infantry and artillery were to act as support for the tanks and not vice versa. The exploitation of a breakthrough in enemy lines became a key role for armor.

As progressive as it was, the new doctrine failed to address the issue of tank versus tank combat. Nevertheless, the new policy created a

A disabled Italian tank sits motionless in the desert of Libya. A large piece of its track appears draped across the chassis. (ullstein-bild)

single Corpo d'Armata Corazzato (Armored Corps) made up of two armored and two motorized infantry divisions. A tank worthy of the new theory was needed. The proposed M13/40 seemed to provide the solution.

The M13/40 medium tank had its inception in the desire to replace the hull-mounted 37mm cannon on the M11/39 with a higher velocity 47mm Austrian Bohler gun housed in a rotating turret. Experimentation began in 1938, but suffered numerous setbacks. It was then decided to make a variant of the M11/39. A revolving turret with the 47mm gun was fitted onto a chassis that was almost identical to the one used for the M11/39.

Armor protection was not increased, but for better protection of the four-man crew steel plates were bolted to a steel frame. The M11/39 engine, suspension, and transmission were used in the new model, which, due to the added weight, made the M13/40 sluggish. Its top speed was no more than 19 miles per hour on the road and 11 cross-county. Its height, width, and length were a little larger than the M11's.

Moving toward the front in the Libyan desert in 1940, a column of M14/41 medium tanks of the 133rd Tank Regiment of the Littorio Armored Division raises a cloud of dust.

Each tank was fitted with a radio, and the 47mm gun proved to be comparable to the two-pounder used by the British. The new tank did not see action until 1940, and by the end of its production run in 1942 over 800 had been produced.

With the arrival of the M13/40 expected, the Italian Army decided to create armored divisions. These new formations were to contain one tank regiment and motorized infantry regiment supported by two groups of artillery, a company of antitank guns and two batteries of antiaircraft guns. Italy's three armored divisions entered World War II in June 1940 with a complement of 7,500 officers and men, 184 tanks (the majority L3/35s), and 24 75mm field guns each.

Even before the M13/40 was deployed, the Italians started working on a heavy tank design, the Carro Armato P40. The 26-ton vehicle had a diesel engine providing a top speed of 16 miles per hour. Its 75mm, turret-mounted gun was very effective, but for antipersonnel defense there was only one 8mm Breda co-axial machine gun. The crew of four was surrounded by 50-60mm of armor plate at the front, 40mm on the sides and rear, and 20mm on the underside. Favorably compared to the venerable German Mark IV panzer, the P40 never saw service during the war due to manufacturing delays.

In March 1943, the Army decided to end production of all its medium series tanks. Their poor performance since 1940 convinced the military that the best way to fight a tank was with an antitank gun, not another tank. This shift in tactics was reinforced by the presence of a formidable self-propelled gun, the Semovente da 75/18 Su Scafo M41, in the Italian arsenal. First making its appearance in North Africa in mid-1942, the Semovente was based on the German Sturmgeschutze III infantry assault self-propelled gun and manufactured by the Ansaldo Company. Using an M13/40 tank chassis, a short 75mm howitzer in a ball mount was fitted to the front of a low superstructure. The model's early trials proved it was reliable and easy to maintain. Ninety were ready for service by February 1941, with another 120 slated for production.

The new self-propelled gun perfectly suited the Army's longtime belief that artillery was the best antitank weapon. It also could act as mobile artillery, which would be used to create holes in enemy lines to be exploited by the infantry and tanks. Further, it fit well with the Army's artillery doctrine, *fuoco da manovra* (maneuvered fire), which called for the employment of massed antitank guns and field artillery fire close to the front.

The Semovente was manned by a crew of three: a driver, loader/radio operator, and commander/gunner. In almost all dimensions it was identical to the M13/40, except it was two feet lower in height, making it a more difficult target to spot. Its superstructure, frontal, and side armor was 25mm thick, while the mantlet was 50mm, and the top a thin 9mm. It carried 44 howitzer shells and proved to be a threat to Allied armor in the battles in North Africa. First used in small groups in direct support of armor and infantry, by late 1942 batteries of up to 16 vehicles were being employed for both support and independent missions.

In late 1942, the Semovente was upgraded by using an M42 tank chassis. About 200 of these were produced. Soon after, a new model carrying a 105/25 su Scafo M43 howitzer entered service. Built by Ansaldo, armor protection was 50mm all around. This was the most formidable armored fighting vehicle fielded by the Italians during the war. Thirty of them entered service before Italy left the conflict.

The armored fighting vehicles of the Italian Army during World War II have remained somewhat obscure. Their overall performance during the conflict must be assessed as less than spectacular. □

Arnold Blumberg has conducted extensive research into armored fighting vehicles of World War II. He resides in Baltimore.

By Peter Kross

FDR prepared the U.S. for entering the war

President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved the United States toward war with Germany and Japan in a series of diplomatic moves.

BY JUNE 1940, EUROPE WAS ABLAZE. DURING THAT MONTH, FRANCE FELL TO THE Nazi blitzkrieg that threatened to overtake the entire continent. In the previous year Hitler's troops and tanks had overrun Poland. The Nazi dictator's vision of world domination was now in his grasp, and only Great Britain stood in defiance of Germany. The German general staff was preparing a secret plan, code-named Operation Sea Lion, to invade England. All along the British coast, fortifications were being erected to repel the expected cross-Channel assault.

However much Hitler's generals wanted to invade England, the Führer still harbored wishes for an Anglo-German alliance against the greater enemy, the Soviet Union, and wanted to spare the tiny island the horrors of an invasion. He attempted by clandestine means to send peace overtures to the British government. To his disappointment, London resoundingly declined his offers.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, the United States was officially neutral. By 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had been elected twice and was campaigning for an unprecedented third term in the White House. Speaking to the county in person and via his fireside chats, he said that the United States did not want to send its boys to fight in any European conflict. The president's rhetoric was for public consumption only. In private, he was doing everything possible to join the struggle against Hitler, thus undermining the policy of neutrality that America had espoused since the beginning of the war.

To that end, FDR and Prime Minister Winston Churchill had for some time been exchanging personal correspondence on all sorts of matters, both private and military. In their voluminous letters, the prime minister referred to President Roosevelt as POTUS (President of the United States), while FDR called Churchill "Former Naval Person." Anyone reading their correspondence would have been shocked as to how far the American leader was going, secretly making plans for the shipment of surplus war materials to Great Britain and positioning the

Roosevelt confers with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill during their historic meeting at Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, in August 1941. The leaders drafted the Atlantic Charter during their conference. (National Archives)

United States to eventually join Great Britain as an active participant in the war against Germany.

If the president's wartime relationship with Winston Churchill was one of mutual trust and admiration, their first encounter did not turn out so well. The two men had first met 21 years previously when a young Franklin D. Roosevelt traveled to England. In later years, President Roosevelt told Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy, "I have always disliked him [Churchill] since the time I went to England in 1918. He acted like a stinker at a dinner I attended, lording it all over us."

Two decades later, with the clouds of war now squarely over England, then-Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appointed Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty. Like Churchill, FDR was part of his country's naval establishment, serving as assistant secretary of the Navy under President Woodrow Wilson in 1913 at the tender age of 31. In this role, Roosevelt turned his attention to an area in which he was well versed and interested in pursuing further—espionage.

ABOVE: Future General William "Wild Bill" Donovan was the founder of the OSS. This photo was taken in 1928. BELOW: In this 1913 photograph, future President Franklin D. Roosevelt poses while holding the office of Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

(Both: National Archives)

Roosevelt built up the only national intelligence agency the United States had at the time, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). ONI officers were posted to various countries across the globe to gather intelligence. FDR was obsessed with the possibilities of domestic subversion and home-grown violence perpetrated by foreign agents. As an example, he pointed to the Black Thom explosion in New York harbor on July 30, 1916, in which German agents blew up millions of dollars worth of ammunition bound for Allied troops in Europe during World War I. Seven men had been killed and 35 injured.

To gain a firsthand view of the war, Roosevelt visited England. Upon arrival, he met with Sir Reginald "Blinker" Hall, the director of British Naval Intelligence. For FDR, this meeting with one of the preeminent spymasters of the time was heady stuff. FDR was given access to Room 40, the top-secret bastion of British naval intelligence where the largest navy in the world was sent out to protect the empire. Hall shared with Roosevelt just enough highly classified information to whet Roosevelt's appetite for anything clandestine. Upon his return home, FDR vowed to transform the nascent American ONI into an organization similar to its British counterpart.

Almost 20 years passed before Roosevelt contacted Churchill in an official capacity. One week after Great Britain declared war on Germany, FDR wrote to Churchill and asked if it would be possible for the two men to begin secret, personal communications. FDR wrote, "It is because you and I occupied similar positions in the World War that I want you to know how glad I am that you are back again in the Admiralty. What I want you and the Prime Minister to know is that I shall at all times welcome it, if you will keep in touch personally with anything you want me to know about. You can always send sealed letters through your pouch."

On May 10, 1940, the government of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigned, and Churchill assumed residence at 10 Downing Street. The "Former Naval Person" was now Roosevelt's contemporary in power.

From across the Atlantic, FDR watched in horror as Hitler conquered most of Europe. Hitler knew that if he conquered England Germany would dominate the European continent for years to come. FDR knew that something had to be done to ensure England's survival, and his letters to Churchill showed how much he understood his friend's plight.

On May 16, 1940, a message between the two men revealed how far the United States was willing to go to aid Britain. Churchill told the president that to keep the sea lanes free of marauding German U-boats that had been wreaking havoc on British supply ships, he needed from the United States 50 old destroyers that were no longer in the active American fleet. The president told Churchill that he had no problem with the destroyer deal but that he had to get congressional authorization, which, at the time, was highly unlikely.

In the United States, a loud chorus of isolationists in Congress was pressing the Roosevelt administration to stay out of the war in Europe. In the 1930s, Congress had passed a number of bills that prevented the United States from supplying war materiel to combatants and refused to provide loans to any nation that had

defaulted on its debts from World War I. The isolationist sentiment was so strong that in 1938 a constitutional amendment was proposed requiring the American people to vote before war was declared.

Despite the isolationist sentiments in Congress, the president decided on a different course of action. On April 20, 1939, FDR told his staff in a confidential meeting, "We are going to have a patrol from Newfoundland down to South America and if some submarines are lying there and try to interrupt an American flag, and our navy sinks them, too bad ... If we fire and sink an Italian or German, we will say it the way the Japs do, So sorry. Never happen again. Tomorrow we sink two."

In June 1939, three months before Germany invaded Poland, King George VI of England arrived in the United States and met Roosevelt at his home in Hyde Park, New York. During their discussions, the president said that should war erupt between Germany and England, the U.S. would fully support England militarily.

The destroyer deal was a victory for the Roosevelt administration. In return for signing over the outdated warships, the British allowed the United States to use a number of their bases in the Caribbean for military purposes. During the war, these strategic bases would play an important part in tracking the German U-boat fleet, which prowled the waters of the Western Hemisphere.

Although FDR's policies regarding secret military shipments to England were positively endorsed within the upper echelons of Churchill's government, the U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain, the outspoken and controversial Joseph P. Kennedy, did not share their enthusiasm. Kennedy, a wealthy, Irish-Catholic millionaire from Boston who had reputedly made his fortune in the bootlegging business during Prohibition, had visions of becoming the first Catholic president of the United States. Being named ambassador to England, then the most prestigious assignment in the foreign service, was, in Kennedy's mind, the first step toward the White House.

The Kennedys were immensely popular when the new ambassador presented his credentials to the king. He brought to England with him his large and gregarious family, including his two eldest sons, John and Joe Jr., whom he made his personal secretary. They were the hit of the social circuit, going to the best parties British society could offer and meeting the upper crust of the kingdom.

While the British may have loved Joe Kennedy and his dashing family, FDR had a vastly different view of his new ambassador.

Before getting the London post, Joe Kennedy had lobbied Washington for the job of Secretary of the Treasury. Instead, FDR gave that most vital post to Henry Morgenthau who became a confidant of the president. Joe Kennedy was no intimate of the president, as time would show.

Kennedy was against any U.S. involvement in the European war and made no bones about how he felt. His public statements in support of American neutrality left many members of the Roosevelt administration shaking their heads. In FDR's eyes, Kennedy was getting out of step with the administration's foreign policy.

Joseph P. Kennedy, seen here with his wife Rose, served as U.S. ambassador to Great Britain and ruined his political career by opposing FDR's perspective on war with Germany. (National Archives)

In December 1939, Kennedy returned to the U.S. for consultations with the State Department and the president. Kennedy told FDR that, in his opinion, Churchill was "ruthless and scheming" and would do anything to get America into the war. He further told the White House that Churchill was allied with certain "Jewish leaders" who wanted nothing better than to get America into the war. Kennedy's blatant anti-Semitism was now out in the open, and his daily utterances made life difficult for the president.

During his stay in Washington, Kennedy had a meeting with Bill Bullitt, U.S. Ambassador to France. Kennedy told Bullitt that Britain and France were finished as sovereign countries, that Germany would win the war, and that there was nothing the United States could do to stop that from happening. Kennedy's comments were funneled back to the White House, and FDR reportedly said, "I never want to see that son of a bitch again as long as I live. Take his resignation and get him out of here."

Kennedy was now officially out of the Roosevelt administration and was replaced by a man more in tune with FDR's political program, John Winant, a Republican businessman who had none of the baggage that Kennedy carried. Winant was a facilitator between the president and Churchill.

In Washington, the administration was pushing ahead with the Lend-Lease Bill. The man responsible for drafting the bill was Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau. The administration got its way in most respects, including the right of American naval vessels to go on convoy duty, protecting ships heading for Europe. Roosevelt was also empowered to send military aid to the Soviet Union if that country were attacked by Germany.

The bill passed Congress easily, and Churchill called it "the most unsordid act in the history of any nation." By the time the war ended, the Lend-Lease program had sent between $40 and $50 billion worth of military aid to Allied countries. At the time Lend-Lease was signed it sent an unmistakable signal to Hitler that the United States was not going to allow England to be defeated without a fight.

While the debate over Lend-Lease was going on, covert meetings between American and British military leaders were taking place in Washington. In the summer of 1940, high-ranking American and British military commanders met to plan strategy in case the U.S. was brought into the war. These secret talks were called ABC-1, American-British Conversations, and were conducted away from the prying eyes of both the Congress and the American people.

While these secret military and political negotiations were going on, the president was running for re-election to a third term in 1940. His public rhetoric did not match his clandestine words and deeds regarding covert overtures to the British. At a campaign rally in Boston a few days before the November election, the President told the cheering throngs, "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again. Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." He repeated the same message in Brooklyn, stating, "I am fighting to keep our people out of foreign wars. And I will keep fighting." During stops in upstate New York, Roosevelt kept up the same anti-interventionist theme. "Your national government is equally a government of peace—a government that intends to retain peace for the American people."

If the president thought he was going to be campaigning against an antiwar Republican candidate, he was wrong. The GOP nominated Wendell Willkie, a native of Indiana and now a successful New York businessman. Willkie shared FDR's position on aiding the British and that potentially inflammatory issue never surfaced. Roosevelt became the first American president to be elected to a third term in the White House. He was now able to use all his influence to align the United States covertly behind Britain in her war against Germany. The actions FDR took between November 1940 and December 7, 1941, still one full year in the future, laid the cornerstone for American participation in World War II.

Working in conjunction with Winston Churchill, FDR took definitive steps in the year before Pearl Harbor to solidify American aid to Britain and prepare the United States for war. These included the initiation of naval patrols by American warships in the Atlantic Ocean beginning in April 1941. If an American ship spotted a patrolling German U-boat, the position of that submarine was to be instantly relayed to British ships in the area. Further, American naval units were dispatched to the coast of Ireland as a show of solidarity with the government in London. Ireland was not fully in support of the British in the war with Germany, and the Churchill government feared that the Germans would use Irish soil as a jumping-off point for an invasion of England. Congress passed a bill on September 16, 1940, which initiated a peacetime draft, the first one in American history.

Other provocative actions by the Roosevelt administration included the use of American naval ships as escorts for merchant ships of other nations sailing between the United States and Iceland and a presidential declaration signed on September 11, which authorized American warships to shoot at any German submarine that initiated hostile action. Through the so-called "ABCD" agreement, the United States pledged to come to the aid of Britain if that country were attacked by Japan in the Southwest Pacific.

The president had ordered the development of a series of war plans addressing numerous potential scenarios. The Rainbow 5 plan was a comprehensive blueprint for U.S. involvement in a European conflict. Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall had led the effort to complete the plan, which carried the official name of "Army and Navy Estimate of United States Over-All Production Requirements." Marshall's report to the White House was staggering in its military implications. To fight and win a global war, the United States would require 216 infantry divisions, 51 motorized divisions, and a large navy capable of covering the world's oceans. The pricetag for this huge military buildup was an astronomical $150 billion.

On December 5, 1941, the Rainbow 5 plan was leaked to the press and published in the anti-Roosevelt *Washington Times Herald*. Readers were treated to a screaming headline: "WAR PLANS' GOAL IS TEN MILLION ARMED MEN. PROPOSED LAND DRIVE BY JULY 1943." Before the fallout from the *Herald*'s bombshell could make any further

trouble for the administration, the magnitude of the story was overshadowed by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor three days later.

On July 25, 1941, Roosevelt froze all Japanese assets in the United States. Days after this action was taken, the governments of Britain and the Netherlands East Indies took similar actions. This was, in reality, an act of economic warfare by the United States against Japan. The Roosevelt administration soon took the further hostile measure of enforcing a total trade embargo against Japan. The embargo was literally a stranglehold on the Japanese, who now had to look elsewhere in the world for the precious oil that fueled an ever-growing military machine.

In August 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill met at Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, and agreed to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. To pave the way for a summit meeting between the two, the president sent Harry Hopkins, one of his most trusted aides, to London to make arrangements. Churchill arrived aboard the battleship HMS *Prince of Wales,* while Roosevelt reached the location aboard the cruiser USS *Augusta.*

Their conference focused on two important items: the conduct of the war in Europe and how the political climate of the world would look after hostilities ended. One of the agreements coming out of the meeting was a decision by the Americans to allow U.S. naval vessels to provide escort for shipping as far away as Iceland. As of September 16, 1941, it became the policy of the United States that if any American naval ship was attacked by a German U-boat, immediate retaliation was in order. That decision was the unofficial beginning of American participation in the war. It was also decided that American and British commanders would meet to formulate military policy, even though the United States was not technically involved in hostilities.

In the end, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed on a number of fundamental policies to govern a postwar world. Among them were the basic freedoms of worship and speech and a dedication to a postwar international organization similar to the old League of Nations, but which would have more power to settle international disputes. The other principles in the declaration were self-determination and economic liberalism. Self-determination called for the freed populace of any nation to choose its own way of life and form of government. This notion did not sit well with either the British or the Soviets. The British did not want to lose their mighty worldwide empire, while the Soviets did not want to take the chance that any liberated nations in Eastern Europe would choose democracy over communism. The term "economic liberalism" was more benign in its concept. It called for free trade among nations and freedom of the seas.

Churchill came away from the meeting convinced that "FDR was obviously determined" to enter the war at some point in the future. Like the other clandestine steps taken by the American president to align the United States with England, the principles spelled out in the Atlantic Charter were another step on the road to open American involvement in the war.

In October 1941, the U.S. rejected offers by the Japanese government that would have ended the economic embargo. In a message dated November 26, 1941, the U.S. further called for the unconditional pullback of Japanese forces in Indochina and the Far East, and the renunciation by Japan of the use of force in the region.

The United States also allowed former American military pilots to carry out covert aerial attacks against Japanese forces in the Far East on behalf of the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang, the Nationalist leader, asked the Roosevelt administration for a large force of 500 bombers from the American arsenal to be used in a military campaign against Japan. Roosevelt thought that this was too much of a provocation against Japan and decided to scale down the request instead of canceling it outright.

The president had tasked Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau to meet with certain representatives of the Nationalist government, including T.V. Soong, the ambassador to the United States, and Claire Chennault, a onetime U.S. Army Air Corps officer and the current American air advisor to Chiang. In December 1940, a secret agreement was formulated between the White House and Chiang's representatives whereby a number of furloughed American Air Corps pilots, along with 100 Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk pursuit planes, were loaned to the Nationalists to carry out military actions against the Japanese. The American pilots were paid $500 per month, as well as an extra $500 for every Japanese plane they shot down. This secret air unit earned the nickname of "The Flying Tigers." The Chiang-Roosevelt agreement was not revealed to the public until the war was over.

Some revisionist historians have speculated that FDR was aware of the impending attack on Pearl Harbor. In historical hindsight, such assertions are not based on fact. A more accurate description of events is that the intelligence gathered was misinterpreted or mishandled. The air and seas commanders in Hawaii were kept largely in the dark until the fateful

By Scott A. Beal

LEFT: Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler and Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen proceed to the opening of the Reichstag on March 21, 1933. BELOW: Papen made the cover of *Time* on July 4, 1932.

(Left: akg-images)

From espionage to politics and war crimes

Career diplomat and aristocrat Franz von Papen remains something of an enigma among prominent Germans of the Nazi era.

ON MAY 31, 1932, FRANZ VON PAPEN ACHIEVED THE pinnacle of a long career serving his country when, in a surprising move, the aging President Paul von Hindenburg named him Chancellor of Germany. The hand of fate had taken an unusual route in guiding this career diplomat and spy to the helm of Germany. Intent on preserving peace while contending with unstable political and economic situations domestically, Papen's six-month administration as chancellor instead was dominated by controversy and international intrigue. Both characteristics seemed to follow Papen throughout his career, before and after his term as chancellor.

Born October 29, 1879, in Werl, Westphalia, Franz von Papen was the son of a wealthy landowner. Like many young men of the day, he decided upon a career in the military. By World War I he had risen to become the military attaché to the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. Papen had married the niece of a French marquis, who taught him to speak almost perfect French. The couple had grown quite popular among the Washington diplomatic corps by 1915 when Papen was declared persona non grata by the U.S. government and ordered home to Germany.

His unofficial job while in America had been that of spymaster. Charged with overseeing German espionage agents and their activities concentrated on preventing American armaments from reaching England, Papen was given a considerable budget to fund the operation. Dummy corporations were established which then took all the orders they could for Allied armaments. With no intention of filling the orders, their customers were continually given excuses about the endless delays, thus helping Germany's cause.

Other fictitious firms created by Papen bought all the gunpowder available in the United States under the guise that these fabricated companies were manufacturing grenades and artillery shells destined for England. Instead, the gunpowder languished in warehouses never to see use during the war at all.

Though these two operations were relatively successful in assisting Germany's war effort, other efforts were not, primarily because of the ineptitude of Papen's subordinates. In particular was one Heinrich Albert, an attaché at the embassy who inadvertently left his briefcase on a train in New York. The case was promptly seized by an American intelligence agent. It contained sensitive documents, and their eventual publication in American newspapers caused significant embarrassment to the German diplomatic corps, particularly Papen.

Incidents such as this increased the tension between Franz von Rintelen and Papen as well. Sent from Berlin to coordinate sabotage efforts in the United States, Rintelen was intent on blowing up military installations and warehouses. Rintelen's approach to espionage vastly differed from that of Papen, who preferred quieter, more sophisticated methods of harassing Germany's enemies. Papen was of the opinion that Rintelen's "loose cannon" approach was not only reckless in its own right, but it potentially endangered the plans implemented by Papen as well.

While Rintelen was busy funding sabotage operations against U.S. merchant vessels and

the 1917 explosion at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard in San Francisco (in which 16 children were killed), Papen was consistently cabling the Abwehr (Germany's intelligence agency) insisting that his more flamboyant associate be recalled to Germany.

Papen got his way, and Rintelen was indeed ordered home to Germany. However, instead of being allowed to continue assisting the war effort by using his own methods, Papen was placed in the position made vacant by Rintelen's departure, that of supervising sabotage in the United States. While he never ordered acts of overt terrorism in the United States like his predecessor, Papen evidently did authorize such activities in Canada.

He dispatched men to blow up crucial portions of the Canadian Pacific Railway, thus preventing troops from reaching the transports destined to take them to England. However, Canadian authorities and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were able to thwart this mission. While he was coordinating these activities, he also supervised operations preparing forged identification papers for German citizens who were eager to return to Germany and fight for their homeland.

Papen's activities finally caught up with him and caused his ejection from America. Specifically, the attempts to sabotage American armament production and a conspiracy to blow up Canada's Welland Canal were the ultimate causes. These events would resurface in the American press when Papen became German chancellor in 1932, and in his autobiography he attempted to clear up his part in the activities. Much of the evidence against Papen in 1915 was supplied by British agents who were not completely unwilling to manufacture information implicating a German national during wartime. It was under this cloud that Papen headed home to Germany, but he would not remain there very long.

Sent to Spain briefly in 1917, Papen was serving again as military attaché when he reportedly had contact with the ill-fated German spy, Mata Hari. In 1918, mainly because of his bungling attempts at espionage in the United States and a less than stellar performance in Spain, Papen was sent to Palestine where he was to serve as the chief of staff of the 4th Turkish Army. Leading a ring of spies for the Turks in their war against the British, he was charged with tracking down Arab guerrillas under the command of T.E. Lawrence, the now famous "Lawrence of Arabia." Here too, he was unsuccessful. During this period he also implemented clandestine operations that encouraged rebellion in both India and Ireland, as well as more sabotage in the United States.

With the end of World War I, the devoutly Catholic Papen returned to Germany and embarked on a career in politics, joining the Catholic Centre Party. In 1921 he was elected to the Reichstag, the German parliament, settling into a position as an unexciting but wealthy member of his party, and ultimately serving as a party deputy. By 1932, the suave, well-mannered Papen had attracted the attention of party leaders. At the time, former German Chancellor Heinrich Bruning was leading the Catholic Centre Party. President Hindenburg had been nurturing Bruning as his protégé, but Bruning was dropped from this role. With Hindenburg lacking a favorite, Papen was offered up as replacement for Hindenburg's support.

As a young soldier in the German Army, Franz von Papen poses wearing the traditional Prussian spiked helmet. (Library of Congress)

It was General Kurt von Schleicher, Hindenburg's chief adviser, who orchestrated Papen's ascendance to German chancellor. In late May 1932, Schleicher posed Papen to Hindenburg as a patriotic German who would answer the call of his country to serve, even at the expense of offending his own party. At the president's insistence, Papen accepted the role reluctantly.

The government Papen presided over was a strict one and tolerant, if not favorable, to Nazi ambitions. In June 1932, he rescinded the ban on the Nazi Party's paramilitary SA (Sturm Abteilung or Storm Section, also known as the Brownshirts) and deposed Prussia's Social Democratic government. One positive accomplishment of his administration was that he did manage to get Germany's war reparation debts cancelled, but it was not enough to validate his other actions. Papen's attempts to disregard the Weimar constitution and implement his authoritarian rule had managed to alienate one of the key men who had helped place him in power, Schleicher.

General Schleicher then took matters into his own hands by convincing several cabinet ministers to flout Papen's initiatives, and the chancellor resigned in December 1932, only to be replaced by Schleicher himself at the direction of President Hindenburg.

It was this series of events that led Papen, still stinging from his apparent betrayal by Schleicher just weeks prior, to seek out Adolf Hitler in January 1933 and forge an agreement with him. This now infamous arrangement would see the aging Hindenburg appoint Hitler as chancellor on January 30, 1933, with Papen as vice chancellor. Papen had been successful in persuading Hindenburg that he could prevent Hitler from enacting many of the extremist Nazi programs he was anxious to implement.

In this scenario, Papen envisioned his own return to power, believing that Hitler would be malleable to behind-the-scenes manipulation. Vice Chancellor Papen quickly learned that Hitler was not so easily swayed from the aims of his Nazi agenda. Although Papen was not as extreme as Hitler in pushing the persecution of German Jews, his attempts to justify that discrimination were apparent in a speech delivered in Gleiwitz in 1934. "There can certainly be no objection to keeping the unique quality of a people as clean as possible," Papen had stated, "and to awaken the sense of a people's community."

Papen was now effectively trapped in a powerless position. As vice chancellor for almost 18 months, he was unable to sway Hitler from his extremist plan, but so desperate to hold on to any shred of power was Papen that the alternative of resignation and possessing no power at all was even worse. If in his present situation he was powerless, his proximity to Hitler meant he was relatively safe.

Papen narrowly escaped death when as many as 400 members of the SA were purged on June 29, 1934, during what came to be known as the Night of the Long Knives. Many of those murdered were high-ranking Nazis of the old guard, including the SA leader and Hitler's longtime friend, Ernst Roehm.

Hitler's justification for this systematic slaughter was based on claims that the SA was planning to overthrow the government. Actually, Hitler gained the tacit support of the professional German military and elevated the role of the SS, under Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, to greater prominence as a result of the purge. It was also a convenient vehicle for Hitler to rid himself of anyone he considered opposed to the Nazi regime. Counted among the victims that night was Schleicher, the most recent chancellor and Papen's former patron turned rival. Also illustrative of how close the vice chancellor's office was to peril that night,

Prior to the signing of the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact on August 23, 1939, German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop departs the company of Ambassador Franz von Papen. (akg-images)

Papen's press councilor was killed.

By now it had become painfully clear to Papen that he had grossly overestimated his ability to control Hitler, and he finally resigned as vice chancellor three days later. The resignation was most likely prompted by self-preservation and a keen awareness that he could just as easily have been a victim himself on that horrible night.

Two weeks previous, in a letter to Hitler on July 12, 1934, the day before the German people learned of the purge, Papen praised the Führer for his actions concerning the SA's purge of June 29. He wrote, "Allow me to say how manly and humanly great of you I think this is. Your courageous and firm intervention have met with nothing but recognition throughout the entire world. I congratulate you for all you have given anew to the German nation by crushing the intended second revolution."

Franz von Papen was certainly not stupid in attempting to curry Hitler's favor, lest a fate similar to one that befell Schleicher visit itself upon him. Nor was he the type to fade into obscurity, content to have escaped death so narrowly. In the wake of the assassination of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, the subsequent unrest in Austria, and Mussolini's massing Italian divisions near the Brenner Pass, Papen was abruptly summoned by Hitler and assigned the task of maintaining stability in Austro-German relations. The fact that Hitler had never publicly accepted or announced Papen's resignation as vice chancellor weeks earlier was now the perfect opportunity to vacate the vice chancellor's office without the appearance of internal strife.

In the last official documents signed by President Hindenburg, Papen was officially appointed ambassador to Austria on July 28, 1934, arriving in Vienna on August 15 amid an atmosphere of distrust and intrigue. He cautiously embarked on the task of calming the volatile situation, all the while intent on orchestrating Austria's eventual annexation into Germany, with that unification being achieved by referendum on April 10, 1938.

From his post in Austria Papen once again retired, his government service apparently over. Then, in 1939 Hitler appointed Papen ambassador to Turkey, the primary task being to prevent that nation from forming a partnership with the Allies. Also among his responsibilities was overseeing the immense German spy network that existed in neutral Turkey. It was here that he came into contact with one of the best known spies of the war.

In 1943, one of Papen's clerks at the German Embassy introduced him to an Albanian named Elyeza Bazna. As a personal valet to British Ambassador Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen in the British Embassy in Ankara, Bazna had offered to steal British secrets for the Germans. Papen jumped at the opportunity, christening Bazna with the code name Cicero.

Cicero (Bazna) began to supply Papen with voluminous amounts of information in return for large sums of currency in the form of British bank notes. The payments originated from the office of German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. Unknown to Papen, the bank notes sent as payment for Bazna were counterfeit. The information that Bazna provided was not counterfeit at all, and in fact it seemed so incredible that the Germans receiving it refused to believe its authenticity. Most notably, there

were records of meetings between Churchill and Roosevelt at the Casablanca Conference, and documents containing the code name Overlord, the designation for the Allied invasion of Europe planned for 1944. The Germans were unable to discern the precise meaning of Overlord and never pursued it.

This flow of pilfered information continued unabated under Papen's watch until the British were informed that their Ankara embassy had a security leak. The name Cicero had appeared in a cable from Papen to Ribbentrop, and an American agent of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in the German Foreign Ministry Office spied it on Ribbentrop's desk. This information was then passed from the OSS agent in Berlin to OSS station supervisor Allan Dulles in Switzerland, who then told British intelligence of the leak.

The British investigated, but try as they might they were unable to identify Cicero. That is, until a secretary in the German Embassy defected to the British and told British intelligence that Cicero was the ambassador's valet. The ambassador and investigators immediately questioned Bazna, but he refused to crack under their interrogation, denying all charges. He was dismissed and left the embassy, embarking almost immediately for South America via Lisbon, Portugal. With him went one of the best sources of information Germany had.

Papen remained on station in Turkey until he was recalled to Germany in late July 1944, less than a week after the attempt on Hitler's life on July 20. His fate was far from certain as he returned amid the reprisals over the assassination attempt being visited upon people at every level of the German government and armed forces. Papen met with Hitler days after his arrival. After Papen briefed the Führer on the situation in Turkey, Hitler personally presented Papen with the Knight's Cross of the Military Merit Order. This decoration was proof enough of his loyalty for those rounding up suspects in the assassination attempt. Papen was removed from any danger connected with the consequences of the failed coup. In September he once again retired to his home in Westphalia.

He would not enjoy a leisurely retirement for long. In November 1944, amid the growing threat of advancing U.S. forces, he and his family were forced to flee their home, which was subsequently looted and burned to the ground by the U.S. Army.

Arrested by Allied troops at the home of his daughter and son-in-law on April 10, 1945, Papen was transported to Rheims, and ultimately to Nuremberg. He was placed among the prominent Nazis on trial there. He was found not guilty of "conspiracy to prepare for an aggressive war" by the Nuremberg tribunal in 1946. However, on May 1, 1947, he was declared by a German court to be a "major offender" and sentenced to eight years in prison for being a "prominent Nazi." He appealed this sentence and, most likely because of his wealth, was released in January 1949, but forced to pay a fine.

Although Papen lost his state pension and driver's license, his assets and property were returned to him. Publishing his autobiography, entitled *Memoirs,* in 1952, he painted a portrait of himself as meaning well but caught up in historic events and unable to stop the Nazi machine once it had started. Whether he truly was a wily diplomat adept at the highest levels of Machiavellian intrigue and remaining one step ahead of his rivals, or an honest man caught up in epic events, the impact of his role in German government before and during the war remains for history to judge. Franz von Papen died in Obersasbach, Germany, on May 2, 1969. □

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By Ulrich A. Straus

Chinese help save Japanese "face" after 1945 surrender

Crouching before his Chinese captors, a dejected Japanese soldier awaits his fate at Changde in Hunan Province. This soldier was captured as the Chinese advanced on February 1, 1944.
(© Bettmann/CORBIS)

The more than one million Japanese prisoners of war were generally treated with honor and respect by the Nationalist Chinese.

IT WILL NOT COME AS A SURPRISE TO AMERICAN READERS THAT WHEN THE Japanese emperor delivered his surrender message on August 15, 1945, Allied forces led by the United States had thoroughly defeated Japan's naval and air power in the Pacific. They may be less familiar with the fact that the bulk of Japan's land forces were still largely intact. In three years of intense combat beginning in late 1942, Allied forces had retaken control of many islands in the Pacific, notably the Philippines and Okinawa, and had routed the Japanese defenders. At that point, however, they had not defeated key units of the Japanese Army.

When the cease-fire took effect, a depleted force of some 300,000 Japanese soldiers in Manchuria had fallen victim to the sudden attack of the Soviet Union on August 8, 1945, and many were on the run. All of the other Japanese divisions that were scattered throughout East Asia remained fully intact. These included Japanese forces in the Dutch East Indies, Malaya, Thailand, Burma and French Indochina. Although weakened by relentless American submarine and air attacks against Japanese shipping, these forces had hardly even been tested in combat.

The largest contingent of Japanese soldiers in East Asia—about 1.2 million of them—were still stationed in China when the war ended. Beginning in 1937, Japan had vainly attempted to subdue the Chinese only to discover they were strengthening nascent Chinese nationalism. The Japanese had seized China's largest coastal cities and controlled the main communications arteries in the eastern part of the country, but huge areas of China remained outside Japanese control. Chinese Nationalist, Communist, and warlord armies sporadically fought the Japanese and occasionally each other. As late as the spring of 1945, Japanese armies staged a major offensive to seize airfields in western China that were being used by American bombers.

The war in China was a drawn out, leisurely kind of conflict, punctuated by occasional Japanese victories in the field but no final resolution. It was marked by relatively few Japanese casualties and a Nationalist foe that preferred to husband its resources rather than risk losing large numbers of men and scarce weapons in pitched combat.

The conflict often seemed senseless to the Japanese troops as their forces would advance, seize territory often without coming to grips with the enemy, and then relinquish gains in order to shorten their lines. Many of the troops were engaged in light garrison duty in urban centers, rather than combat. Their experiences were vastly different from those of soldiers and sailors engaged in sustained, bitter combat on the islands in the Western and Southwest Pacific. Some of the prisoners the Allies took in the Pacific had previously served in China. In interrogations they generally expressed surprise at how desperate the struggle was against a much tougher and better equipped foe in the Pacific, for which they were unprepared. The Japanese soldier in China was expected to live off the land during combat operations. He was provided with a ration of rice, some vegetables, occasionally a little dried fish and some cigarettes, but beyond that was on his own. If he needed addi-

tional food or shelter, he would have a choice among paying for it with worthless currency, bartering for whatever prizes he might have "liberated," or just taking it.

Under benign circumstances, the policy of living off the land led to Japanese troops bedding down with the peasants and relying on them for at least some of their food. If the farmers resisted, the Japanese would not hesitate to mete out severe punishment, including death. Frequently the Chinese peasants would simply flee before the Japanese arrived. Then the soldiers helped themselves to whatever stores were available, and often set fire to what remained in order to deprive guerrillas of support.

The emperor's surrender broadcast did not come as a complete surprise to Japanese forces in the Pacific, where they had been battered by successive defeats. The news was far more unexpected for undefeated Japanese ground forces in China. Although senior officers and signals personnel were generally kept informed about military trends in other theaters, the Japanese refrained from providing their troops with much, if any, news about the recurrent defeats.

Although undefeated and not expecting defeat, Japan's largest concentration of troops surrendered to the Chinese without incident. Having witnessed, and in some cases participated in, the routinely cruel treatment of Chinese POWs and civilians, the Japanese expected the worst. Consequently, they were totally taken aback by the uniformly benign treatment that ensued at the hands of the Chinese.

The official policy of the Kuomintang, or Chinese Nationalists, was calculated and came down from the very top. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek set the tone of his government's postwar policy as soon as the war ended. In an address delivered on August 15, 1945, an hour before the emperor spoke, Chiang stated that China had a distinctive morality that "taught us not to think about the past evils of individuals, but to think of their future good works."

Now that the Japanese militarists had been overthrown, Chiang urged the Chinese people no longer to think of the Japanese people as the enemy: "We should not seek revenge from the enemy nor insult the innocent people of the enemy country…. If we were to insult them as they did us, one grudge would simply lead to another and continue into eternity."

This remarkable display of generosity toward the defeated foe has been cited by numerous Japanese accounts of the war's end in China as affecting them deeply and was called to mind with intense feelings of thanksgiving in my interviews of former Japanese POWs. The Japanese tended to attribute Chiang's remarkably restrained attitude to his belief in Confucian precepts akin to turning the other cheek. In turn, Chiang's words had caused them to "reflect" on their own past mistreatment of the

A Japanese officer summarily bayonets a wounded Chinese prisoner. Despite such atrocities, Japanese prisoners were treated generously by their Chinese captors during and after the war. (National Archives)

Chinese. In autobiographies and letters to me, repatriates from the China front expressed apparently genuine feelings of sorrow about their personal misdeeds in China.

Chiang's statement and his unexpected goodwill toward Japan clearly facilitated the peaceful surrender of Japan's army in China, but Chiang had other matters in mind as well.

Although President Franklin D. Roosevelt had attempted to sell the Americans on the idea that China was a powerful ally, Chiang was aware that in August 1945 Japan's undefeated army remained by far the most potent force in China. Some of the American military commanders in China, who had a poor impression of Nationalist China's military capabilities, shared the view that for the time being the Japanese were best situated to maintain order in some parts of the country.

Most of all, Chiang realized that a breakdown of order would benefit the Communists who demonstrated unexpected strength once the war ended. He also wanted to retain the goodwill of the Japanese to ensure that their weapons would not fall into the hands of his internal enemies. Beyond that, Chiang may well have believed already that Japanese soldiers might be induced to volunteer, or perhaps be coerced, to join the impending struggle against the Communists.

Chiang may have had other, more personal reasons to look kindly on the Japanese military who no longer posed a threat to his own position. He had lived in Japan for eight years and had received much of his military training there, preparing for the Nationalist Revolution. At one point he had to flee Shanghai and sought refuge in Japan. He knew some of Japan's top military leaders personally and retained discreet contacts with a few Japanese even during the war. And he was not the only Nationalist military leader with such ties to Japan. According to a Chinese source, when the Nationalist chief of staff, General Ho Ying-ch'in, called on the Japanese commander in Nanking, General Okamura Yasuji, to take his surrender, his first word was "*sensei*" (teacher) because he was reestablishing contact with his former instructor at the Japanese military academy.

The Japanese commanders had at least equally compelling reasons to cooperate with the Nationalists. Despite Chiang's assurances, many Japanese feared Chinese retribution, often with good reason. Aside from the prospect of the Chinese fingering substantial numbers of war criminal suspects, the Japanese military wanted to prevent, at all costs, having their troops fall into Communist hands and turned against them. They also faced the daunting prospect of having to cross considerable distances just to reach a port from which their troops could be repatriated. To accomplish this, they would have to rely on a variety of Chinese authorities. Within a period of two years, this repatriation was largely accomplished, with remarkably little friction considering the immediately preceding enmity.

In the months after Japan's surrender, small contingents of American forces landed in China. To strengthen Chiang Kai-shek politically, they were intent on having Japanese forces surrender to the Nationalists and not to the Americans, as the Japanese no doubt would have preferred. The Americans, moreover, shared the Nationalist objective that Japanese weapons fall into Nationalist, not Communist, hands, and that all Japanese come under Nationalist, not Communist, control.

This policy was carried out without a hitch, although the way the Nationalists dealt with their erstwhile enemies was far different from the treatment accorded Japanese POWs by the United States and its Western allies. As reflected in autobiographies by Japanese veterans of the war in China, and supplemented by several interviews I conducted with such veterans a few years ago, Nationalists treated the Japanese with kid gloves in a way calculated to preserve their honor and "face."

En route to the Chinese 74th Army headquarters at Wukong, five Japanese prisoners are marched out of the guerrilla headquarters at Tien Toh. All five appear to be well fed and clothed. (National Archives)

Following are the stories that illustrate the variety of experiences encountered by Japanese soldiers in China once hostilities came to an end.

Yasuzo Hattori recalled his remarkable postwar career as a Chinese Nationalist officer in a privately published memoir on which he elaborated in an interview. Inducted into the Japanese Army in December 1944, he was assigned almost immediately to the city of Baotou on the Yellow River in Inner Mongolia, about 350 miles west of Beijing. As a radio operator he enjoyed good, carefree duty, even though he was stationed at the very frontier of Japanese control. There were no roll calls and no participation in raiding parties. His only responsibility was to listen to foreign broadcasts. The first time his unit came under attack was on August 13, 1945, but by then the war was almost over. Until then Hattori had not even carried a gun.

According to Hattori, the "enemy" he had faced was not actually the Chinese Nationalist Army; it was one of the "thieving" warlords who controlled the area around Baotou. This particular warlord was a graduate of a Japanese military school who had made cooperative "arrangements" with both the Japanese and the Nationalists. However, it was the Nationalists who collected the Japanese weapons shortly after the war's end. Life actually improved for the nominal prisoners of war. Their warehouses held food for two years. Controls over entry and exit from their POW camp were lax, enabling them to get into town almost at will. Best of all, the Japanese were never given the hated appellation of "prisoner of war."

After a month or two, their "enemy" asked them to come and pick up some of their arms and ammunition again. It appears that in this remote corner of China the Nationalist/warlord conflict with the Communists was not going well, even as early as the fall of 1945. Some of the Japanese soldiers, sent out to guard the railway tracks, were seized by the Communists, indoctrinated, and returned to their own units to carry on an underground propaganda campaign. Another group of Japanese soldiers "disappeared" and quietly set up shop near a Japanese warehouse from which it filched clothing that was sold to Chinese merchants. They also sold sacks of flour. Others sold dynamite from military stocks to help the local coal mines function again. A combination of ingrained fear of Japanese power and an understanding that they might well require the Japanese for their own defense from the Communists was sufficient to inhibit the Chinese from simply confiscating the needed materials.

Japanese entrepreneurs had earlier installed virtually all of what was then considered Baotou's modern machinery. It gradually came to a standstill after the Japanese civilians who had operated the small factories were repatriated. According to Hattori, the local Chinese had neither the technical nor the managerial skills to take over the coal mines, match, and kerosene factories, among others. In this situation, the Chinese authorities asked about 500 Japanese soldiers to remain behind to revive the economy. They were promised wages in accordance with their military rank, plus three meals a day.

Hattori was one of those who decided to take up the offer. Although not in touch with his family, he figured they could do without him for a while; besides, job prospects at home were poor and he had a "youthful enthusiasm" to contribute to China's reconstruction. From a lowly enlisted man in the Japanese Army, the Chinese Nationalists promoted him to first lieutenant and assigned him the name Pai Syu-gen with responsibility for getting the match factory going again. Hattori felt overwhelmed by the unexpected Chinese goodwill toward him, a feeling he was anxious to reciprocate. Once again he could feel proud, especially because the Chinese delicately refrained from ever mentioning Japan's defeat.

When American officers came to inspect Hattori's unit, they were none the wiser. All Japanese serving the Nationalists were under orders to keep their mouths shut so long as the Americans were in the area. The Americans soon departed.

With Communist pressure increasing, Hattori's group of volunteers in the Chinese cause decided they should take the opportunity to be repatriated to Japan when that chance occurred. But when they arrived at the railway station, the last train out before the Communists cut the rail line to Beijing was disappearing in the distance. It occurred to Hattori that he and others had possibly fallen victim to a conspiracy between senior Japanese Army commanders and the Chinese. In any event, all hope for early repatriation had fled.

Under the direction of a Japanese colonel from the general staff, Baotou's defense was organized around a main force of the 500 Japanese. They were required to train 3,000 Chinese draftees. The Japanese rapidly learned sufficient Chinese to train their men without using interpreters. Hattori commanded about 100 Chinese whom he trained in basic infantry tactics. Every Japanese officer had a Nationalist as deputy. The Japanese were billeted with Chinese families. They had dinner at Chinese restaurants, spending their income that was rapidly diminishing through inflation.

Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Hattori "did not feel that Japan had lost [the war]." Clearly, he was no longer a prisoner of war. He and other Japanese in similar circumstances were free to come and go at will. As a freshly minted officer he admitted to a bit of swagger. In his reincarnation he came into plenty of contact with Chinese girls who had matrimonial designs on new Nationalist officers. According to Hattori, they trusted men who took their duties seriously, "even if they already have wives at home." A mass *miai* (a formal meeting between men and women with a view to arranging an engagement) took place, though in Hattori's case it eventually came to naught, with saved "face" all around.

The good times began to deteriorate when

Communist military pressure increased during 1947. This forced the Japanese-led units to withdraw to prepared positions. Since their rail links to the coast had been cut, they had no choice but to stay and hope for the best. Besides, the Japanese felt they needed to repay the Nationalists' goodwill. Moreover, as Hattori pointed out, they had been "brainwashed" by the stern Japanese militarist dictum that did not permit retreat. For three months the Japanese-led units were pounded by the Communists.

Hattori noted that there were Japanese fighting with the Communists as well. He surmised this from the loudspeaker appeals to defect they regularly heard from the other side. Moreover, he saw enemy troops sporting *hachimaki* (headbands) around their heads. The Japanese tied theirs in the back while the Chinese tied theirs in front. By unspoken agreement, the Japanese in the employ of the two Chinese factions never fired on one another.

Nationalist planes from Beijing resupplied the defenders of Baotou with ammunition and bombed enemy positions, which eventually allowed the mixed Nationalist/Japanese force to go over to an attack. According to Hattori, however, when the situation got tense, some of their Chinese Nationalist troops had simply fled. Earlier, the more peaceful-minded Chinese simply shot their rifles in the air in the direction of the enemy to simulate engagement in combat. When the Communists abruptly gave up the siege, 50 Japanese were dead and 125 were wounded. In the fall of 1948, the railway to Beijing was reopened, and Hattori was repatriated to Japan without further adventures.

Thinking it over many years later, Hattori pondered why so many Japanese should have sacrificed so much on behalf of another country. He concluded that the Japanese willingness to die for another's cause must have had something to do with their indoctrination. However, he insisted, those who served the Nationalist cause were not mere mercenaries. The citizens of Baotou had repaid them for their sacrifices during the siege by subsequently providing their meals free of charge.

In June 1992, Hattori returned to Inner Mongolia, taking part in celebrations marking 20 years of Japanese-Chinese friendship. Much had changed in Baotou, but he was pleased to find his old Japanese Army unit's coat of arms still affixed to the gate of the city. He looked up some of his Chinese friends from that bygone era and found them all still as friendly as ever.

In Central China, the end of the war came to Army Captain Harutaka Sasaki on August 18, 1945, when his regimental commander ordered the burning of all their flags and admonished

them not to commit suicide. He told them, "Chinese revenge may be harsh, but we will first have to endure it." A few days later the unit was ordered to leave Nanchang for Jiuchiang and then follow the Yangtze River north to Nanjing, a distance of 285 miles. They were still in their camouflage uniforms and scarcely believed the war was over.

This part of Kiangxi Province looked more desolate to Sasaki than he had remembered it from marching through the region in 1942. The Chinese, who lined the road where they marched, jeered "impudently." En route they encountered units of the New Fourth Red Army that demanded the Japanese turn over their weapons. This was rejected, and the Japanese commander ordered even stricter measures of self-defense while avoiding any actions that might be interpreted as aggressive.

Sasaki and his comrades understandably felt they were in a "strange situation." Here they were, marching through Chinese territory, still fully armed but technically POWs. China's Nationalist Army Headquarters had ordered them to defend themselves against "bandits" (i.e., the Red Army).

After recrossing the Yangtze 30 miles south of Nanjing, the Japanese commander called on the local authorities to inform them about their intended line of march through their territory. They were warmly welcomed by a Japanese-speaking governor, who confessed he had become concerned about Communist infiltration. He urged the Japanese to shoot the "rebels" without hesitation. The governor also arranged for them to meet with the chief of the provincial militia. He told them that quarters would be prepared for them and made it clear that he was looking forward to conducting joint operations with the Japanese.

The townspeople were pleasant enough, but nervously asked how long the Japanese would remain, to which they responded, "Until replaced by Nationalist forces." This in turn brought forth the Chinese comment that they hoped it would be forever since the Nationalists were "unreliable." In any event, the Japanese troops settled down for a while. A Chinese suggestion for joint combat operations was briefly floated, but came to naught. Orders came down from the central government for the Japanese to withdraw to an area west of Nanjing. The townspeople saw them off "without hiding their fears." The promised Nationalist relief never appeared.

According to Sasaki, the Japanese senior officers were invited to a farewell banquet hosted by the provincial governor, who thanked them for "standing guard" for two months. In his remarks, the governor stressed that peace in East Asia depended on friendship between Japan and China. For whatever reason, 14 years of war had ensued between them, and the Western powers had utilized this unhappy situation for their own advantage. He placed primary responsibility for this state of affairs on Japanese militarism, but added that China's internal divisions had contributed. To remember the occasion, he presented the Japanese with a picture of bamboo. Should they ever become discouraged, the Japanese could look at the bamboo and "snap back" to a more positive outlook.

All this was music to the ears of the Japanese, who felt that being treated honorably so as to retain "face" was especially appreciated at a time when they had been defeated. At the conclusion of the dinner, the Chinese commander raised his cup to toast Chinese-Japanese mutual goodwill.

When the governor's party was over, the provincial militia's security chief invited the Japanese for a party of his own. It seemed to them that he just could not let go. He used the occasion to ask the Japanese to leave grenades for his forces on the grounds that the Communists feared this weapon above all else. The Japanese believed that grenades were hardly sufficient to turn the tide against the Commu-

nists, but in the party atmosphere in which the request was made found it difficult to respond.

After polite discussions, the Japanese commander finally urged the Chinese to accept their fate: "No matter how much you struggle, whatever Heaven decrees should happen, will happen." Providing the grenades, the Japanese commander explained, would only end with the Chinese commander's death and cause his wife to grieve for him. The Japanese kept the grenades. On parting, the Japanese felt deep sorrow for the Chinese who had lost all faith in their own military and could only rely on the power of a recent enemy.

Sasaki's unit was moved to a new area 20 miles southwest of Nanjing to spend the night. Each platoon sought shelter separately in village houses. Their owners were not especially happy about it, but "since we were heavily armed" there was nothing they could do. Rumors swept the unit; examples were that due to the lack of shipping, it might take 10 years to get all the Japanese home, and conditions were so bad in Japan that it was better to remain in China. Questions were also raised about who was going to feed and house the Japanese while they remained in China.

The order to turn over their arms to the Nationalists arrived on November 28, 1945, three and a half months after the emperor's broadcast and almost three months after Japan's formal surrender. It was only then that the Japanese soldiers felt the full impact of defeat. Within the Japanese military, reproaches were exchanged among senior officers about responsibility for "killing millions" and "burning all those fields." Meanwhile, Sasaki noted that with new weapons in hand the Nationalists became more confident, even boastful about their future prospects. At the same time, they admitted that they had been fortunate in "not having to fight the Japanese."

In fact, some Nationalist soldiers envied the Japanese POWs for being able to go home, while their own fight was just beginning. A few months later, Communist forces in Manchuria decimated the Nationalist unit that had taken their surrender. As the Japanese troops waited for transportation, a new problem of maintaining order among the troops arose. As POWs, unit solidarity broke down, and respect for superiors weakened. Troublemakers were reminded that they were still subject to military law until demobilized in Japan. If they deserted and tried to find a way home on their own, they would have to suffer any consequences. The troops were reminded that their best bet for survival was to retain their traditional solidarity, but that proved difficult to enforce.

While still awaiting repatriation, Sasaki's unit was ordered to Nanjing to clean up the city. Sasaki and his comrades thought this was "unfair" since their division had not been involved in the Rape of Nanking. The Chinese explained theirs was the only division available; moreover, a unit such as theirs, which had not participated in the massacre, was less likely to encounter hostility among Nanjing's citizenry.

The nearer they came to the center of Nanjing, the louder grew the verbal assaults by younger elements of the population. They gritted their teeth and were thankful that the adults refrained from taking part; it seemed bearable since at least a few Chinese showed some pity toward the POWs. Arriving at the castle work site, the POWs were stopped by 15- and 16-year-old "military guards" who demanded bribes, preferably pens or watches. In the end, they settled for cigarettes.

Following extensive discussions with the Chinese about the various projects on which the POWs were to work, agreement was reached. The Japanese unit leader thereupon addressed his subordinate officers as follows: "These are likely to be the last projects we are required to work on in China. Whatever mental attitude we bring to this work, it is a fact that we have brought about an unbelievable amount of trouble for China. From now on we must associate with them as with a trusted neighbor and repay our debt to Chiang Kai-shek. Let us go about our work in such a manner so as not to cause the Chinese either to laugh at us or to despise us, and follow the jointly agreed work plan with dedication."

The work involved repairing the heavily damaged ancient castle, repairing and rebuilding houses that had been set afire, cleaning public toilets, and dredging sewers. Most difficult was working on the roads without proper tools. The Japanese POWs referred to it as "coolie labor."

When Sasaki's unit left Nanjing by troop train for the coast in May 1946, the petty corruption—perhaps the only real complaint voiced by Japanese POWs in China—only intensified. The train would stop in the middle of nowhere and only "gifts" to the engineer would get it going again. The distance the train would then travel was proportional to the amount of the "gift" that had been provided.

Summarizing his POW experience, Sasaki wrote that the status of a prisoner of war is "bitter" because it gives the power over life and death to foreign forces. One has a mixture of shame and a sense of fear about an uncertain future. That he emerged from the ordeal without suffering any physical harm, was not even treated as a POW for much of the time, and had maintained order over his men to the last, was, he believed, ultimately due to the magnanimity and far-sightedness of Chiang Kai-shek and other Chinese leaders. His appreciation could never approach the thankfulness that he feels.

Sasaki wrote, "I have the profound feeling that we lost owing to the Chinese peoples' ability to look into the distant future and their boundless humanity. We Japanese must learn from them." Ironically, despite Sasaki's boundless gratitude, he still shrank from accepting the Chinese Nationalist and Communist number of 300,000 victims of the Rape of Nanking. He argued that since he had not been ill-treated while assisting in the reconstruction of Nanjing, it was "unlikely" the large numbers could be correct.

Masanobu Kato had yet another story to tell about the days after Japan's surrender. He was stationed in the city of Xinyang, north of Wuhan in Henan Province. Thinking that Nationalist and American forces would be arriving soon, their first action was to burn all the unit's administrative documents, personal diaries, notebooks, and other possible evidentiary material that might one day be used against them. They were eventually packed into a train heading north, together with plenty of "thieving" Nationalist guards and civilians who rode on top of and between the cars. At one point the train derailed, with many guards and civilians killed and injured. The Japanese speculated that it might have been the work of local Chinese, who wanted to get revenge on Japanese troops whom they knew to be on board.

All members of Kato's unit formally became POWs on arrival at Zhangzhou in central Henan Province. The Chinese treated them politely, possibly because the Chinese commanding officer was a classmate of the commander of one of the Japanese units when both were students at a Japanese military academy. Nevertheless, Kato attributed their good treatment to basic Chinese "humanism." Even he, a lowly private first class, felt it. No heavy labor was required. Once in a while he might have been a bit hungry, but virtually every day was carefree, spent collecting firewood or raking grass. Some POWs even got paid to repair houses. Kato wrote that he "shuddered at the thought of how Japanese had treated Chinese [during the war]."

Takeo Hirano was a medical orderly who served in China from 1940 to 1946. Initially he was stationed in Anqing in central China, but was later transferred to a city near Hong Kong. There he worked in a cholera prevention program, together with a number of Chinese medical students from Hong Kong University. In early 1944, he was transferred to the military

hospital in Nanjing; he claimed that he never knew anything about the "Rape" that had taken place seven years before.

The war's end saw him at the front lines in central China, taking care of Japanese patients. After the war the Japanese army hospital also took in Chinese patients. Public health was a major concern throughout this period as malaria and diphtheria were rampant. Confined to their stockade, the Japanese POWs ensured a steady supply of food for themselves by trading their stock of medications for food that the farmers were allowed to bring in. Hirano indicated that he feared the Chinese might seek revenge for Japanese wartime atrocities. One of the precautionary measures taken by the Japanese was to disguise their nurses in male uniforms. The revenge never took place.

Hiroshi Tanio was deferred several times from the draft for health reasons, went to Beijing in 1938 to learn Chinese, and was employed by a Japanese business there. After Pearl Harbor, he had grave doubts about the wisdom of taking on a huge country such as the United States, but was resigned eventually to entering the military himself. He was called to the colors in February 1944. In the summer of 1945, he took part in engagements against the Nationalists in Hubei Province in central China. In the course of these campaigns, he wrote in his autobiography, he had "taken lives and property from the Chinese people."

His company received no news about the surrender on August 15, 1945, but several days later a Chinese peasant brought a letter to his company commander from the opposing Nationalist brigade commander. The letter informed him that Japan had lost the war and asked him to designate the time and place where he would surrender. The Japanese commander replied, in Chinese drafted by Tanio, that he intended to continue fighting since he had received no official information that Japan had surrendered. A few days later, Tanio's company was ordered by higher headquarters to withdraw from its position and by September 18 to assemble in Luohe City in Henan Province. If they encountered the enemy, they were not to initiate combat, but to defend themselves, if necessary.

Arriving at the assembly point, they received word from the Nationalists that their unit was not under suspicion of harboring potential war criminals. Accordingly, they would be allowed to keep their unit with rank structure intact. Then began their half-year as POWs. Some of the citizens of Luohe, by Nationalist order, were required to vacate their homes, which the POWs then occupied. The former residents

meanwhile found shelter with others, at some inconvenience to themselves.

Tanio recalled that during the war the Chinese had usually fled before the advancing Japanese Army, which simply occupied their houses, helped themselves to any available foodstuffs and whatever else was at hand. If the Chinese displayed any hostility, they would simply be killed. The hate and bitterness this must have engendered now pained him greatly. In my interview it was clear to me that his contrition was entirely genuine.

The Nationalists did not even refer to the Japanese as POWs. Instead, their liaison office was called the "Japanese Forces Government Management Office." The Japanese were not under surveillance, not required to perform heavy labor, and had roll call only once a month. They never lacked for food or other material things. They were permitted to operate under the rules and regulations they had employed during the war. Although they were required to turn in most of their weapons, the POWs retained a limited number of rifles with which to stand guard, and they were asked to remain vigilant to block the possible passage of Communist forces. It seemed to Tanio that his unit's responsibilities "were to guard the Nationalists against possible Communist activities."

To while away the time, daily Chinese language classes were instituted at a local school for all the men. Japanese officers believed that such skills might come in handy for scrounging for food and other necessities in case the men were required to walk to a port of embarkation. At the time of Japan's surrender, rumors abounded that the Chinese Nationalists would force the Japanese POWs to walk home—through northern China and Korea—at a probable high cost in lives. If there was ever any serious intent to carry out such a plan, the increased power of Communist forces in North China ensured it would not take place.

In due course, the Nationalists asked the Japanese to instruct them in the operation of the heavy and light machine guns that they had earlier turned over. The morning after the instruction started, Tanio was surprised when one of the Chinese guards appeared with a wash basin filled with hot water for the prisoners. At the time, it was unthinkable that a private in the Japanese Army would be entitled to such a luxury.

After breakfast, tea, and a smoke, the Japanese were brought to a parade ground where 40 Nationalist field grade officers were lined up and waiting for them. On command, they saluted the Japanese. It was, of course, unheard of for an assemblage of senior officers of the victorious army to salute their erstwhile foe, let alone some lowly privates, and the Japanese were "deeply moved" by the gesture of respect. While Japanese had always been taught to look down on the Chinese, Tanio thought he would henceforth look on them as his "moral masters."

After completing their training in weapons use, the Chinese were not content merely to invite their teachers to a plentiful Chinese meal. They actually sent them horses on which to ride, while Chinese led the animals to the restaurant. On another occasion, the Chinese commanding officer invited a Japanese medical doctor and his interpreter (Tanio) for a meal to thank them for treating Chinese. This generosity of spirit impressed Tanio greatly, causing him to think about the immense differences in the humanity of the Chinese and Japanese.

To express appreciation for the kind treatment accorded them, the Japanese, in turn, planted trees to line Luohe's main street before they departed for home. Rather than being required to march to the port of embarkation, the POWs were transported to Shanghai by rail, with a small guard of Chinese Nationalist troops.

The recollections of a handful of Japanese veterans of their wartime and postwar experiences in China cannot claim to provide a complete picture of what actually took place. They do indicate that experiences differed greatly and depended to some extent on whether the Japanese commanders had earlier established a personal relationship with their Chinese opposites. Even more telling was the extent to which the Nationalists in their area felt threatened by the Communist insurgents.

While most Japanese soldiers serving in China may not have known about the Nanking massacre, they did know, from personal experience, about the daily humiliations, depredations, murders, and cruelties visited on ordinary Chinese. There was no secret whatever about the Japanese government's policy of living off the land during combat operations.

The autobiographies of Japanese veterans of China indicate that many felt considerable guilt about what had occurred, and most had feared possible Chinese retribution. For whatever reason, the Chinese Nationalists maintained a benign policy toward the defeated Japanese and displayed remarkable tact and restraint to permit the Japanese to retain their sense of face and honor. More than any other experiences, former POWs in China recalled with immense relief and thanksgiving the Chinese practice not to humiliate the defeated Japanese and to treat them with respect.

There appears to have been considerable looting of the POWs' personal possessions by Nationalist guards, but over the years the Japanese had done far worse to both the Chinese military and civilians under their control. Moreover, there is evidence that senior Japanese commanders enriched themselves during their service in China, though it is not clear whether they were able to take their booty with them when they were repatriated.

In the light of the history of Japanese depredations in China it may appear astounding that the surrender of over a million Japanese troops in China took place over an extended period of time without incident. Japanese soldiers were often not even confined to their barracks, let alone placed in POW stockades. There were no reported instances of Chinese military forces or civilians wreaking vengeance on the Japanese. Just as Americans were surprised that the emperor's surrender was carried out without incident on Japanese soil, Japanese were surprised and relieved by the sudden and total change in Chinese attitudes toward them when the war ended. Whether such abrupt changes in behavior toward their erstwhile bitter foe reflect an aspect of the Confucian heritage common to both China and Japan, Chinese Realpolitik, or some other factors, there is little doubt that the Chinese helped the Japanese save "face" at a particularly sensitive period of history.

Both the Nationalists and the Communists conducted trials of suspected war criminals. Some were sentenced to death and some served time in Chinese jails. A few years ago, a two-part television program showed war crimes trials conducted by the Communists, the good treatment the suspects received in prison, and recent interviews of the former war criminals in Japan. In these interviews, these now aged men confirmed that they had participated in unspeakable crimes against Chinese military prisoners and civilians and expressed their deep regret for their actions. As part of the program, two noted professors affirmed that these events really happened.

Despite some remaining open wounds in the Sino-Japanese relationship, the postwar experiences of Japanese veterans in China contributed to the continuing reconciliation between East Asia's two large neighbors. At the same time, Chiang Kai-shek's magnanimous treatment of the defeated Japanese may still benefit the newly democratic Taiwan and its efforts to maintain its independence. □

Ulrich A. Straus lives in Northpoint, Michigan. His research on the experiences of Japanese POWs captured by the Western Allies during World War II has been published by the University of Washington.

Troops and armor of the Canadian First Army cautiously enter the French town of Calear on February 28, 1945. The Germans had previously evacuated the area, but they later stood and fought the Canadians viciously.

(National Archives)

GALLANT MEN

THE QUEEN'S OWN RIFLES OF CANADA IN THE RHINELAND, 1945

The heroism of officers and NCOs of the storied Canadian regiment resulted in victory against a determined enemy defending its homeland.

BY ANGUS SCULLY

By February 1945, the green Allied formations that landed on D-Day had become hard professional armies. Army, corps, and division commands had been shaken down and were operating efficiently. The supply problem that had plagued operations in the autumn had been solved. But most crucial for winning on the battlefield against the still formidable Germans were the officers and NCOs of the front-line infantry battalions. Those who had survived the previous eight months of combat had gained invaluable experience.

When Allied offensive operations resumed after the Battle of the Bulge, the German armies were fighting for their lives on their own soil. They were still very dangerous, but the seasoned officers and NCOs leading Allied battalions into action were their match by 1945. The fascinating story of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada shows the impact on the battlefield of experienced infantry leaders—young civilians from a variety of backgrounds who became such effective leaders.

The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada has a distinguished history, tracing its origin back to 1861. The Queen's Own prides itself on the traditions of rifle regiments. Riflemen are expected to act with initiative, speed, and resolve, and always to support one another. Having been a D-Day assault battalion, the Queen's Own was, by 1945, a hard-fighting and close-knit outfit. The regiment fought through Normandy, helped close the Falaise Gap, took part in the siege of Boulogne, and became "water rats" in the flood and mud battles of the Scheldt. The men of the battalion had been green when they ran across the beaches on D-Day morning, but in February 1945, they were professional warriors.

While the Battle of the Bulge was still raging, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, and his staff had no intention of waiting for spring to renew their offensives. On December 31, 1944, Ike said that once the Ardennes salient was reduced it was his intention "to destroy enemy forces west of the Rhine, north of the Moselle and to prepare for crossing the Rhine." The task was given to Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery's 21st Army Group, which planned a pincer movement.

ABOVE: During their drive to the west bank of the Rhine, Canadian soldiers hurry through Calear. Resistance at this point consisted mainly of thickly sewn minefields and snipers, which sometimes held up large formations of troops. BELOW: Spearheading the drive up a road, Sherman tanks of the 1st Canadian Hussars roll forward with spare tracks welded to the front of their vehicle for added protection against antitank weapons.

(Above: National Archives / Below: National Archives of Canada)

In Operations Veritable and Blockbuster, the First Canadian Army would attack south from the Nijmegen salient. The Ninth U.S. Army was transferred to 21st Army Group and would, in Operation Grenade, attack north. Eisenhower met with General Omar Bradley, commander of 12th Army Group, on January 30 and, the Germans having been defeated in the Bulge, shut down operations there and moved the weight of Allied operations to the north. Veritable was scheduled for February 7 and Grenade for February 9, 1945. There was a great deal of controversy at the highest levels of the Allied command over strategy and operational structures, but however much that may entertain historians today, the reality for the men on the ground was to prepare to fight the Germans on their own soil.

The First Canadian Army had begun planning for the Rhineland campaign on December 7, 1944, with a target date of January 1, 1945. Montgomery had transferred the British XXX Corps to the First Canadian Army for the attack. The Germans had other ideas, and their Ardennes offensive of December 16 caused Montgomery to remove XXX Corps from Canadian command on December 19 and to shut down planning for Veritable. First Canadian Army spent the ensuing month on high alert in case of an enemy attack on the Nijmegen salient.

On January 16, active planning for Veritable resumed. The XXX Corps was returned to Canadian command on January 18, and the start date was set for February 8. The cost to the Germans of the failed Ardennes offensive was high, not just because of the battlefield defeat, but also because the Allies had to delay the clearing of the west bank of the Rhine by only five weeks. Allied success in Veritable and Grenade would doom the Germans in the west.

For Veritable, General Harry Crerar's First Canadian Army would have XXX British Corps and II Canadian Corps. Crerar was a capable but colorless commander who had had several major run-ins with Montgomery, as indeed did many non-British generals under Monty's command. It was no accident on Montgomery's part that Veritable would be carried out by two of his favorite corps commanders: Lt. Gen. Brian Horrocks of XXX Corps and Lt. Gen. Guy Simonds of the II Canadian Corps. When Simonds was commander of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division, he served under Monty in Sicily and Italy and became Monty's protegé. Simonds then commanded the II Canadian Corps in the controversial closing of the Falaise Gap in Normandy, and had been in temporary command of the First Canadian Army while Crerar was ill, during the Battle of the Scheldt in October and November 1944. Simonds was known as a cold, ruthless, and innovative general who did not lead, but commanded.

The administrative buildup by Crerar's headquarters was immense. The enemy was expected to fight fanatically, defending their own country from the prepared positions of the Siegfried Line. The weather was cold and the ground was muddy—flooded in many areas—so the tanks would have to move on roads. Cities had been bombed to rubble, creating obstacles to the planned advance. Two forests, the Reichswald and the Hochwald, would be difficult to take from determined defenders. With 450,000 men under his command, Crerar used 50 companies of engineers, three road construction companies, and 29 pioneer companies to prepare roads and depots. Gasoline stores were built up to provide 153 operational miles for XXX Corps and 200 operational miles for II Canadian Corps.

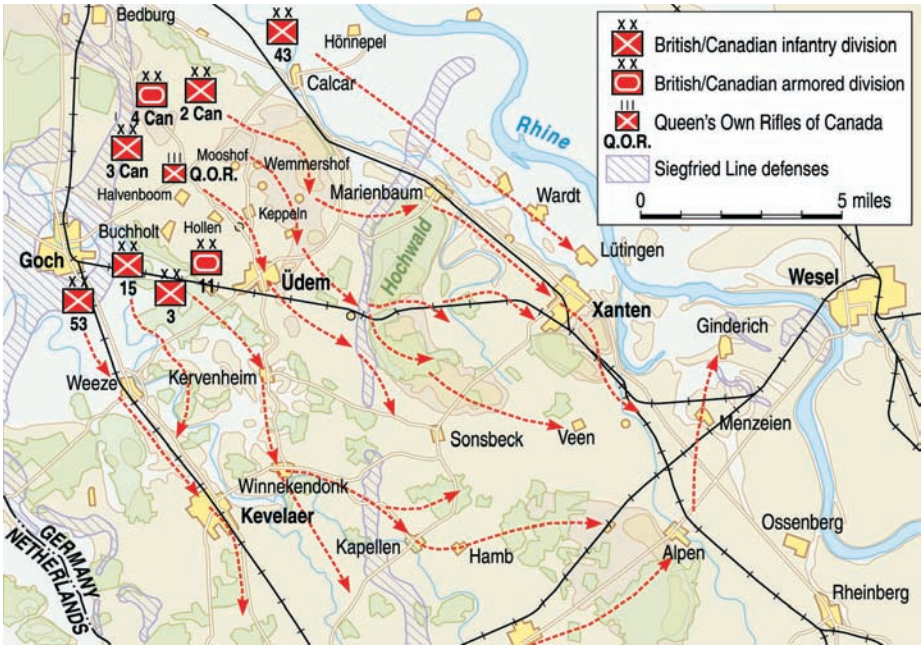
Crerar said, "If the ammunition allotment

for the operation, which consisted of 350 types, were stacked side by side and five feet high, it would line a road for 30 miles. The total ammunition tonnage ... would be the equivalent in weight to the bomb-drop of 25,000 medium bombers."

The opening artillery barrage on February 8 was the most concentrated of the war in the west. It lasted over five hours, and 1.5 million shells were fired on a seven-mile front by 1,034 guns. On this narrow front, XXX Corps attacked with the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Infantry Divisions under command. A 30,000-yard smoke screen concealed the operation from German observation on the other side of the Rhine. The rest of II Canadian Corps was not brought into the line until February 15 when the front had opened out.

German defenses in the Rhineland consisted of the north end of the Siegfried Line, called the Schlieffen Line by the Germans. In front of the Hochwald there were lines of entrenchments, antitank ditches, and wire entanglements 600 to 1,000 yards apart. Villages had been converted into islands of resistance surrounded by wire and trenches. Buildings were strengthened with concrete. The area was manned by the First Parachute Army, which included the II Parachute Corps and the XLVII Panzer Corps. German resistance would be ferocious. Hitler had issued a no retreat order. It was to be a fight to the death for the Fatherland.

The Germans opened the banks of the Rhine to flood low-lying areas, limiting the ground on which the Canadian Army could operate. They also opened the Roer River dams in front of the U.S. Ninth Army, which had planned its attack (Operation Grenade) in the Rhineland for February 10. The flood stopped the Americans until February 23. The Germans were able to move their reserves, including two parachute and two panzer divisions, to meet the First Canadian Army. One German division had been facing XXX Corps on February 8; there were nine German divisions in action two weeks later.



A five-hour artillery barrage signaled a renewed Canadian offensive toward the Rhine on February 8, 1945. During the prior three months, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada had received new troops to replace losses sustained since D-Day. (Map © 2007 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN)

By February 21, the First Canadian Army had advanced 20 miles over terrible terrain, but the enemy still maintained an unbroken front and the prepared defenses of the Hochwald section of the Siegfried Line. Crerar met with his corps and divisional commanders on February 21 and decided to shift the weight of his operations from XXX Corps to the II Canadian Corps. This second part of Veritable, called Blockbuster, was scheduled to launch on February 26.

That morning, two outstanding riflemen of the Queen's Own, Platoon Sergeant Aubrey Cosens and his company commander, Major Ben Dunkelman, led an attack against German positions at Mooshof. It was an obscure hamlet, but it held the key to the advance of an entire Canadian corps.

The Queen's Own had spent the previous three months in defensive lines on the Maas River, securing the Nijmegen Salient. This time had been used in training and integrating replacements to make up for the infantry shortages resulting from the ferocious fighting of the summer and autumn of 1944. The Third Canadian Infantry Division had sustained the highest number of casualties of any Allied division

The Victoria Cross is Britain's highest decoration for bravery in the presence of the enemy.

The Victoria Cross was authorized in 1856 by Queen Victoria to recognize outstanding gallantry during the Crimean War. The medal itself was designed by Victoria's husband, Prince Albert. Although commonly associated with Britain, it has been awarded to Empire and Commonwealth troops as well, and Canada has retained it today as the highest Canadian decoration. The action leading to the award must be performed in the presence of the enemy. Since 1902, a posthumous award has been possible. In such a case, the award is made to the next of kin.

The Victoria Cross has been awarded to 93 Canadians, of which 69 were won during World War I. The award is rarely made, as the approval process is so stringent. For Aubrey Cosens, a general officer walked over the Mooshof site, and the award recommendation went not just to General Crerar, but up to Montgomery himself. The award to Cosens was announced after the war in Europe had ended, and the formal investiture took place in Ottawa on February 28, 1946. Charles Cosens, Aubrey's father, accepted the medal for his son. It is now in the possession of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada.

Dorothy Smith, Aubrey's foster mother, was not at the ceremony. Indeed, with Charlie Cosens listed as Aubrey's next of kin, she was not even officially notified of his death. In April 1945, when Lt. Col. Steve Lett found out about her role in Aubrey's life, he wrote Mrs. Smith and described the action. Lett said, "It was a magnificent effort and a great credit to himself, the regiment, and to you."

In 1979, the Royal Canadian Legion, a veterans group, successfully sought formal recognition of Mrs. Smith, and she finally received the Memorial Cross, a medal given to the mothers of all Canadians killed in World War II. □

in the Normandy campaign. On the Maas, intensive patrolling kept the men sharp, and by February 9 morale was very high as the battalion took the Dutch town of Millingen on the left flank of Operation Veritable.

By February 23, orders for the next phase of action for the Queen's Own Rifles were starting to arrive in detail. Simonds planned an all-out blow, first taking the ridge that ran from Calcar southwest to Udem with attacks by the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Infantry Divisions. This would be followed by a breakout attack by the 4th Canadian Armoured Division and the 11th British Armoured Division. The armored divisions were to take the Hochwald and exploit toward Xanten. Engineers would turn a rail line into a dry road for supplies, and the attack would be backed by heavy artillery support.

On February 24-25, Lt. Col. Steve Lett and his battalion officers made a reconnaissance of the proposed front. What they saw was daunting. They knew their opposition would be the German 6th and 8th Parachute Regiments in reinforced concrete positions in farmhouses and tiny villages across their front.

An Allied aerial reconnaissance photo reveals a farmhouse near the Siegfried Line, which the Germans have turned into a fortified strongpoint. Such positions were often reduced at great cost.
(National Archives of Canada)

The Queen's Own would have to attack over flat, open country overlooked by the enemy on the Udem-Calcar Ridge. Lett decided not to adhere to the standard procedure of following close behind the moving artillery barrage. He said, "Enemy artillery is not very flexible. His defensive fire is brought down very accurately. However, once the limitation of the area is determined, it can be circumvented with comparative safety." Therefore, Lett delayed the assault by a half-hour. The plan to advance over open ground against German paratroopers had a sobering effect on the officers. Major Dick Medland of A Company told his officers, "This could be the toughest fight we've ever been in. A lot of us won't make it."

The Queen's Own Rifles spent the night in their slit trenches in a cold rain. The men were called out at 3:30 AM and fed sandwiches and coffee laced with rum. Cosens checked his men. Finding Private Don Chittenden struggling with his wet web equipment, he knelt in front of him to get the buckles done up. Chittenden felt as if he were being fussed over by an anxious mother, and when he looked down at Cosens they both laughed loudly. Private Don Cowling knew it was going to be a different affair from their previous experience when he saw Dunkelman walking around waving his pistol and yelling, "Who's ready for war?"

At 4:30 AM, the Queen's Own started for-

AUBREY COSENS epitomized the spirit and heroism of the Queen's Own Rifles.

Aubrey Cosens was the first soldier of the Third Canadian Division to earn the Victoria Cross in World War II—and this was a division that had landed on D-Day, taken 76 percent casualties in Normandy, and used its amphibious warfare experience to defeat the Germans in Holland.

Although Cosens and Ben Dunkelman were from very different backgrounds, their personal stories reflect the spirit and heroism of the soldiers of the Queen's Own Rifles and the finest qualities of leadership and bravery among men in combat. Cosens was from a remote mining and lumber frontier town and had been a railway laborer before enlisting. Dunkelman had grown up in a wealthy family, attended the best schools in Canada, and was an executive in the family business when the war began.

When the announcement of Cosens's Victoria Cross was made public, it created a sensation in Northern Ontario where he had grown up. One newspaper article attributed to him "The Spirit of the North—a spirit that enables men to perform noble deeds spontaneously and without regard for their personal safety. It has often been said that the North does something to a man, something fine and generous and loyal." This sentiment may seem a little over the top today, but Aubrey Cosens is still remembered and commemorated in the small towns of Northern Ontario.

Cosens was born in 1921. His father, Charlie, was a World War I veteran whose job with the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railroad took him to the tiny, isolated village of Porquis Junction. It was accessible only by rail and existed to serve the railway. There, Charlie, his wife Yvonne, and young Aubrey lived in a converted rail car, a common way of housing railway personnel in the North. In 1924, Yvonne died of cancer, leaving Charlie with a four-year-old son to care for. As was typical of remote settlements, the neighbors all helped Charlie, taking in Aubrey while Yvonne was ill, and, after her death, taking on the job of caring for the little boy while Charlie was at work.

National Archives of Canada

Mrs. Dorothy Smith, whose husband worked with Charlie, ended up looking after Aubrey full time, becoming in effect his foster mother. When the Smiths later moved to the gold mining town of Timmins, Aubrey went with them, and Charlie visited when he could. In Porquis Junction and Timmins, Aubrey grew up in a loving, extended family. Remembered as a lad who was always on the go, he grew up crazy for sports, playing hockey with the Timmins Police Amateur Athletic League and for teams from the mines around the town. In the summer he played baseball. The discipline and hard work of sports helped shape the character of young Aubrey as much as the people of his small communities and family.

At age 16, Aubrey left school as so many did during the Depression, but his family connections got him seasonal work on a section gang for 32 cents an hour. It was hard outdoor labor, in cold, rain, or heat, and often menaced by clouds of mosquitoes and black flies. Aubrey worked for the railway in several small towns throughout the North but spent the winters with the Smiths or with Charlie, who had moved to the lumber town of Latchford, still with the railway.

Canada declared war on Germany in September 1939, but Aubrey stayed on the job, spending the winter cutting and selling fire-

ward under the artificial moonlight created by antiaircraft searchlights reflecting off the overcast. Quite a few of the riflemen thought it helped the enemy more than it helped them. While Lett might have wanted to avoid the German artillery counterfire, the Canadians came under ferocious fire from automatic weapons and mortars. Company D suffered heavy casualties crossing the 500 yards of open ground, and only a few men from 16 Platoon made it up to the buildings.

Corporal E.W. Fraser was one of the few who did, and he called back for the others to speed things up just before he was cut down by a point-blank burst of Schmeisser fire from the window of the farmhouse. Dunkelman ordered his men to dig in away from the buildings, expecting a German counterattack and prearranged German bombardment of the farm, but 16 Platoon did not get away before the German fire started.

As Dunkelman later put it, "All hell had broken loose. The bodies of the dead, wounded, and dying lie everywhere you look. It's a nightmare. The struggle for Mooshof hangs in the balance." The rest of the story is best told by the eyewitnesses whose testimony was collected as part of the investigation into awarding Cosens a posthumous Victoria Cross.

This strongpoint on the northern end of the Siegfried Line fell to the First Canadian Army on February 21, 1945, following three days of bitter German resistance. Four days later, the Canadians moved south to link up with the U.S. Ninth Army. (National Archives)

"After our Platoon Commander, Lt. Lloyd McKay was wounded, Sgt. Cosens took over," remembered Corporal H.F. Gough. "He asked me to gather up the men who were not wounded. There were only four of us left. He asked us to give covering fire while he made a dash to find a tank. He appeared on the top of the tank and directed fire which broke up the German counterattack. The Germans in disorderly fashion ran for their building. They started to open fire on us from there with automatic weapons. As he could not stop the withering fire he crouched on the tank and had it ram the first building. With his pistol in hand he wounded one German. After clearing the first building he had the tank move towards the building alongside. Before reaching the building he jumped off the tank to remove Lance Corporal Fraser's body from the path of the tank. He had the tank fire a shell into the second building. The tank then gave covering fire while he himself cleared the building. He forced his way in the front door and alone cleared the building. He then continued across the road with covering fire from the tank and cleared the third building. We followed him from building to building gathering the prisoners. The last I saw of him was when he told me where to sight my Bren gun and then he dashed off to seek the company

wood. The British defeat and retreat from the beaches of Dunkirk in June 1940 seems to have been the catalyst that prompted Aubrey to enlist. He was working on a section gang with Cecil Holmes, who today remembers that when they heard about Dunkirk Aubrey came into the bunk car and announced that they were needed in Europe.

The two boys went down to North Bay to join the Royal Canadian Air Force, but Aubrey was turned away because he had forgotten his school records. He returned to work, and his foster mother, Mrs. Smith, told him he really did not have to go. He was just 19. Aubrey insisted, however, that he would, and when the fall work season ended in November 1940, he took the train to Toronto and enlisted in the infantry, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada.

Almost immediately, the Argylls were sent to Jamaica for two years of garrison duty. The raw, partially trained Canadian militia battalion relieved British regulars desperately needed at home. It was an eye-opening adventure for the young man from the remote North. Indeed, it was an exotic posting for all of the Argylls. The battalion returned to Canada briefly in 1943, and was then posted overseas to become part of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division.

In England, Aubrey was promoted to corporal and sent to the Army School of Physical Training, his athleticism marking him as a PT instructor. After that, he was transferred to the Third Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit, a holding and training unit, and from there sent as a replacement into Normandy in July 1944 with the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada. The orientation talk for Aubrey and the other new men was given by the mortar platoon commander, Ben Dunkelman.

Aubrey was soon promoted to sergeant. In a letter to his girlfriend, he wrote, "So it's sergeant now and what a lot of work there is to do and do I ever have a lot of dirt flung at me from all angles. But I'll beat it if it kills me. I was platoon commander for two weeks or more. That was a lot of responsibility to take and it makes you think am I doing this right ... how many men will come back ... If I get grey hairs you can guess the reason. The word responsibility is a big one in the Army. I have learned that." The boy had become a man, and to the teenaged soldiers of his platoon, he seemed an old veteran by February.

The men of D Company recalled Aubrey Cosens as a remarkable man and leader. Don Chittenden of 16 Platoon said, "With all due respect to the platoon commander, it was Cosens who ran the platoon, who took care of morale, who knew tactics … while the rest of us were trying to save ourselves, Cosens was off trying to win the war."

Bill Ives, company sergeant major, recalled, "The very first thing he did was look after his men. He was just more caring about other people than about himself. He always seemed to know how to lift morale."

Jack Staples of 16 Platoon said, "Cosens liked to be with the boys and was always joking. He was also very commanding. He knew how to handle our platoon of 38."

Company commander Dunkelman recognized the promise in the young soldier, commenting, "He was an outstanding, good looking man, a perfect noncommissioned officer, and carried as much as 80 pounds of ammunition on his back when his platoon went into action. I cannot speak of him too highly as a fine, clean-living soldier...."

Was Cosens really such a remarkable man? Were his former comrades just extending the image of the man who had become a hero? Is it really too much to expect that a Victoria Cross winner be strong, good looking, and clean living? We have only their recorded memories and Cosens's military record from which to judge. That record does contain one, and only one, blemish. In Jamaica, on January 4, 1943, Cosens was found guilty of being absent without leave and was confined to barracks for five days. Cosens was absent from 10:54 PM December 31, to 6 AM on January 1. This new year's celebration far from home, and from danger, seems only to confirm the image created by his comrades. □

commander to tell him that the counterattack had been broken up and the objective taken."

Sergeant Charles Anderson of the 6th Canadian Armored Regiment reported, "I, B19526 Sgt. Anderson C R, 6 Cdn Armd. Regt testify that during the battle of 26 February 1945 which took place after we had reached our objective [Mooshof], a Sgt of the Queen's Own Rifles climbed on my tank and directed my fire upon the enemy who were making a heavy counterattack. Then he directed me toward some buildings where there were heavily held positions, all the while he was on top of the tank. In all his movements he was harassed by snipers. He directed me to ram the building with my tank which I did. After that he went into the building to clean out the enemy. He took several prisoners out of the building. The Sgt then went to other buildings

A destroyed German 88mm self-propelled assault vehicle lies silent in the wake of Operation Blockbuster. The casualties on both sides were severe, with the Queen's Own Rifles sustaining many dead and wounded. (National Archives of Canada)

to clean them out while my tank gave him covering fire. There was a great deal of sniping and mortar and shell fire during the whole action in which he directed my tank."

Trooper Bill Adams was the driver in Anderson's tank, and he later recalled ramming one of the buildings. "I put her in bull-low and advanced. When I hit, I bounced back about two feet and didn't do too much. Then I tried again and this time I did a pretty good job and went in quite a way. I was pretty careful about ramming those stone walls. Usually there's some kind of basement. We wouldn't be much use to anyone with a 30-ton Sherman tank lying around in a cellar."

Cosens had killed 20 of the enemy and taken 20 prisoners. He set out to report to Dunkelman but got only 25 yards before he was shot through the head by a sniper and killed instantly. His action was not only considered brave but decisive to the success of the whole attack. By taking and holding Mooshof, Cosens

BEN DUNKELMAN was a formidable combat leader in two wars.

Ben Dunkelman was born in 1913 in Toronto to a wealthy Jewish family. His father owned Tip Top Tailors, Canada's largest manufacturer and seller of men's clothing. His mother was a leader in the Canadian Red Cross, founded a newspaper, *The Jewish Standard,* and was an enthusiastic Zionist. As a boy, Ben met prominent Zionists who came to stay at the family's 90-acre estate on the outskirts of Toronto. One of them was Chaim Weizmann, who was president of the World Zionist Organization and later became the first president of Israel.

At home and at the family's summer home on Lake Simcoe, Ben grew to love the outdoors and sailing. He attended Upper Canada College, an elite private school whose cadet corps was affiliated with the Queen's Own Rifles. The college placed a great deal of emphasis on patriotism and loyalty to king and country. Ben was a so-so student, but an excellent athlete, playing hockey and football. For the football team, at 6 feet 2 inches and 200 pounds, he often played both offense and defense for the whole game. He was so good that the team basically had one play—give the ball to Dunkelman.

Nothing perhaps shows his privileged background more than the gift his parents presented for his 18th birthday—in the middle of the worst of the Great Depression. It was a round-trip ticket to Palestine and $500 spending money.

Ben traveled on his own, first to Europe where he took in the sights, including a cruise on the Rhine, and then on to Jerusalem. Not surprisingly, given his childhood, he decided to stay in Jerusalem for a while. What he did might not have been expected from a rich boy from Canada who grew up with servants, summer homes, and the best private schools. Ben went to work at the Jewish settlement of Tel Asher, 30 miles north of Tel Aviv. It was a rough and primitive place. He had a bug-infested straw mattress to sleep on after long exhausting days stooped over a short-handled hoe.

Being naturally strong, Ben quickly toughened up and soon reveled in the hard work, companionship with the other laborers, and the pay of a dollar a day. His parents wanted him to return home, but he kept cashing in the tickets they sent and bought himself a shotgun, which allowed him to become a watchman, protecting the settlement from thieves and trespassers. This led to several fights, but he was a big man and toughened by manual labor. He won all his scraps.

National Archives of Canada

After a year at Tel Asher, Ben was persuaded by a family friend to return to Canada. The boy of privilege had received a good upbringing in a loving family, but there is no doubt that his year at Tel Asher made him capable of dealing with a harsh life.

Back in Toronto, Ben was a dutiful son and entered the family business, starting at the bottom and doing a bit of every job in the factory and stores. However, he longed to return to Palestine and his great adventure. He did go back in 1935 to try to set up a farm, but the deal fell through and illness forced him to return to Canada. Back in Toronto, he was something of a party animal and admitted to heavy drinking and a love of fast cars.

The Depression was hurting the family finances, and the family estate, Sunnybrook, was sold off to pay debts. Ben threw himself into the business and introduced new ladies wear and sportswear departments into the stores. The business survived, and Ben led the life of a single playboy.

When Canada entered the war, Ben announced that he was going to enlist. His family was opposed, especially as Ben would have been exempt from service as an executive in the clothing industry, which produced uniforms. When Ben's father arranged for him to become a lieutenant colonel in the Ordnance Corps with responsibilities for military supplies, Ben refused. He first tried to join the Royal Canadian Navy, but it considered him overqualified to be a seaman and put him on a waiting list to be trained as an officer.

After waiting to be called all winter, Ben found out that the Navy had a policy of not accepting Jews as officers (later reversed). Angry but not deterred, he joined the militia, as a rifleman in the second battalion of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, training evenings and weekends. A natural leader and an experienced businessman, Ben was

and D Company had seized their objective, allowing B Company to pass through to seize the battalion's final objective. Thus, the right flank of the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade was protected as the division advanced to the high ground overlooking Calcar and on to Keppeln.

Apart from D-Day itself, February 26 was the hardest day of the war for the Queen's Own. Company D had crossed the start line with 115 men. That night, Dunkelman was the only officer left standing. He could count only one NCO and 35 fighting men left. He later said, "I was exhausted: sick in body, and even sicker in spirit. For all my exhaustion, I did not sleep well that night."

Although D Company was nearly destroyed, the action did not let up. The 4th Canadian Armoured Division had passed through while the Queen's Own Rifles were engaged in Mooshof and advanced to the wooded Hochwald. In the forested area, infantry was needed, so the 3rd Division, including the Queen's Own, was called upon to attack again. Tank support was nearly impossible, so the infantry went at it hand-to-hand with the enemy. What was left of D Company was in the thick of things, and Dunkelman's leadership and bravery were rewarded with the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

The Queen's Own Rifles remained in the line for two more weeks and then went into reserve until March 28 when they crossed the Rhine to take part in the liberation of northern Holland. On May 5, the battalion was in Germany and attacking a crossroads near Ostersander. Then the cease-fire order was received, and the war in Europe was over. The First Canadian Army moved back into the Netherlands to rest prior to returning to Canada. □

Lt. Col. Steve Lett commanded the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada during Operation Blockbuster and the fighting around Mooshof. (National Archives of Canada)

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promoted to sergeant, sent through an NCO's course, and then served as an acting company sergeant major. After six months as an NCO, he was accepted for officers' training. At 28, he was older than the average soldier and no longer a lean and hard teenager.

After being commissioned a lieutenant, Ben was assigned to train new recruits, but he strained to get into combat. He was shipped overseas in 1943, to rejoin the 1st Battalion of the Queen's Own, where he immediately exerted his personality and leadership in command of the mortar platoon. The regimental history tells about the Christmas party given for English children in 1943. "Soldiers provided goodies from their own parcels from home. The outstanding feature of the party was Lt. Ben Dunkelman's interpretation of Santa Claus. His commanding height, resounding voice and histrionic ability all combined to keep the children in ecstasies."

By the end of the war, Dunkelman, who had led his mortar platoon at Juno Beach on D-Day, was very ill with malaria and tired of fighting. When offered command of the 1st Battalion of the Queen's Own, he turned it down. In late 1945, Dunkelman returned to life at Tip Top Tailors.

While he enjoyed peacetime life and recovered his health, Palestine was never far from Dunkelman's mind. The full impact of the Holocaust was revealed, and the news was full of stories about Jewish refugees being kept out of Palestine by the British. As a prominent decorated war hero and member of an important Zionist family, Dunkelman was drawn into activities supporting the cause in Palestine. He became the head of the Haganah Committee in Canada, raising funds and finding volunteers and war surplus equipment to send to Palestine. Then, he was encouraged to use his military experience by two outstanding supporters of Israel.

Lady Lorna Wingate, widow of General Orde Wingate of Burma fame, was, like her husband, an ardent Zionist. On a visit to Toronto, she challenged Ben to return to Palestine where trained combat officers were needed. Colonel David Marcus (formerly of the U.S. Army) was a West Point graduate who was actively working to recruit volunteers for the Israeli cause. He wanted Ben to raise a brigade of English-speaking volunteers, which Ben could legally do in Canada. American volunteers would, under U.S. law, forfeit their citizenship. Given Ben's background, his departure for Palestine was inevitable.

Dunkelman arrived in Palestine under a false British passport in March 1948, and started working with the Palmach. He was then attached to the Harel Brigade as a supernumerary staff officer. At first the brigade did not know what to do with Ben, but his experience soon told, and the brigade commander, Yitzhak Rabin, gave Ben more and more responsibility. Ben planned the Harel Brigade's breakout from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv in May 1948. On a broader front, he solved problems with mortar production, distribution, and training for the whole Israeli Army. Again Ben's leadership and experience were rewarded when David Ben Gurion appointed him commander of the 7th Brigade of the Israeli Army.

The 7th Brigade was made up of many recent immigrants and had suffered high casualties at the hands of the regulars of the Jordanian Army. To restore morale, Ben worked hard at training and organizing courses for officers and NCOs. To find out if the new arrivals really had the military experience many claimed, Ben used a former U.S. Marine Corps officer to put them through a course of unarmed combat and a former sergeant major of the Black Watch to put them through a parade ground routine. Those who had never served in an infantry outfit were quickly exposed.

The revitalized brigade was now more than a match for the Arab armies it faced. In July 1948, it attacked and captured Nazareth. In October, during Operation Hiram, Ben devised an unorthodox plan to capture all of the Galilee in just 36 hours and with few casualties.

After Operation Hiram, Ben married Yael Lifshitz, who had been a secretary at Northern Command Headquarters of the Israeli Army. While they were on a brief honeymoon trip to Canada, an armistice was arranged. Upon their return to Israel, Ben Gurion offered Dunkelman command of the armored corps. Dunkelman turned it down, saying he was not a soldier. A year later, he and Yael moved to Canada, and once again Dunkelman took over the family business. Ben later sold the family business and, with Yael, opened an art gallery in Toronto.

Although Dunkelman always thought of himself as a civilian, he proved he was a formidable combat leader in two wars. He rose to high command in Israel and in business, yet when he wrote his memoirs, he remembered Aubrey Cosens and the Queen's Own with these words: "Never in my life, either before or since, have I found a body of men who were closer or dearer to me than the young soldiers of D Company. They had put their trust in me, and I had always done my best to justify that." □

Over the Hump

In truth, it really was not a combat operation. For every airplane lost to enemy action, a hundred were destroyed in accidents. Yet the effort to resupply Allied forces in China entirely by air was perhaps the most ambitious effort of World War II.

No other effort—including the amphibious landings on beaches from Casablanca to Normandy and from Guadalcanal to Okinawa—faced so many obstacles; obstacles that had to be overcome to simply keep China in the war and prevent the Japanese from overrunning all of Asia. They were obstacles that are as old as human history: rugged mountains, raging rivers, steaming jungles, violent weather—the very features that dictate how regions are settled, trade routes are developed, and wars are fought. These are the obstacles that ultimately dictate how nations and modern military forces develop. Prior to 1942, these obstacles could have never been scaled. Even then, the cost of surmounting them was extreme.

The actual decision to attempt to resupply China by air is lost to antiquity, although developing events in the spring and summer of 1942 dictated that aerial resupply was the only possible means of getting supplies to a country that by that time had been completely cut off from the sea. By mid-1942 Japanese troops occupied China's port cities and the southern two-thirds of Burma. The Japanese had cut the Burma Road, and Rangoon had fallen into their hands. Thailand, which lay to the south,

The Allied effort to supply the forces in Asia was a monumental task.

By Sam McGowan

was allied with Japan, while Japanese troops occupied French Indochina by proxy from the Germans, who now controlled France. The vast Chinese interior remained under Allied control, but with no suitable roads and all of China's seaports in Japanese hands, the only means of delivering supplies to the region was by air.

As the first country to experience Japanese aggression, China came to depend on the United States as a valuable ally through the efforts of the American-educated wife of the leader of the Koumintang, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Madame Chiang used her American connections to influence President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide military supplies and other support to her country. Her brother, T.V. Soong, the head of the China lobby in the United States, made sure that Chinese-Americans did not forget their native land and the many troubles facing it. The Soongs found a ready audience for their message in the evangelical Christian movement in the United States, where China had been a focal point of American missionary efforts for nearly a century.

When war finally came to the United States on December 7, 1941, China immediately took on a strategic importance due to its location in relation to Japan. Although events pushed the massive Asian country to the back burner, Allied planners initially saw China as an avenue from which to take the war to the Japanese homeland. American heavy bombers—Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses and Consolidated B-24

In this painting by artist Tom Lea, an American transport aircraft flies across the ominous peaks of the Himalayas to deliver precious supplies to Allied troops in China. Brooding clouds often meant the approach of bad weather, which made the airborne lifeline across the Hump even more hazardous.

(U.S. Army Art)

Standing in the open doorway of a C-47 transport on April 16, 1944, Brig. Gen. Frank Merrill, commander of the famed Marauders, watches the countryside of northern Burma pass below. At right is Sergeant Donald Ross, the dropmaster for the flight, which was en route to resupply Merrill's command. (National Archives)

Liberators—could wage a strategic bombing campaign against Japan from air bases in China. In the spring of 1942, the U.S. War Department authorized the establishment of the Tenth Air Force to defend China and begin an aerial offensive against Japan.

Major General Lewis Brereton was transferred from Australia to India to organize an air force that would be made up of a group of heavy bombers, a group of medium bombers, and two groups of pursuit planes, with a troop carrier group to provide air transportation. The famous Doolittle Raid on Japan was actually a part of this plan—18 North American B-25s that had been authorized for China service were diverted by presidential order to make a raid on Japan from an aircraft carrier. The War Department plan called for them to overfly Japan after departing an aircraft carrier in the Pacific, then to proceed on to China. When they got there, the B-25s were expected to form the nucleus of a medium bomber force in China.

It was the impending arrival of the Doolittle force that led to the initial deployment of American transports to India for flights to China. In advance of the raid, 10 Pan American Airways Douglas DC-3 transports operating under contract to the Army Ferry Command were moved from Africa, where they had been supporting British forces, to India. Their mission was to pre-position gasoline and oil at Chinese airfields to service the B-25s when they arrived in China. As it turned out, not a single B-25 arrived intact. The task force was discovered and Doolittle decided to launch the bombers at the limit of their range to even strike Japan. There was little chance that any of them could make China intact. The raid was a propaganda coup for the Roosevelt administration, but the loss of the B-25s and the subsequent capture of the proposed sites for bomber bases destroyed Allied plans for mounting an air campaign against Japan from China in 1942.

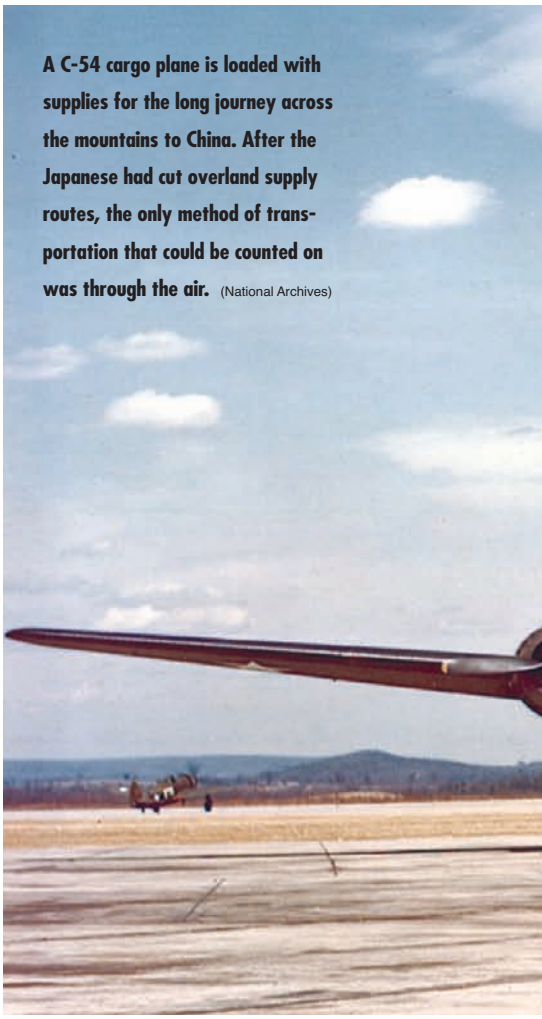
Even as the Doolittle raiders were on their way to China aboard the aircraft carrier *Hornet,* Colonel Caleb V. Haynes was on his way to India via the overland route across Africa and Central Asia with a combined flight of Boeing B-17s and Douglas C-47 transports. Haynes's force, which was designated as Project Aquilla, was to serve as the nucleus of a heavy bomber force in China. These planes were to join a bombardment group that was being transferred from Australia. (The 7th Bombardment Group had fought in Java and the Philippines—its small force of B-17s and LB-30 and B-24 Liberators had been greatly diminished.)

Another force of B-24s under Colonel Harry Halverson was also planned for China, but its departure from the United States was delayed, and the Halpro force ended up diverting to the Middle East where it would eventually be joined by the Aquilla B-17s. Haynes and his men arrived to discover that the military situation in China had taken a turn for the worse as the Japanese went on the offensive in retaliation for the Doolittle Raid. The planned bomber bases had been overrun, and Japanese forces were advancing into Burma. Haynes and some of his crews gave up their B-17s and were put to work with the C-47s hauling supplies into Burma. As the military situation deteriorated, they evacuated Allied troops from the country.

Unfortunately, the Japanese were successful in both Burma and eastern China, leaving the Allies completely landlocked. Although Chinese forces held the vast interior of the country, the only means of delivering supplies was from India. Even without the threat of enemy action, land delivery was extremely difficult due to the rugged terrain of eastern India and central Burma, but even that possibility was ruled out when Japanese forces cut the Burma Road. With the land routes cut, the only means of delivering supplies to China was by air.

By the spring of 1942, it was apparent that delivering supplies to China was to be a major mission of the Tenth Air Force, the organization the War Department had created for control of air operations in the China-Burma-India Theater. With the loss of the planned bomber bases, China also lost its importance to the strategic plan, but there was one element that dictated that the country could still be important to the Allies.

Before the war, retired U.S. Army Captain Claire Chennault had organized an all-volunteer air force staffed by former U.S. military personnel to support China. The American Volunteer Group went into action two weeks after Pearl Harbor and immediately revealed to the world that Japanese air units were not invincible. Chennault's small force of fighters, known as the Flying Tigers, would evolve into an air force operating deep in the Chinese interior, a force that would tie down Japanese air units in Southeast Asia, preventing some of them from moving to other theaters. Chennault was recalled to active duty as a brigadier general and given command of the China Air Task Force (CATF), a subordinate unit to Tenth Air Force. The CATF would be entirely dependent on airlift for everything it needed to function as a viable combat force.



A C-54 cargo plane is loaded with supplies for the long journey across the mountains to China. After the Japanese had cut overland supply routes, the only method of transportation that could be counted on was through the air. (National Archives)

When it became obvious that air resupply of China would be a major Allied mission in the CBI, the War Department authorized the creation of a special transport unit to move supplies from India to China. In March 1942, Project Ammisca, a special effort consisting of a "ferry" force made up of a hundred recalled Army reservists, mostly active airline pilots, was

formed. The reservist pilots reported to the Ferry Command base at Morrison Field, Florida, where they joined enlisted crew chiefs and radio operators. Formed in 1941 to provide crews on temporary duty from the Air Combat Command to ferry U.S.-built aircraft sold under Lend-Lease to the Allies, Ferry Command had no other operational mission.

However, just prior to the war, the command was authorized to contract with the airlines for aircraft and crews to set up a "ferry" of supplies to British forces in North Africa. So, the mission of delivering supplies to China was given to it. The situation became even more complicated when the War Department decided that the "India-China Ferry" should be a Tenth Air Force responsibility. The original plan called for Ammisca to be under the direct control of General Joseph Stilwell, the senior Allied officer in China, but Tenth Air Force commander Brig. Gen. Clayton Bissell naturally believed that if he was to be responsible for the air ferry, all of the assets involved should be under his command.

Ammisca commander Brig. Gen. Robert Olds, an original member of the Ferry Command staff, opposed the transfer, but Bissell's view won out. When Ammisca arrived in India as the 1st Ferrying Group, it became part of the Tenth Air Force.

There was a third air transportation entity in Asia, one that offered perhaps even more possibilities for success than the 1st Ferrying Group. China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) was a subsidiary of Pan American Airways, which had been established in China in the 1930s. Many of the pilots were former U.S. military fliers—including some who joined the airline after leaving Chennault's AVG—and they took quickly to air transportation operations in the rugged conditions faced along the routes to China. CNAC would be the prime element in the China Ferry for most of 1942.

Brigadier General Earl Naiden surveyed the route for the Assam-Burma-China Ferry, along with a Trans-India route from Karachi to the Assam Valley, from which supplies bound for China would depart. The most direct and efficient route was across Burma to the airfield at Myitkyina on the Burma-China border, where supplies could be transferred to river barges then to trucks for the remainder of the trip to Chungking and Kunming. But Myitkyina was a strategic target for Japanese forces in Burma, which captured the airfield on May 8, placing the success of the resupply effort to China in doubt.

From Myitkyina, Japanese fighters threatened to control Burmese skies while their bombers were in easy range of the Indian bases from which the airlift was to be mounted. To alleviate the threat to India and reduce Japanese efforts against the air routes to China, the Tenth Air Force made the airfield at Myitkyina its primary target.

The delivery of supplies to China attracted political attention at the highest level of the United States government as President Roosevelt took a personal interest, to the extent that he actually set monthly tonnage goals. Had simply flying supplies into China been the only military consideration in the CBI, the goals might have been met. Unfortunately, Japanese troops were moving westward, forcing the Tenth Air Force to prioritize the use of its forces, with the defense of India becoming primary.

The "Hump" that ultimately gave the airlift its name was the Santsung Range, a long ridge that reached 15,000 feet in places and lay between the Salween and Mekong River valleys on the Burma-China border.

Air transportation was proving to be a major asset to ground operations in the theater, as well as in New Guinea in the Southwest Pacific where Allied forces faced similar obstacles. Military considerations for the defense of India led to frequent diversions of 1st Ferrying Group transports to missions in support of combat operations. Every time a transport was assigned to another mission, one less airplane was available for the China Ferry.

Political interest in the delivery of supplies to China ran high, thanks in no small measure to the interests of the American companies selling war materials to the Chinese. Their representative company was China Defense Supplies, Inc., a corporation that had been formed by Whiting Willauer, a New York lawyer with political connections, to act as a middleman between the Chinese government and the U.S. manufacturers for the delivery of Lend-Lease supplies. Willauer was also instrumental in the formation of the AVG. Payment for materials was contingent on their delivery to Chinese soil, and executives whose companies stood to make millions from the supply effort were not sympathetic to the military problems of the region.

A China Defense Supplies, Inc., representative, one Frank D. Sinclair, who wore the title of "Aviation Technical Advisor" in the company, visited India in the summer of 1942 to observe the airlift. Sinclair, whose background was in the aviation industry and who had airline connections, wrote a scathing report accusing the Tenth Air Force of having "a defeatist attitude" and lacking "singleness of purpose" in regard to the China Ferry. Sinclair's accusations seem ridiculous today when considering the seriousness of the military situation in eastern India in 1942, which he either failed to grasp or chose to ignore. Nevertheless, the report attracted the attention of the White House. A copy also went to the headquarters of the infant Air Transport Command.

A replacement engine for a Boeing B-29 heavy bomber arrives in China aboard a C-46 transport. B-29 engines and replacement parts were a priority for Hump flights during the effort to mount a bombing campaign against Japan from airfields in China. (National Archives)

In reality, the effort to deliver supplies to China was proceeding in spite of numerous problems, the most serious of which was the loss of Myitkyina. With the central Burmese airfield no longer available for transshipment, transports were forced to fly all the way to Kunming to deliver their loads, which reduced the efficiency of the transports and the amount of supplies that could be delivered. Furthermore, the threat of interception forced the unarmed transports to fly a more circuitous route, heading north over the eastern reaches of the Himalayas, then turning east to their Chinese destinations. Although the high Himalayas were well to the west, the "foothills" north of the Assam Valley were higher than the American Rockies.

The combination of humid air masses moving north out of the Bay of Bengal and the high mountain elevations produced some of the worst weather conditions in the world—strong winds that made navigation difficult, violent thunderstorms with heavy rain, and severe mountain turbulence that could rip an airplane apart. In the higher elevations the rain turned to ice and snow, which could load the wings and force an airplane into the mountain peaks.

THE OTHER HUMP AIRLIFT

Although history emphasizes the Air Transport Command airlift to China, the ATC airlift was but one of several flown over the lower reaches of the Himalayas to China and Burma. Once the Japanese took control of southern Burma and cut the Burma Road, anything that went to China or the portions of Burma still under Allied control had to go by air. Every bullet, every bean, every bomb, and every gallon of gasoline that found its way to China or Burma went inside an airplane—but not necessarily an Air Transport Command plane.

The Tenth and Fourteenth Air Force bomber crews were involved in the airlift effort. Due to the distances involved, bomber crews were forced to stage their operations from forward bases in China, although their main bases and supply bases were in China. While theater troop carrier squadrons brought in some of their supplies, the bomber crews hauled much of their own food, ammunition, bombs, and fuel.

Some estimates held that four Hump supply flights were required for each bomber mission. Liberator and B-25 Mitchell crews flew supply missions between India and their forward bases in China in preparation for each combat operation. These supplies were outside the tonnage carried by the Air Transport Command. In 1944, XX Bomber Command moved to China with the intention of airlifting a major portion of its own supplies to advanced bases in China. In addition to their C-87 and C-109 transports, XX Bomber Command converted several B-29s into tankers.

The largest airlift effort in the CBI was not conducted by the bombers, but rather by the theater airlift forces assigned to the Tenth and Fourteenth Air Forces. The Allies learned early in the war that airlift would play a major part in their strategy to retake Burma, and a massive airlift apparatus outside of the ATC Hump force was built up in eastern India in the vicinity of Imphal. The initial unit assigned was the Aquilla transport force brought to India in the spring of 1942 by Colonel Caleb Haynes.

These men were joined by crews and airplanes from the United States to make up the 1st and 2nd Troop Carrier Squadrons; in early 1944 the two squadrons joined others to make up the 443rd Troop Carrier Group. The troop carrier squadrons served dual roles, supporting ground forces operating in Northern Burma and providing logistical support for combat squadrons throughout the CBI.

In early 1944, American and British special forces began operations into the Burmese interior that depended on airlift for transportation and resupply. The newly arrived 1st Air Commando Group, brought to India from the Mediterranean, included a troop carrier squadron. Tenth Troop Carrier Command and British transports airlifted Brigadier Orde Wingate's Chindits into Burma, kept them supplied, then brought them back to India. Troop carrier transports also supplied Merrill's Marauders during their march across Burma.

As Allied operations in Burma increased, so did the role of the theater airlift units. The Burma airlift actually exceeded the Hump airlift in terms of tonnage. In some months, theater airlifters transported more than twice as much cargo as their ATC counterparts. Out of 1.75 million tons of cargo and passengers transported in the CBI, 60 percent went to Burma. □

Consideration was given to placing the entire responsibility for the movement of supplies to China on the China National Aviation Corporation, a move that Stilwell opposed. He believed it would be a mistake for U.S. military personnel to be under the control of an organization whose civilian personnel were paid on a much higher scale. Stilwell proposed instead that the CNAC be contracted to the Tenth Air Force, a suggestion accepted by the War Department and by the Chinese government, which owned the airline. The CNAC transports were assigned exclusively to the movement of supplies from Dinjan to China.

The airlift got off to a slower start than the White House wanted, but it was a start nevertheless. The CNAC transports in particular soon established an efficient routine. But the 1st Ferrying Group effort suffered innumerable problems, thanks in part to the diversions of some of its airplanes—one squadron was diverted to the Middle East in June. Only about two-thirds of the group's assigned airplanes had reached India by mid-1942. Quite a few were involved in accidents during the move while others were diverted to support military operations in Africa and the Middle East. Once they began operations, the transport force was plagued by accidents.

Events in the spring of 1942 eventually affected the China Ferry, although not until late in the year. Lawrence Pogue, the director of the Civil Aeronautics Board, wrote a letter to President Roosevelt expressing his concern that the haphazard awarding of military contracts to the nation's airlines was detrimental to the future of the industry. Pogue's solution was the creation of a pseudo-military government-run airline reporting directly to the president, an airline that would function independently of the Departments of War and the Navy.

A second alternative was for the War Department, at least, to set up its own air transportation command to handle airline contracts. A board of military officers was appointed to consider the problem, but before it submitted a solution Army Air Forces commander General Henry "Hap" Arnold took matters into his own hands. On June 20, Arnold issued General Order No. 8, establishing an Army air transportation organization that would be responsible for all air transportation needs except those directly related to combat.

The order took the "air transport" designation that had previously belonged to the groups and squadrons that had been formed to support combat operations and gave it to the new organization. The former air transport units were redesignated as "troop carriers." The reorganization also transferred the responsibility for issuing military contracts to the airlines from the Air Service Command to the new Air Transport Command.

Supplies fall free from the cargo doors of a Hump transport. On the ground, soldiers wait at the banks of a river deep in the Burmese jungle. Once gathered, the supplies were placed on flat-bottomed boats and moved to troops in the north of Burma. (National Archives)

The Air Transport Command was assigned a dual function, the ferrying of military aircraft, including Lend-Lease aircraft that had been consigned to other nations, from factories to combat units and the transportation of military cargo and passengers. As such, it was divided into two sections, the Ferrying Division and the Air Transportation Division. To staff the new command, the Army drew heavily on the airline industry, which contributed a number of key personnel who were given direct commissions as field grade officers. American Airlines President Cyrus R. Smith was assigned as the chief of staff of the new ATC, initially with the rank of colonel and with the responsibility of organizing and supervising the Air Transport Division.

Both divisions depended heavily on the national airline industry for contract pilots and air crews as well as for former airline personnel to fill military positions. The Air Transport Command also utilized "service pilots," men with civilian flying experience who were brought directly into the military without undergoing military pilot training. ATC's Ferrying Division also included a sizable number of female pilots, women with civilian flying experience who were employed in the same manner as male civilian contract pilots with the exception that their activities were confined to North America.

A copy of the Sinclair letter ended up in the hands of ATC Chief of Staff C.R. Smith, who saw and seized an opportunity for his new command and for the airline he managed in civilian life. He elaborated on Sinclair's complaints to assert that an independent command should be established in the CBI for the sole purpose of delivering supplies to China. Smith proposed that the Air Transport Command "take over" the airlift of supplies to China. His rationale was that since the Air Transport Command was made up of "air transportation professionals," it would logically be able to produce a better product than the Army's combat command.

All that would be required, according to Smith, would be support from the theater units in the form of base facilities and the air bases from which the ATC transports would operate. ATC would do the rest. Smith made a powerful case, and his proposal was accepted by General Stilwell. The ATC was to take over the airlift to China on December 1, 1942. Unfortunately, Smith's proposal was founded to a large degree on wishful thinking, and his command would not only fail—it would fail miserably.

The "Hump" that ultimately gave the airlift its name was the Santsung Range, a long ridge that reached 15,000 feet in places and lay between the Salween and Mekong River valleys on the Burma-China border. Fortunately, Allied troops, mostly native Ghurkas and Chinese, held northern Burma, thus affording advance bases for Tenth Air Force fighters charged with protecting the airlift route. Allied fighters and bombers concentrated on Japanese airfields in Central Burma, reducing Japanese fighter capabilities and allowing more direct deliveries from the transport bases in India's Assam Valley to the destination airfields at Kunming and Chungking.

Even though the threat of enemy air attack was sporadic, the crews flying the Hump faced constant danger, not the least of which was the reduced performance of their aircraft in the rarified air at the airfields themselves. Many of these were located at altitudes several thousand feet above sea level. In six months in 1943, Air Transport Command suffered no less than 134 major accidents on the Hump route, a large number of which occurred during takeoff and landing.

In spite of Smith's assurances that ATC would increase airlift capabilities over the

ABOVE: During the April 16, 1944, flight, Sergeant Donald Ross watches for a signal from the cockpit of a C-47. Private Robert Crane is positioned against the side of a box, ready to shove it out the door. Pfc. Charles Banks is positioned behind the box, while Brig. Gen. Frank Merrill observes.

BELOW: A C-87 transport, which has crashed at an airfield in India, is salvaged by ground crewmen in the hopes that it will be airworthy once again. The C-87 was the transport version of the B-24 Liberator heavy bomber. (Both: National Archives)

Hump, tonnage amounts actually declined during the first months after the transfer. The decline came in spite of an increase in the size and perceived capabilities of the airlift force. When ATC took over the Hump operation, it began making plans to add new types of aircraft to replace the Douglas C-47s with which the 1st Ferrying Group was equipped. In early 1943 a contingent of Consolidated C-87 four-engine transports arrived in India. C.R. Smith's own company, American Airlines, provided the flight crews under contract.

The transport version of the B-24 Liberator bomber, the C-87 promised to increase tonnage capabilities considerably due to its increased payload. However, it failed to live up to initial expectations. The other new type assigned to the Hump operation was the Curtiss C-46 Commando, a large twin-engine airplane capable of carrying a much larger payload than the DC-3 and C-47. But the C-46 was poorly designed, particularly the fuel system, with miles and miles of aluminum and steel tubing that made the airplane a mechanic's nightmare. Fortunately, modifications to the design turned the C-46 into an adequate transport, although it never lived up to expectations.

Although ATC had promised to increase the airlift tonnage, it would take the India-China Wing another six months to attain the 4,000 tons a month goal it had promised for February 1943. Meanwhile, the White House and War Department were promising tonnage levels twice those that were actually being carried. For example, the goal for September 1943, when tonnage finally exceeded 4,000 tons, was 10,000 tons. The Air Transport Command commander, Maj. Gen. Harold George, passed the buck to the Tenth Air Force, claiming that the India-China Wing was "a relic" of the 1st Ferrying Group that had been transferred to theater command over the protests of the Ferry Command leadership. Such an argument doesn't hold water. In reality, other units involved in airlifting cargo to China were constantly increasing their capabilities.

By September 1943, the CNAC was averaging 49 tons per airplane per month, while ATC squadrons were only carrying 23—and this in spite of the fact that ATC was equipped with C-87s and C-46s, both of which afforded considerably larger payloads than the CNAC DC-3s. Furthermore, when the 1st and 2nd Troop Carrier Squadrons became operational in India in the spring of 1943, they immediately became far more efficient than ATC. Many of the crews in the two troop carrier squadrons, which were promised to the Tenth Air Force as compensation for the loss of the 1st Ferrying Group, were fresh from training in the United States. Obviously, the problems with the India-China Wing were internal.

Eastern Airlines president and World War I ace Eddie Rickenbacker paid a visit to the CBI in the spring of 1943. With decades of experience in air transportation, Rickenbacker recognized that the real problem with the airlift lay in the command organization. The Air Transport Command was attempting to operate an independent command within a combat zone while expecting to receive priority support from a theater command that was up to its ears in combat operations.

Rickenbacker also noted the lack of suitable airdromes to handle the airlift operation, as well as shortages in weather forecasting, communications, engineering, and maintenance personnel. To Rickenbacker, the only logical solution was to return responsibility for the airlift operation to the Tenth Air Force. Rickenbacker's views were not shared by those within

the military establishment in Washington, especially the leadership of the Air Transport Command. The airlift remained under ATC. The problems continued.

Low morale was a major problem in the ATC units in India, although they were operating under conditions no worse, and perhaps better, than those endured by the combat squadrons. For Americans native to the temperate United States, the heat and humidity of India were a shock. They made life miserable, and they also produced torrential rains that turned the bases into seas of steaming mud. The situation was compounded by the presence of venomous snakes, insects, and vermin of every description.

Another factor unique to ATC personnel that is not discussed in histories of the airlift was the feeling that hauling freight to China was less important than fighting the Germans and Japanese. While the Ammisca pilots were drawn from the ranks of the U.S. airlines, they were also U.S. Army reservists and trained combat pilots. They knew that other reservists had been assigned to the bomber squadrons that were being formed in the United States, often in positions of leadership as flight and squadron commanders. Yet, here they were, pushing freight in unarmed transports in a backwater region of the world.

The lack of the exuberance of youth was also a factor. As a rule, ATC pilots in 1942 and 1943 were considerably older than the young men assigned to the combat squadrons. An older man's ordeal is often a young man's adventure. It is worth noting that the efficiency of the airlift began to improve after more and more Army pilots became available for transport duty.

The Air Transport Command took several steps in an attempt at improving the morale of the airmen assigned to the Hump mission. A major complaint was the poor delivery of mail, so mail was assigned a higher priority in the cargo system. General George convinced the Army Air Forces to authorize the awarding of combat decorations, particularly the Air Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross, to Hump flyers even though the dangers they faced were more from weather conditions and adverse terrain than from an armed enemy. He also obtained a citation for the India-China Wing.

The ATC headquarters encouraged several well-known media representatives to observe command operations, including the Hump airlift. Photographs and articles produced by men such as Ivan Dmitri appeared on the pages of *Time, Life,* and *The Saturday Evening Post.* The publicity drew attention to the role of the ATC airmen, but it also led to derision among the combat crews—especially troop carrier personnel—who began referring to the ATC acronym as "allergic to combat" or, in reference to the civilian contract crews, "Association (of) Terrified Civilians." The hostility toward ATC also reached into the command levels in the combat units, as theater command personnel came to believe that the ATC leadership in Washington was out to build an empire at their expense.

At Myitkyina, Burma, a helicopter is unloaded from a Douglas C-54 of the Air Transport Command. The helicopter saw limited use in the China-Burma-India Theater during World War II. (National Archives)

In mid-1943, the Army increased the size and capabilities of the India-China Wing of the ATC more than fivefold, a factor that allowed tonnage levels to finally begin increasing. Additional air bases were placed into service in India's Assam Valley and in the Chinese interior to handle the vastly increased airlift apparatus. All of the ATC wings were elevated to division status, including the India-China Wing, which became the India-China Division.

In September, Colonel Thomas O. Hardin transferred to the India-China Division to take command of the Hump operation. An airline executive in civilian life, Hardin had a reputation as a hard driver. He was also a practical commander who realized that official policies were often detrimental to mission completion. One of Hardin's actions was to implement 24-hour-a-day operations on the Hump route, thus greatly increasing the number of flights each day. The additional flights immediately increased tonnage capabilities over the Hump. In December, Hump crews hauled more than 12,000 tons into India. Adverse weather and high terrain made night operations more dangerous, and the accident rate increased.

The ATC leadership realized that an essential ingredient in the success of the airlift was an adequate supply of aircraft and engine parts. General George authorized special weekly flights from the Air Service Command supply depot at Fairfield, Ohio, to India. Four C-87s from the 26th Transport Group began the operation in September, but the mission transferred to the Ferrying Division in November and became known as Fireball. To keep the airplanes moving, crew stage bases were set up along the route. The rapid deliveries of aircraft parts also increased the numbers of available operational airplanes.

Although the threat of enemy interception was real, there were actually very few instances when ATC transports were subjected to enemy air attack. The worst period for the ATC, and other crews flying the Hump, commenced on October 13, 1943, when Japanese fighters operating from forward fields in central Burma attacked Allied aircraft over northern Burma. Two transports, a C-46 and a C-87, were shot down that day along with a CNAC DC-3. A B-24 and two Tenth Air Force C-47s were damaged. The Japanese were in for a surprise when they attacked several armed B-24s that were engaged in transport operations, and paid for their mistake with several losses.

Over the next two weeks two more ATC transports were shot down, and three others were reported missing. Two more transports were shot down in December. These were the only ATC combat losses on the airlift to China. Statistics reveal losses to enemy action of seven

transports and 13 crew members during the duration of the Hump Airlift.

Even though losses to enemy action were minimal, Hump airplanes and crews were being lost to accidents at a phenomenal rate. So many wrecks were strewn along the route from Assam to Kunming that some Hump crews began referring to it as "The Aluminum Trail." Still, the majority of the accidents occurred at the airfields themselves, where the combination of higher elevations and hot temperatures put the transports on the very edge of their operational performance envelope.

The accident rate was particularly high among the four-engine C-87s, no doubt due to the lack of adequate runway lengths for the altitudes involved. The Army had established 6,000 feet as the necessary runway length for a loaded C-87, apparently without taking into consideration the phenomenon known as density altitude. Due to high temperatures, density altitude—the altitude that actually effects an airplane's performance—is significantly higher than the actual elevation, thus increasing takeoff distance considerably. Climb performance is also drastically affected, meaning that the loss of an engine right after takeoff on a hot day in high terrain was a sign of impending doom. It is reported that accidents during the Hump airlift claimed some 600 transports and the lives of 1,000 airmen.

Approaching a drop zone which has been cleared in the Burmese jungle, a Douglas C-47 prepares to unleash its cargo of food, ammunition, and medical supplies. Airdrops were the only method of sustaining long-range jungle penetrations. (National Archives)

In the spring of 1944, the capabilities of the ATC Hump airlift force were greatly increased with the arrival of additional C-46s that were dedicated to the support of Matterhorn, a special unit equipped with long-range Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers to begin aerial operations against Japan. The Twentieth Air Force deployed to China as a self-sufficient unit. Several XX Bomber Command B-29s were converted into tankers to transport fuel from India to the advance bases in China from which the Superfortresses would depart on missions against Japan.

The Matterhorn force also included its own transport squadrons equipped with C-87s and a new transport version of the Liberator, the C-109 tanker, which entered service in August. While the C-87 was essentially a B-24 that had been stripped of the features that made it a bomber and equipped with a cargo floor, the C-109 incorporated a system of tanks that could be filled with fuel. Both the C-87 and C-109 were designed so that ground crews could drain extra fuel from their tanks at the Chinese bases. Aviation fuel was the major commodity delivered over the Hump, especially in 1944 and 1945.

Support of the Matterhorn force greatly increased the amount of tonnage being hauled across the Hump by the India-China Division. The division received a bonus when XX Bomber Command agreed to transfer its C-87s and C-109s to the Air Transport Command. When the War Department decided to withdraw the B-29s from China in early 1945, the transports that had been dedicated to their support were incorporated into the Hump airlift. It was largely due to the increase in airlift capability that ATC was able to start exceeding its monthly tonnage goals.

In August 1944, Brig. Gen. William H. Tunner replaced Brig. Gen. Thomas O. Hardin as commander of the India-China Division. Tunner was an ATC veteran whose air transport career dated to his assignment as the personnel officer for the Ferry Command before the war. When the ATC was activated, Tunner was placed in command of the Ferrying Division. One of the first production-oriented officers of the Army Air Forces, Tunner achieved a reputation for organization and safety. The India-China Division set unprecedented records while under Tunner's command, records for which the general was quick to take credit. Many historians credit Tunner with "turning around" the airlift, and the modern Air Mobility Command considers him to be "the father of Military Airlift." Such, however, is not the case.

Several factors led to the increase in tonnage being airlifted to China, not the least of which was the capture of the airfield at Myitkyina by Merrill's Marauders in May 1944. Although the town itself remained in Japanese hands until August, the capture of the airfield had a twofold benefit for the Hump airlift. It deprived the Japanese of an advanced base for their fighters and afforded the ATC a delivery point from which supplies destined for China could be further delivered by truck and barge.

The reduction in the threat of enemy interception allowed ATC crews bound for China to take a more southerly route over lower and less hostile terrain. The lower altitudes now required for flights into China allowed the introduction of the four-engine Douglas C-54 Skymaster to the airlift. Although the C-54 had proven to be a reliable transport with substantial payload capabilities, its limited high-altitude performance ruled it out for flights over the Hump. The C-54 also had a far better safety record than the C-87, although this was perhaps largely due to the Douglas transport being operated at lower elevations than the Liberator Express. However, it was C-46s, not C-87s, that the C-54s began replacing.

Tunner took command in India just as the

size of the India-China Division was greatly increased by the transfer of the XX Bomber Command transports to ATC. The combination of an increased force and shorter routes at lower altitudes from India to China naturally resulted in an increase in the amount of cargo carried.

Although Tunner has been given too much credit for the success of the Hump airlift during its final year, he did implement new maintenance and cargo-handling procedures that improved efficiency. One of his first actions was the introduction of what he called "Production Line Maintenance," a system under which airplanes were placed on a line not unlike an assembly line over which they moved as various maintenance items were completed. Under previous procedures, a crew of men would complete all required maintenance procedures one airplane at a time.

Tunner's system allowed more specialization as individual mechanics concentrated on specific tasks. He also applied similar techniques to the processing, handling, and loading of cargo. Due to the increase in size of the airlift force and the decreasing military urgency, Tunner was also able to institute safety policies in an attempt to lower the accident rate.

Tunner also benefited from the Allied successes in Europe and elsewhere in the Pacific Theater. By the time he took over the India-China Division, Allied troops were advancing from the Normandy beachhead and, most important, the air war in Europe had been won. The decreasing demand for replacement pilots in heavy bomber groups made more four-engine pilots, aerial engineers, radio operators, and navigators available for transport duty. The reduced demand for trained aircrews in the combat groups led to a reduction in primary flight training, thus releasing the staffs of the hundreds of primary flight schools for military service.

Tunner and the India-China Division also benefited from decisions made by the Army Air Forces as the war in China began winding down. By the spring of 1945, Burma had been liberated, and the massive troop carrier and combat cargo organization that had been developed to support combat operations in the CBI became available for routine transport operations.

Lieutenant General George Stratemeyer, the senior American air officer in the CBI, made another decision that greatly increased ATC capabilities. He and his staff decided that the cost in fuel of conducting heavy bomber operations from bases in China was prohibitive and that the four-engine B-24 Liberators of the 7th and 308th Bombardment Groups would be more productive in transport operations than in tactical operations.

Coming in for a landing on an airfield near Kunming, China, a C-46 Commando transport plane flies low over the tile roofs of the nearby village. (National Archives)

In May, Stratemeyer ordered the transfer of the two bombardment groups, the 433rd Troop Carrier Group, and the 3rd and 4th Combat Cargo Groups to the operational control of the India-China Division of the ATC. The transfer was not based solely on efficiency. The ATC effort had fallen short of its April allotment by more than 4,000 tons, and the assignment of more aircraft and crews would boost ATC capabilities.

The transfer met with resentment on the part of the combat personnel, who saw their new assignment as degrading. That they had to undergo a week of training under the supervision of ATC personnel caused further resentment among the bomber and troop carrier crews—all of whom were veterans of months and sometimes years of Hump operations. Ironically, the troop carrier and combat cargo squadrons had been carrying considerably more tonnage across the Hump than ATC. In March 1945, troop carrier and combat cargo transport delivered twice the tonnage transported during the same period by ATC.

The former combat aircrews were now under the control of "Tonnage" Tunner, and the India-China Division commander insisted that the combat crews undergo the same training as newly assigned crews fresh from the United States. In spite of their resentment and subsequent low morale, the bomber and troop carrier/combat cargo crews made a large contribution to the airlift to China through the end of the war. It was only due to their contribution that the India-China Division was able to exceed 50,000 tons a month.

With the end of the war, the requirement for the airlift of supplies to China lessened. The airlift continued, however, until November as Allied forces in China moved into occupied territory formerly held by Japanese troops. □

Sam McGowan is himself a pilot. He resides in the Houston, Texas, area.

Heroic Stand at Lausdell

Defending a critical crossroads during the early hours of the Battle of the Bulge, American troops blunted the German spearhead on December 17-18, 1944.

Three German soldiers crept through the snow. They had infiltrated the American front line during a counterattack.

Major William F. Hancock spotted the trio. The lead man towered over the others. "He must have been six foot four and weighed about 250 or 275 pounds," Hancock recalled. The huge German clutched a Panzerfaust, which had a warhead the size of a hornet's nest.

The major shouted to 1st Lt. Roy E. Allen, who stood nearby. The lieutenant leveled his carbine and began shooting at the Panzerfaust man. Allen's bullets struck the soldier, and he fell after several hits. The man tried to stand up but collapsed. He remained alive and somehow managed to drag himself forward, still grasping the Panzerfaust. Allen kept shooting. The German struggled onward until he finally keeled over and lay motionless.

The other two infiltrators raised their hands.

The courage of the hulking German impressed Hancock. "He was one of the bravest fellows I have ever seen. He just wouldn't stop." The Americans examined his body and discovered he was still breathing. "We took him to our aid station because I thought he deserved a chance to live even though he was our enemy."

The Panzerfaust man was just one of many German casualties suffered during a series of failed counterattacks. These abortive assaults withered under the guns of the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, part of the 2nd Infantry Division. The action took place at Wahlerscheid crossroads, and the date was December 16, 1944.

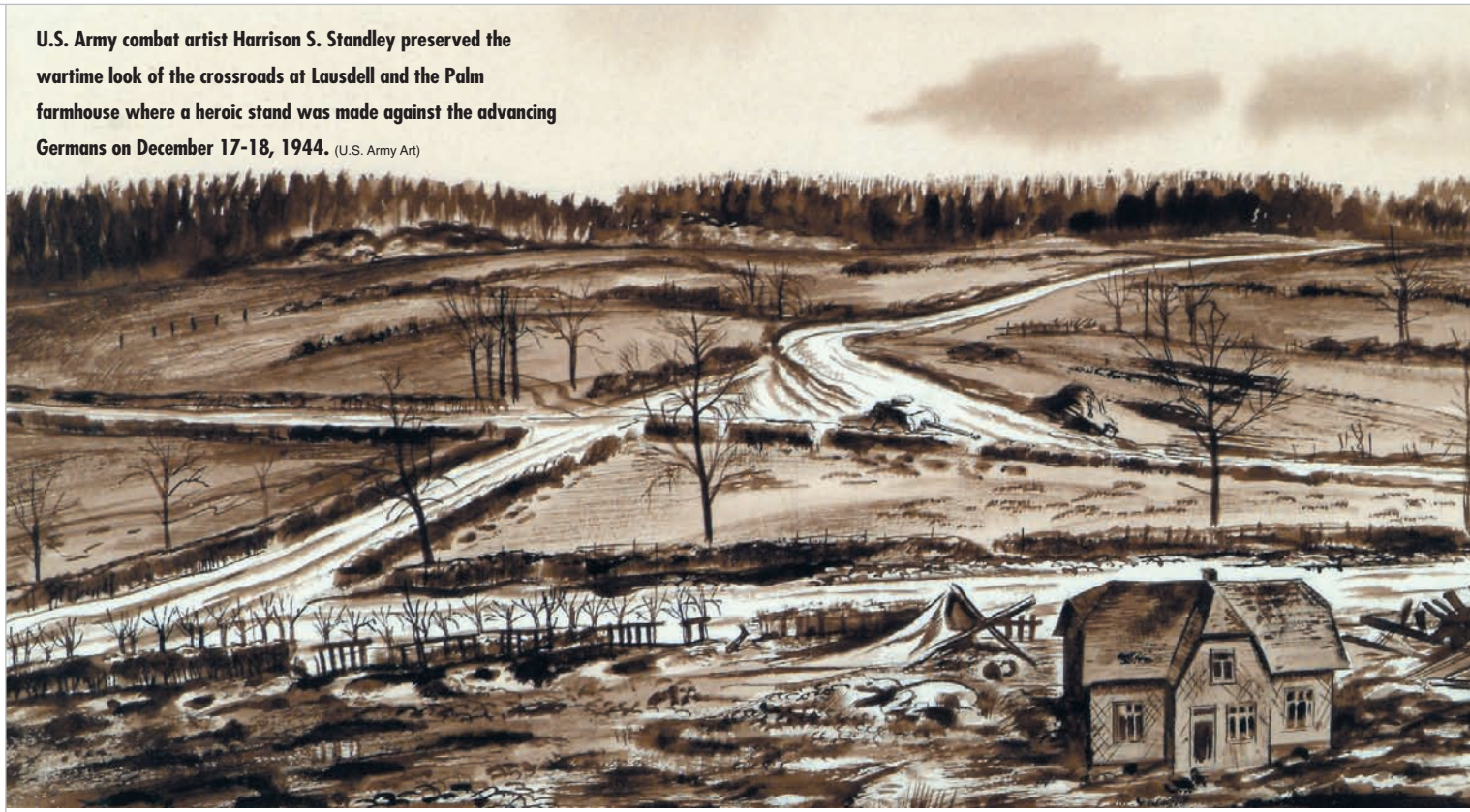
The crossroads lay several hundred yards inside Germany and within an enormous spruce forest. GIs of the 9th Infantry had seized Wahlerscheid after three days of fighting. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion were the first ones to pierce the German defenses and, along with 3rd Battalion troops, had captured a string of enemy trenches and concrete bunkers. The 1st Battalion had also captured several bunkers and then had fought to repel the counterattacks.

On the American side, the butcher's bill included 47 dead and scores more wounded. The weather inflicted even more casualties. During the day it warmed enough for the snow to begin melting. Clothing, webbed gear, and leather boots became soaked. At night, the mercury fell, and everything froze.

Major Hancock served as the 1st Battalion executive officer, and he never forgot the frigid temperatures. "One time my boot strings came untied and were frozen. When I attempted to retie them, they snapped like twigs. After that I learned to rub my shoestrings with my hands to warm them up." All night long, soldiers seemed to shiver constantly. "There were times you would shake so long that you were embarrassed because you looked like you were scared to death."

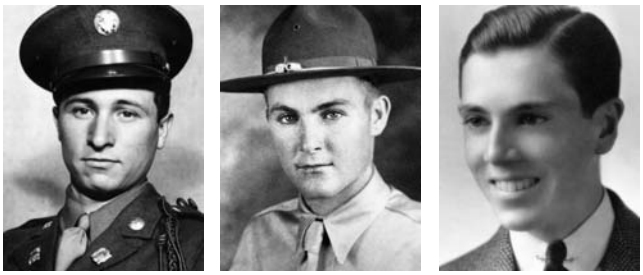
BY BILL WARNOCK

This modern view of Lausdell was taken in 1986. During the opening hours of the Battle of the Bulge, a handful of American troops slowed the German advance in the Ardennes and bought precious time to organize a coordinated defense. OPPOSITE: In one frame of a series of famous photographs from the Battle of the Bulge, German soldiers pass a burning American tank on the dead run. The Ardennes offensive caught the Americans by surprise, but two weeks later the crisis had passed and the Germans were again on the defensive. (Author / Opposite:National Archives)



U.S. Army combat artist Harrison S. Standley preserved the wartime look of the crossroads at Lausdell and the Palm farmhouse where a heroic stand was made against the advancing Germans on December 17-18, 1944. (U.S. Army Art)

A few lucky soldiers lived inside captured bunkers, some of which had stoves with tin chimneys. Most men lived outdoors in foxholes and slit trenches. The nearness of the enemy precluded the making of fires for warmth. The men huddled together in their holes. Nobody had blankets or sleeping bags. An epidemic of frozen feet thinned the ranks. "We lost a lot of people who went back to the rear because of cold-weather injuries," Hancock recalled. "I think we must have lost 20 percent of our command from the cold alone."



LEFT TO RIGHT: Sergeant Joe Busi, a coal miner from Pennsylvania, survived the intense fight at Lausdell. Staff Sergeant Odis Bone, along with Sergeant Charley Roberts and Sergeant Joe Busi, torched Panther tank 135. First Lieutenant John C. Granville called in artillery support for the hard-pressed Americans at Lausdell.

After three days of grinding misery, the fighting strength of the 1st Battalion had dwindled to 22 officers and 387 enlisted men. When the Wahlerscheid operation began, there had been 35 officers and 678 enlisted men. The chain of command had suffered, too. Company A had lost one commander, and Company B had also lost one. The men of Company C had lost two commanders, one of them suffering a nervous breakdown. In addition to losses among company commanders, numerous platoon leaders and platoon sergeants had fallen victim to the cold, or the enemy, or combat exhaustion.

Yet despite the heavy casualties, the Americans at Wahlerscheid felt a sense of accomplishment. They had cracked the German front line. Their victory had occurred at the forefront of a major U.S. Army offensive aimed at capturing a series of dams on the Roer River. The conquest of Wahlerscheid removed the first obstacle on the way to the dams.

After Wahlerscheid fell, the 1st Battalion established its command post in one of the captured bunkers. As the final hours of December 16 ticked away, Hancock walked outside the bunker and surveyed the surroundings. The night was uncharacteristically clear and quiet. He looked far to the south and saw a blue cloudbank stretching for miles and miles. Flashes of light illuminated it, and the rumble of thunder droned on without lull. The spectacle resembled an electrical storm, but it was entirely manmade, all of it created by artillery. Hancock surmised that an attack must be in progress.

He ambled back inside the bunker to tell the battalion commander about the artillery show. The commander was fast asleep, taking an overdue nap. About then, a field telephone rang. The regimental executive officer was on the line, and he wanted to speak with the commander. Preferring not to wake his boss, Hancock took a message instead. The executive officer said the enemy had launched an attack to the south and had penetrated the American line at several points. He then said the 9th Infantry might have to abandon Wahlerscheid and move south in the morning to help stop the German assault.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. William Dawes McKinley, woke up and heard Hancock on the phone. News of a possible retreat from Wahlerscheid dismayed McKinley, but he went about making plans for a possible withdrawal.

Hours later, on the morning of December 17, McKinley received an urgent summons to the regimental command post. The entire 9th Infantry had orders to pull out. McKinley's men were to defend an area five miles to the south, in pastureland near Rocherath, Belgium.

Word of the pullout spread among the troops like a prairie fire. After all the terror and death at Wahlerscheid, they were going to give up the place without a fight. It seemed like a bad dream. The men began referring to Wahler-

scheid as Heartbreak Crossroads.

Nobody in the 9th Infantry knew the full extent of the German attack to the south. Nobody knew that Hitler had secretly mustered a force of nearly 1,000 tanks, 2,000 artillery pieces, and 200,000 men.

The soldiers of McKinley's battalion faced real peril and had no inkling of it.

On December 17, 1944, McKinley and his men began the chore of moving south to meet the German attack. First, the battalion had to disengage from Wahlerscheid without the enemy becoming aware that an American pullout was under way.

According to standard procedure, each rifle squad left three of its 12 soldiers behind (although few squads still had 12 men). The rear guard darted up and down the line, firing from numerous positions to give the appearance of normal operations. Mortar men from Company D and howitzer crews from the 15th Field Artillery Battalion added to the ruse by laying down barrages on the enemy.

Led by Major Hancock, the rear guard gradually pulled out and joined the tail of the battalion column. Before leaving, the major used a thermite grenade to burn a broken-down jeep. He and others had filled it with rifles left behind by soldiers who had become casualties. McKinley's men were the last soldiers of the 9th Infantry to leave Wahlerscheid.

The infantrymen marched south through fog and mist. They crossed into Belgium from whence they had originally come. Each man trudged along with bleary eyes and a sad slouch. The long line of GI boots churned a path through the snow and muck on the main road to Rocherath. The evergreen forest on either side of the road seemed to stretch on forever, but finally the troops emerged from the woods.

A little farther south, at an intersection known as Rocherather Baracken, the men came upon Maj. Gen. Walter M. Robertson, commander of the 2nd Infantry Division. He flagged down McKinley. The general apprised his subordinate of all available information regarding the German attack. Robertson then directed McKinley to move his battalion and secure a crossroads northeast of Rocherath and defend it against enemy forces pushing in that direction. The general provided trucks, enough to haul about half the battalion.

Robertson had already sent three elements of the 3rd Battalion to the crossroads. They included Company K, a section of machine guns from Company M, and the Ammunition & Pioneer Platoon from Headquarters Company. McKinley received instructions to take command of these units and attach them to his battalion.

The crossroads itself lay amid a patchwork of cow pastures, which local residents called Lausdell. Waist-high hedgerows separated one pasture from another and served as fences. Two buildings stood at the crossroads, a gray-shingled farmhouse and an adjacent barn. The property belonged to Albert and Franzika Palm, a dairy farmer and his wife. Like most civilians, the Palms and their children had moved away when the area became a front-line sector in early autumn.

The house stood derelict when soldiers of the 9th Infantry found it. Captain Jack A. Garvey, commander of Company K, established his command post in the cellar. He positioned the A&P Platoon to his right rear, and he set the Company M machine gunners on his flanks.

All the while, the rattle and pop of small-arms fire emanated from the forest less than a mile east. Bedraggled soldiers exited the woods and hustled toward Lausdell. Some of them wore the Indian Head patch of the 2nd Infantry Division and others wore the Checkerboard patch of the 99th Infantry Division. Many

WILLIAM DAWES MCKINLEY served the Army "with all his heart."

Bill McKinley was the son of Maj. Gen. James F. McKinley and a grand nephew of President William McKinley. Born on January 18, 1916, the young McKinley grew up on Army posts from Georgia to the Panama Canal Zone. His military career began on the west bank of the Hudson River at the United States Military Academy. He graduated in 1937, becoming a second lieutenant. After a stint with the 19th Infantry Regiment at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, he transferred to the 9th Infantry Regiment at Fort Sam Huston, Texas. He met his wife, Anne, in Texas, and the couple married in 1940. The newly wed officer commanded Company D, the heavy weapons company of 1st Battalion. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, he moved up to battalion headquarters as executive officer.

Early in 1942, McKinley became a major and departed the 9th Infantry to become the aide-de-camp for the commanding general of the Third U.S. Army. Before the end of the year, he returned to the 9th, which had moved to Wisconsin to undergo winter-warfare training at Camp McCoy. He received command of a battalion and soon thereafter attained the rank of lieutenant colonel. At age twenty-six, his career was on a fast track.

While at McCoy, unexpected orders sent him to England in 1943 as assistant commandant of a school for officer candidates and supply specialists. After the 9th Infantry—and the entire 2nd Infantry Division—arrived in the United Kingdom later that year, he finagled his way back to his old outfit and became regimental executive officer.

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The regiment landed in France on June 7, 1944, splashing ashore on Omaha Beach. Two days later, he personally led a rifle platoon in an attempt to flank an enemy position. A pair of German bullets tore into his gut, but he survived and received a Silver Star.

After convalescing in England, he returned to the regiment in August and served as the assistant regimental commander—an ad hoc position created to keep him with the unit because his superiors thought highly of his abilities.

In October, he once again became a battalion commander following the death of the colonel who commanded the 1st Battalion. As always, McKinley inspired those who served under him. "His esprit de corps was the highest of any man I have ever seen," Bill Hancock remembered. "He believed in his command, he believed in his regiment, and he believed in his division with all his heart." □

looked punch drunk, stupefied by what they had witnessed. Their units had nearly ceased to exist, crushed by the steel might of enemy tanks. The men told stories of horror and catastrophe. Some of the soldiers stayed to fight alongside McKinley's troops, others fled.

When McKinley arrived at Lausdell, the commander of his headquarters company had already selected an abandoned dugout to use as the battalion command post. It had once belonged to the 372nd Field Artillery Battalion, part of the 99th Division. Earlier in the day, the artillerymen had abandoned firing positions at Lausdell, taking all their howitzers with them.

The dugout that McKinley occupied sat well to the rear of the Palm farmhouse. Inside the log-covered hole, the artillerymen had left a wooden table, upon which McKinley's staff placed maps and a telephone. The colonel himself received another summons to regimental headquarters, leaving Bill Hancock and Captain Glenn M. Harvey, battalion operations officer, to plan the defense of Lausdell.

Harvey and Hancock placed two of the battalion's three rifle companies in front of Company K. Company A dug in on the right of the main road that cut through Lausdell. Company B dug in on the left. The two units occupied pastures that earlier in the day had been home to Cannon Company, 393rd Infantry, another 99th Division outfit. The men of Companies A and B attacked the ground with their entrenching tools, shoveling out foxholes behind hedgerows. Some of the soldiers took over holes left behind by Cannon Company. The commander of Company A, 1st Lt. Stephen P. Truppner, settled into a deserted dugout. His Company B counterpart, 1st Lt. John S. Milesnick, had only a foxhole.

Harvey and Hancock placed Company C in a reserve position on the battalion left flank, well behind the other two rifle companies. Company C had suffered the heaviest casualties at Wahlerschied and had the least number of able-bodied men. Its new commander, Captain Arnold E. Alger, had transferred in from battalion headquarters.

Besides positioning the rifle companies, Harvey and Hancock gave deployment instructions to Captain Louis C. Ernst, commander of Company D. Ernst paired his two machine-gun platoons with Companies A and B. He placed his mortar platoon along a hedgerow directly behind the Palm farmhouse, and he established his command post near the mortars.

The hour was 5:45 PM, and the day had already lost its light.

Back at battalion headquarters, McKinley returned from regiment and reviewed the defensive plan devised by Harvey and Hancock. He approved it and then met with his company commanders.

Years later, Hancock recalled the colonel's words: "Gentlemen, this is it. We have a Panzer Army coming toward us down the road you see in front of us. They have been seen by our scout airplanes, and they should be here within the next hour. Our mission is to defend the crossroads at all costs. I know you are in position now. When you return to your companies, make sure that everyone in your command understands exactly what 'at all costs' means."

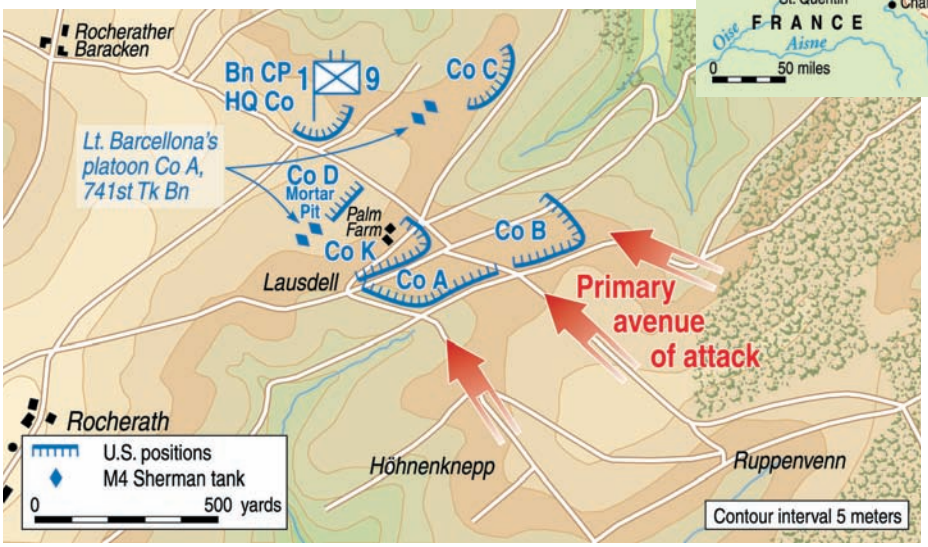
McKinley spoke with the self-confidence of a man who knew his job to a farthing. He turned to his operations officer and said, "Harvey, form 22 bazooka teams. We're going to be on the defensive, but we're also going to be attacking." McKinley then instructed his supply officer to provide extra bazookas and rockets should Harvey require them.

The colonel also directed his company commanders to assemble mine-laying teams responsible for planting antitank mines on all roads that enemy armor might use. But there was a complication. McKinley had received word that armor of the U.S. 741st Tank Battalion might be in the area. The mine layers had to hold back, pending a confirmed sighting of German tanks. Nobody wanted to blow up an American tank by accident.

While the battalion commander spoke to his company commanders, his artillery liaison officer, 1st Lt. John C. Granville, sat just inside the entrance of the command post and agonized over a stroke of bad luck. "I was trying to make contact with the 15th Field Artillery Battalion," Granville recalled. "But my radio wouldn't work."

Minutes later, Granville's fortune changed. "Lieutenant John W. Cooley, a forward observer with Battery A of the 15th Field Artillery, arrived at the CP to ask for instructions regarding artillery support. I told Cooley that my radio was out and that we had to use his radio to make contact with the 15th and, since he would be without any means of communication, he was to stand by as my backup. Lieutenant Cooley and his crew then prepared to dig in about 20 yards behind the battalion CP."

Wearing a headset, Granville spoke into the microphone of Cooley's radio. It was a bulky SCR-610, the standard FM set used by artillerymen. He soon reached the Fire Direction Center of the 15th Field Artillery and learned that someone had inadvertently compromised the code used to encrypt map coordinates. It consisted of letters that corresponded to numbers. The FDC staff created a new one. "I was to use my own



The objective of the German breakthrough in the Ardennes Forest was to effect a crossing of the River Meuse and capture the important supply port of Antwerp, Belgium. In the opening hours of Hitler's desperate gamble on the Western Front, American troops fought desperately at Lausdell to slow down the German juggernaut. (Maps © 2007 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN)

first and last name, not using any letter twice, as a substitute for the compromised code."

Soon after Granville received the new code, he opted to discard it and transmit all coordinates in plain English. The St. Louis, Missouri, native had been in combat since Normandy, and he knew that in a pitched battle he would have no time to fiddle with encryption. Every second mattered.

Visibility dwindled to almost nil as night and fog enveloped the Lausdell defenders. The men strained to hear any sign of the enemy. Nothing stirred.

The stillness lasted until 7:30 PM when, from the east, the men heard the hum of engines and the distinctive squeak and clatter of tank tracks. Four armored vehicles approached. The company commanders had already informed the troops that friendly tanks might be in the area.

As the vehicles drew nearer, the GIs thought the machines were friendly. False assumption. They were Jagdpanzers from the 1st Company of SS Panzerjäger Abteilung 12, and each had an escort of foot soldiers from the 25th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment.

Sergeant Joseph Busi of Company D lay beside the dirt road looking at the grenadiers and Jagdpanzers as they passed by several feet in front of him. The sergeant, a coal miner from Pennsylvania, watched in open-mouthed amazement. The SS men were "talking and joking like the war was over," he recalled. They seemed unaware they were in the midst of an American infantry battalion.

The grenadiers and tanks passed through without a shot fired. They disappeared into the night and continued on toward Rocherath.

Back at Lausdell, scores of GIs shook their heads in disbelief. Soon thereafter, the Americans heard a second group of tanks approaching. Nobody doubted they were German. As the machines rumbled closer and closer, Busi lay mines on the road, as did two other members of his company, Sergeant Charley L. Roberts and Pfc. Harlin E. Coffinger.

The lead tank was Panther 135 from the 1st Company of the 12th SS Panzer Regiment. It reached the crossroads at the center of Lausdell, where it struck one of the mines laid by Coffinger. The blast disabled 135, breaking its left track, which peeled off as the tank ground to a standstill.

Firing erupted. The five-man crew of 135 cut loose with its 75mm cannon and two machine guns. The spray of bullets killed Tech. Sgt. Charlie A. Reimer and Staff Sgt. Billy Floyd, both members of Company A. The unfortunate pair fell as they exited the dugout that served as the Company A command post. Amid the fracas, Panther 127 clanked up to the crossroads. It bypassed the crippled 135 and began turning left toward Rocherath.

This modern view of Lausdell, taken in 1986, shows the position where Panther tanks 127 and 135 were disabled and destroyed by American fire as they advanced in the vanguard of the German offensive. (Author)

Just then, Private William A. Soderman of Company K rose from behind a hedgerow. The former butcher from Connecticut shouldered a bazooka and faced the enemy tank at close range. He squeezed the trigger of his weapon, and a rocket streaked through the air. The wrenching explosion shattered a track link, and the tank rolled to a halt beside Soderman's position. He had brought down a Panther with a single shot.

The crew inside 127 began firing high explosive shells. The turret rotated a few degrees, and the main gun barked out a shell. Another shot followed after the crew cranked the turret around a few more degrees. The enemy gunner sniffed out targets, pounding any location where he spotted movement.

Busi started launching rifle grenades at 127, hoping to stifle its big cannon. Many of his grenades bounced off, but one of them detonated along the base of the turret. The blast sent out a long tongue of fire. "The turret stopped rotating and didn't move again," Busi recalled. Crewmen quickly emerged from the maimed beast, and GIs everywhere opened up on them. Shots rang off the steel hull as the crewmen perished one after another.

Machine gunners from Company D participated in the killing. The squad, led by Corporal Sydney L. Plumley of West Virginia, squirted a steady stream of bullets at the tank. His squad also engaged German infantrymen, who had begun appearing out of the gloom. Plumley worked the trigger, while his assistant gunner fed belt after belt of ammunition. Their shooting drew more attention than a circus spotlight.

As Plumley's gun blazed away, the crew of 135 remained inside their vehicle and carried on the fight. Their cannon shells ignited hay inside the Palm barn and turned the structure into a flaming pyre. The inferno increased visibility at Lausdell, and the Germans took advantage of it, shooting point blank at whatever targets they could locate. According to Busi, "They were traversing the gun and firing at anything." One shot cut down Plumley and his assistant, Pfc. Harry Hooper. Another shot clobbered the machine gun operated by Pfc. Howard Ammons, who died along with his assistant, Pfc. Frank J. Cudo.

The situation demanded quick action. "We knew something had to be done as we would all be killed," recalled Harlin Coffinger.

Sergeant Roberts, a 30-year-old Texan, said, "Let's burn the damn thing!" He and another Texan, Staff Sgt. Odis Bone of Company B, retrieved a five-gallon can of gasoline from an American vehicle abandoned nearby.

Bone and Roberts crept up behind 135, accompanied by Busi. Bone had the gasoline can, and Roberts had a white-phosphorous grenade. After opening the can, Bone raised the heavy container with help from Busi, and the two heaved it onto the engine deck. Gasoline gurgled out. The tank commander inside became aware of the danger, perhaps seeing the Americans through one of his periscopes.

The three GIs watched the turret hatch slowly open. It rose just enough for the commander to toss out a grenade, which hit the side of the tank and bounced onto the road. Bone and Roberts dropped to the ground just as it exploded. The blast injured Roberts in the

hand. Ignoring his wound, he leaped to his feet and flipped the phosphorous grenade onto the engine deck. The gasoline erupted into flames, and the fire beat red against the black sky.

Tracer bullets crisscrossed the air, and Bone surmised he would be hit if he tried to run. He elected to seek cover alongside the tank. He urged Roberts to do the same, but Roberts ran and somehow survived.

The crew of 135 realized their tank had become a death trap, and they made several attempts to escape. Each time trigger-happy Americans kept them pinned inside. The crew eventually became desperate and bailed out despite the fusillade of bullets.

"Our troops along the road just riddled them," Bone later recalled. The bodies of two lifeless Germans tumbled off the tank and landed beside him.

Against near impossible odds, one crewman managed to escape by jumping off the left side of the tank. Busi caught sight of him as "he ran like hell back toward German lines." The flames illuminated a white bandage wrapped around his head.

When the hail of small arms projectiles subsided, Bone sprang up but took a moment to grab a field cap belonging to one of the dead Germans. He then made a beeline to the Company B command post, established along a nearby hedgerow. He gave the cap to a lieutenant who said, "Take it back to battalion."

Bone raced some 400 yards to the dugout being used as the battalion command post. He showed the cap to McKinley and several members of his staff. They immediately recognized the insignia on it as being SS and asked how he obtained it. Bone described the fiery incident at the crossroads. One staff member promised him a Silver Star, but that meant little to the sergeant. In his mind, survival was the only measure of success.

Meanwhile, two other tanks had advanced behind 135 and 127.

Lieutenant Roy Allen and Technical Sgt. Ted A. Bickerstaff of Company B pulled a "daisy chain" of eight antitank mines across the road in front of the tanks. Bullets flicked up dirt around the two men as they armed the mines.

Alert to the danger, the tank drivers veered into adjacent cow pastures. The huge battle wagons slewed mud and hunks of sod as they sideslipped the daisy chain. American soldiers clutching bazookas stalked after them. The commander of Company B was among the hunters. He suffered a nasty leg wound while in pursuit but nonetheless remained in charge of his unit, refusing medical evacuation.

The battered hulks of Panther tanks 127 (left) and 135 lie abandoned at Lausdell crossroads following the heavy fighting of December 17-18, 1944. The Panther was developed in response to the Soviet T-34 in the East and far outclassed Allied armor on the Western Front. (National Archives)

German infantrymen had accompanied the tanks, and some of the soldiers crept among the American foxholes. One SS man jumped in the hole occupied by Pfc. Roberto Gonzales of Company D. The startled GI fled and reported the situation to his platoon leader, 1st Lt. Allyn H. Tedmon of Fort Collins, Colorado.

"Did you kill him?" Tedmon said.

"No."

"Go back and kill him."

Gonzales carried out the order, using a trench knife to dispatch the enemy soldier.

Tedmon led the 2nd Heavy Machine Gun Platoon, and he had established his headquarters in a shell hole. Eighteen men served under him, and his little band of defenders pelted the German infantry with machine-gun bullets.

Three riflemen from Company A did the same. Pfcs. Harry Stemple, William L. Adams, and Rodney M. Jennings climbed aboard Panther 127 and took over one of its machine guns, probably the antiaircraft MG 34. The men soon had it spitting bullets at the enemy.

But the Germans kept coming.

The commander of Company B sighted more armor approaching, and each tank had an infantry escort. He radioed the news to McKinley's command post, and the colonel put Lieutenant Granville to work orchestrating artillery support. Granville transmitted his initial call for assistance at 8:36 PM. He began searching the road with shellfire, starting close to Companies A and B and shifting the barrage back toward the forest.

He later recounted his actions: "My first requests for fire were given in an orthodox manner with 'sensings' that fire was so many yards short or over, or so many yards right or left. Of course, these were actually the sensings of the infantry personnel involved as relayed to McKinley."

Shells plunged down with a piercing wail as salvo after salvo hit the enemy. The German tanks and infantry halted. The Lausdell defenders heard wounded enemy soldiers calling for medical attention. *"Sani! Hilfe!"* they cried.

The commander of Company A soon reported more tanks approaching.

Granville shifted the artillery bombardment and stymied the new threat.

At 10:30 PM, the Company A commander again reported tanks—Panthers and Jagdpanzers. This armored assault converged on Lausdell from three directions. It was the heaviest attack of the night.

Granville described his response: "As the action thickened, I threw all orthodoxy to the wind and, in very unmilitary jargon, called for fire 'on the right' or 'on the left.' Now those sorts of commands would have made no sense had I not been able to give the precise coordinates of our command post as well as the coordinates of the first target. But, having established those two points, I knew that a line had been drawn showing the relationship of our position to the network of roads."

The staff at the fire direction center translated Granville's calls into precise coordinates and then assigned targets to the 12 howitzers of the 15th Field Artillery. Target assignments also went out to six other artillery battalions, which General Robertson had thrown into the fight.

Granville (call sign "Two Four One") pleaded for everything his FDC could scrape together, and he yelled into his microphone, "If you don't get it out right now, it'll be too Goddamn late!"

The seconds crawled by.

Then, to the rear of Lausdell, the horizon lit up like dawn. Granville heard the distant rumble of howitzers followed by the whoosh of shells hurtling overhead. The wave of projectiles exploded in a horrible cyclone of steel and fire. Shock waves from the bursting shells quaked the earth as the detonations merged into a single deafening din. Everywhere the enemy attackers turned, they saw the bright face of Death.

Granville's calls had opened the gates of hell, and he kept hollering for more and more shells. But while transmitting requests, he encountered interference.

"During the height of the artillery barrage, a German tank commander broke into our radio channel. He was giving excited commands to his forces, and he and I were talking at the same time over the same radio channel. This was too much for me to stomach. I screamed into the radio, 'Get off my channel, you kraut son-of-a-bitch!'"

Granville subsequently learned that everyone at the FDC had also heard the German voice. Private Max W. Burian, a German-speaking member of the unit, grabbed a microphone and mimicked the radio lingo used by the enemy. "He transmitted a message directing the Panzers to return to their assembly area," Granville explained. "I don't know if any of that worked, but I was probably cussing him out, too."

By midnight, the wild melee had subsided, and the sour stench of TNT hung in the air. Panthers 127 and 135 stood at the center of the battlefield like a pair of tombstones. The Germans had withdrawn to regroup and marshal more forces.

Hitler's great attack struck along an 89-mile front and overwhelmed numerous American units. The 2nd Division had faced envelopment, but the successful defense of Lausdell on December 17 gave the division time to maneuver.

The 38th Infantry, sister regiment of the 9th Infantry, deployed around Krinkelt-Rocherath and moved in behind McKinley's troops. Linemen spliced together a telephone wire from McKinley's command post to the 38th Infantry. The colonel obtained information about the defensive line forming behind his battalion. The men at Lausdell would eventually withdraw through that line but not before receiving permission. For now, they had to continue holding Lausdell.

McKinley gained assistance from a battle-worn battalion of the 99th Division. Its commander, Lt. Col. Jack G. Allen, received instructions to tie in on McKinley's left flank. The arrival of Allen's force, albeit badly depleted, allowed McKinley to move his Company C from its reserve position. The company

ABOVE: Sydney Plumley and Harry Hooper gave their lives at Lausdell defending a position with this .50-caliber Browning M1917A1 heavy machine gun. The photo was taken in February 1945, and the Ninth Infantry Regiment has maintained the weapon as a symbol of the soldiers' sacrifice. TOP: A direct hit from an artillery shell destroyed this Panther in the area held by Company A. Accurate artillery fire was critical in slowing the German advance at Lausdell. (Both: National Archives)

marched to ground on the far right flank. There, on the outskirts of Rocherath, the men had instructions to guard against a return of the grenadiers and Jagdpanzers that had passed through Lausdell just before the battle began. The soldiers of Company C found no Jagdpanzers but engaged in a skirmish and bagged one enemy prisoner. The soldiers also encountered GIs of the 38th Infantry, who were now taking control of the area. The company commander soon had orders to turn his men around and move back to the reserve position.

Throughout the predawn hours, Lieutenant Granville called for harassing fire on the Panzer-infested woods to the east. Artillery shells interdicted roads, trails, and anywhere the enemy might be massing forces.

Under the shellfire, German armor and infantry girded for renewed combat. Jagdpanzer crews hunkered down and awaited orders. Crewmen from the 1st Company of the 12th SS Panzer Regiment also waited, as did crewmen from the 3rd Company, which had reached the forest during the night and had 14 brand-new Panthers. (The 1st Company had started the battle with the same number of new vehicles.)

The renewed German assault broke on Lausdell before sunrise. The 1st Company led the way through the fog and dark. "You could hear the tank engines roaring in the distance," Major Hancock remembered. "It sounded like a hurricane coming."

With McKinley at his side, Lieutenant Granville shouted for all the artillery fire his FDC could muster in front of Companies A and B. Granville recalled what happened next: "McKinley handed me his radio receiver. From the other end came an admonition to me: 'You're killing my men. You're blowing them out of their holes.' I immediately ordered fires in that sector moved back one hundred yards or so. To this day, I could not tell you which officer I was talking to. I was sick at heart."

Although the shelling inflicted friendly casualties, it blunted the German attack. The tanks and grenadiers turned tail and fell back.

Daytime slowly arrived, and the sky shifted from black to shades of gray. In the morning light, the Germans pushed forward again. Like a giant battering ram, an extended column of tanks plowed toward Lausdell. Hancock described their attack formation: "They closed up just like boxcars on a railroad track, practically bumper to bumper." Grenadiers marched alongside the column, each man with his weapon at the ready.

Artillery shells began raining down on the phalanx of men and machines, but it wormed its way to within 20 feet of the American foxholes.

William Soderman darted along a ditch to engage the oncoming tanks. He leaped onto the road and pointed his bazooka at the lead vehicle. His rocket disabled it.

Meanwhile, the German foot troops had fanned out. Grenade battles erupted, as did hand-to-hand combat and bayonet fights. Soderman killed at least three enemy soldiers with another shot from his bazooka. He used his last rocket to disable another tank. As he scrambled for cover, machine-gun bullets from the tank tore open his right shoulder. He dragged himself a short distance before two buddies helped him off the battlefield.

Not all the Americans displayed courage like Soderman. Six or seven Company B men fled in panic. McKinley heard about it over his radio, and he charged out of his command post. He intercepted the men and sent them back to their unit. Thirty minutes after daybreak, the commander of Company A reported via radio that German forces had swamped his company, but his men were hanging on despite the dire predicament.

Panthers prowled around Lausdell, blasting foxhole after foxhole. One shell exploded near the position occupied by Rodney Jennings and Harry Stemple. The blast peppered Stemple with fragments, and he bled to death in Jennings's arms.

Lieutenant Truppner, the Company A commander, made one last radio transmission. He requested artillery fire on his own position. His troops ducked into their holes as howitzer shells burst pell-mell throughout the area. The explosions rocked the landscape with concussion and left men bleeding from their ears.

One projectile struck the roof of a Panther turret, penetrating its armored skin and setting off the ammunition stowed inside. The shattering blast made the 47-ton behemoth look fragile. Great hunks of steel somersaulted through the air, and a mushroom cloud billowed upward. The lucky hit left torn and twisted metal strewn all over, but the explosion did little to stem the enemy tide.

At 10 AM, McKinley received permission to withdraw around noontime. By then, troops of the 38th Infantry would have a new line behind Lausdell. McKinley had one stabbing worry. How could he accomplish a retrograde movement with his men locked in close combat? The enemy would blast his soldiers in their backsides if they attempted to disengage. Artillery as a means of cover was problematic. It might hold down the Germans but would butcher the withdrawing defenders as they rose from their holes. What to do? The officer in charge of the battalion antitank platoon spotted an answer churning in the morning mist.

First Lieutenant Eugene V. Hinski sprinted toward four American tanks roving along the Rocherath-Wahlerscheid road. He shouted at the man in charge, 1st Lt. Gaetano R. Barcellona from San Antonio, Texas.

"Do you want to fight?" Hinski said.

"Hell, yes! That's what I'm here for."

Excited hands pointed the eager tank commander to the battalion command post, where McKinley rejoiced at the sight of the four lumbering friendlies.

The 29-year-old tank officer led the 2nd Platoon of Company A, 741st Tank Battalion. He sported a bushy mustache and had a reputation for boldness. Several months earlier, he had received the Distinguished Service Cross for his D-Day exploits.

McKinley, his operations officer, and Barcellona hatched a plan to use the armored platoon for a counterattack. The maneuver would permit the remaining Lausdell defenders to retreat. The planners decided to split the tank platoon in half, two vehicles north of the withdrawal route and two vehicles south of it. After a 30-minute artillery barrage, the northern pair moved out at 11:45 AM. They served as decoys, attracting the eyes of the Panther crews.

Bill Soderman, the shoulder patch of the 2nd Infantry Division prominently visible on his sleeve, receives the Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman on the White House lawn, October 12, 1945. (National Archives)

The distraction allowed Barcellona's other two machines to move out and creep close enough to make use of their armor-piercing shells. The tank gunners scored two hits on one enemy vehicle and three on another (the victims may have been Panthers 127 and 135, already out of action). Caught by surprise, two other Panthers bolted toward the twin villages. Barcellona claimed a hit on one of them. Afterward, his platoon withdrew to reassemble for another attack.

With the Panther menace momentarily dispersed, McKinley's men, those not already overrun, pulled their noses from the muck and began falling back. The commander of Company B, Lieutenant Milesnick, rousted his men and guided them away despite his being hobbled by a leg wound. Only after leading his men to safety did he consent to medical attention and a trip to the 5th Evacuation Hospital.

Many of the retreating Americans escaped under covering fire provided by a lone Company D machine gunner, Technical Sgt. James L. Bayliss. He carried a heavy machine gun to an advantageous position and put his weapon into action. The career soldier from Cedar Bayou, Texas, swept the enemy infantry with bullets.

As he hammered out .30-caliber slugs, German armor again converged on Lausdell. The crew of a Panther spotted him and unleashed a shell. The projectile flew wide. Bayliss ignored it and stayed behind his weapon. The Panther cut loose again but missed. The sergeant never flinched. And then—wham—it all ended. He died in a blinding flash as a tank shell found its mark.

Joe Busi and two of his men fell back to the battalion command post. One of McKinley's lieutenants directed Busi to a jeep loaded with ammunition and a machine gun. The sergeant fetched a couple boxes of ammunition. One of his men hoisted out the gun, and the other grabbed a tripod for it. The threesome had instructions to set up the gun at the far end of a long hedgerow and provide suppressing fire. The soldier carrying the gun led the way. Private Joseph Popielarcheck had the tripod. Busi cautioned him, "Stay down below that hedge. Don't let 'em see you."

Popielarcheck, a former paratrooper, lugged the tripod on his shoulders. "He started off real low," Busi remembered. "But then—I guess maybe his back was hurting—he rose up higher and higher. I saw him standing straight up after awhile."

The Germans also saw him and began yelling. Busi realized the danger and screamed, "Get the hell down!" Adrenaline pumping, he tore after Popielarcheck and dove to knock him flat. But an enemy shell won the race. The blast cut Popielarcheck in half and knocked Busi unconscious.

After regaining his senses, Busi looked around, and his eyes locked

Continued on page 86

MEDAL OF HONOR					
Soderman, William A.	Pvt	Co. K	G.O. 97, WD,	1945	
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS					
Bayliss, James L.	T/Sgt	Co. D	G.O. 58, FUSA,	1945	KIA
Milesnick, John S.	1/Lt	Co. B	G.O. 14, FUSA,	1946	
SILVER STAR MEDAL					
Adams, William L.	PFC	Co. A	G.O. 13, 2ID,	1945	POW
Allen, Roy E.	1/Lt	Co. B	G.O. 85, 2ID,	1945	
Garvey, Jack A.	Capt	Co. K	G.O. 75, 2ID,	1945	POW
Hooper, Harry	PFC	Co. D	G.O. 13, 2ID,	1945	KIA
House, Festus C.	Sgt	Co. B	G.O. 13, 2ID,	1945	KIA
Jennings, Rodney M.	PFC	Co. A	G.O. 13, 2ID,	1945	POW
McKinley, William D.	LTC	HQ 1/9	G.O. 41, 2ID,	1945	
Plumley, Sydney L.	Cpl	Co. D	G.O. 17, 2ID,	1945	KIA
Roberts, Charley L.	Sgt	Co. D	G.O. 17, 2ID,	1945	
Stemple, Harry Jr.	PFC	Co. A	G.O. 17, 2ID,	1945	KIA
Tedmon, Allyn H. Jr.	1/Lt	Co. D	G.O. 17, 2ID,	1945	

Lausdell Artifacts

He pulled a rusty American helmet from the ground. It had been an easy target for his metal detector, and the artifact proved something special. It had a hand-painted Indian head insignia—emblem of the 2nd Infantry Division.

The helmet actually had two such insignias, one on its steel shell and one on its plastic liner. The latter also had a crudely etched rank insignia of a Technician Fifth Grade. Jean-Louis Seel had never found a helmet like it before in more than a decade of searching for battlefield relics. Best of all, the helmet came from Lausdell. Seel knew the story of McKinley's battalion and its defense of the crossroads.

1

The 31-year-old Belgian discovered the helmet on April 26, 1994, his first time searching at Lausdell. Upon closer examination, he found the name Cortes scratched into the paint on the interior of the steel shell.

The following week, Seel returned to the crossroads for another search, having obtained permission from the farmer who owned the pastures in the area. Metal detector in hand, Seel scanned the field once occupied by McKinley's Company A.

2

His detector suddenly screamed in his ears.

Large target below.

He used a mattock to dig down and discovered what appeared to be a metal plate. He kept digging but could not find its edge. The object was huge. Excavating it was too much him for him alone. He came back almost two weeks later with a friend, but the task overwhelmed the pair.

Seel returned on May 20 with fellow relic hunter Jean-Philippe Speder and three other men. Together they muscled out an enormous slab of steel, which several of them recognized as part of a Panther turret. The big fragment had a periscope port and an armored ventilator that once expelled gun gases from the fighting compartment. Traces of yellow-ochre paint remained on the exterior surface, and red-oxide primer remained on the interior side. But the most remarkable feature was a fist-sized hole punched through the steel by an American artillery shell. The resulting explosion had shattered the tank like an eggshell. Additional bits of the dead Panther turned up in the field, although none as large or impressive as the turret fragment.

The ground also yielded a bounty of GI artifacts, which Seel and Speder ferreted out after deducing that American soldiers probably entrenched themselves along the hedgerows that edged the field. "We thought like infantrymen," Speder said. "Where would experienced soldiers dig in if they had to defend this place?" The hedges offered the only concealment.

At regular intervals along the hedges, the two Belgians detected metallic objects two to three feet down, where foxholes had once existed. In almost every case, the diggers found a rotted cartridge belt. There were also canteens, mess kits, and other pieces of personal gear. Some of the items had engraved markings identifying them to members of Company A who fell into German captivity. Seel and Speder imagined the scene, hapless prisoners shucking their gear at gunpoint before being marched away. And after the war, local farmers filled in the foxholes, entombing the relics.

Seel later recalled something that surprised him. "Many of the cartridge belts were still full of ammunition. I guess not everybody fought to the last bullet."

The excavation work that began in 1994 continued intermittently for another three years. Throughout that time, Seel and Speder received help from two other diggers, Marc Marique and Jean-Luc Menestrey. The foursome scoured the pastures once occupied by Companies A, B, and K. Besides more engraved items, they found a tripod for a .30-caliber heavy machine gun, which probably belonged to soldiers of Company D.

Only one firearm came to light during the three years. Marique found an M1 rifle in November 1996. While cleaning it, he discovered the weapon had jammed. He also discovered an Indian head carved into the wooden stock.

3

4

5

1. **Spring 1994 recoveries.** (Jean-Louis Seel)
2. **Canteen belonging to Pfc. Frederick K. Wease, Weapons Platoon, Company K, 9th Infantry. Wease became a POW at Lausdell and survived the war.**
3. **Pz.Kpfw. Panther Ausf. G turret fragment discovered in Company A area, July 4, 1996.**
4. **MKIIA1 hand grenade recovered in Company A area on July 4, 1996.**
5. **M91A antitank rifle grenade recovered in Company A area on July 4, 1996.**

(Photos 2-5: Author)

The work at Lausdell included more than just exhuming buried material. Speder mapped the area and recorded foxhole locations and places where engraved artifacts and other special objects turned up. He considered that information as valuable as the artifacts themselves.

Prior to the last dig, the Belgian team learned about a location where farmers supposedly buried a sizable collection of battlefield debris. The team swept the spot with a metal detector but found nothing. "If anything's there, it's deep," Seel said, "and it probably includes a lot of dangerous munitions."

The team left the spot undisturbed.

"Lausdell can keep some of its artifacts," Seel added. □

Debacle at Luban

BY EDWARD PARAUBEK

A Red Army offensive to raise the siege of Leningrad resulted in a disastrous defeat and staggering losses.

On February 23, 1942, Red Army Day, the People's Commissar of Defense, Josef Stalin, issued Order No. 55. It read in part as follows: "But the enemy's efforts have been in vain. The initiative now is in our hands and the futile attempts of Hitler's out of tune, rusted machine are unable to withstand the pressure of the Red Army. The day is not far when a powerful blow of the Red Army will hurl back the enemy beasts from Leningrad, clear from them the towns and villages of Byelorussia and Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia, Estonia and Karelia, liberate the Soviet Crimea, and all over the Soviet land the red banners will again soar victoriously."

At the end of 1941, six months after the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Soviet losses in territory and human lives were staggering, without precedent in modern military history. Some 570,000 square miles, an area equal to that of all occupied Europe, with a population of no less than 70 million and enormous industrial and agricultural output, was lost. For all practical purposes, the original Soviet air force and armor ceased to exist, and of those Red Army men who met the German onslaught in June, only 8 percent were still in the ranks.

Despite these tragic, crushing facts, the mood of the Soviet supreme commander, Premier Josef Stalin, was optimistic because of recent news from different corners of the front. A Soviet counteroffensive, launched on December 5, had driven the Germans from the gates of Moscow and liberated Tula and Moscow provinces. Rostov was retaken, and the railroad town of Tikhvin, the key to the survival of Leningrad, was recaptured after a desperate and furious offensive. Stalin was convinced that all strategic dispositions had changed in favor of the Red Army and that the Moscow offensive would continue unabated, in conjunction with massive strikes along all the length of the enormous front.

When the always cautious and prudent Chief of General Staff Marshal Boris Shaposhnikov timidly suggested consolidating the achieved gains and switching to strategic defense all along the front, Stalin brushed him aside, saying, "Hitler is already exhausted. With a unified blow along all fronts we will overrun his armies and throw them off our land. The Soviet people will not understand us, comrades, if we will call them to passive defense."

In this bleak painting titled *Stuka Support* by German war artist Helmut Gerorg, beleaguered soldiers of the Wehrmacht scan the sky as the dive bombers attack distant Red Army targets.

(U.S. Army Art)

ABOVE: Soviet troops clad in white camouflage suits and carrying automatic weapons charge toward German positions north of Moscow. The resurgent Red Army held the line at Moscow but continued to suffer serious reverses in 1942. OPPOSITE: The Soviet offensive aimed at the relief of besieged Leningrad failed miserably in the area near Luban and resulted in catastrophic Red Army casualties. (Above: National Archives / Opposite: Map © 2007 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN))

On the last day of December a meeting took place in the Kremlin during which plans for the next year's campaign were outlined. At the beginning of January, these plans were submitted for Stalin's approval. The final product became known as the Soviet Supreme Command or Stavka's directive letter. On January 5, Stalin personally dictated the final paragraph: "Our task is not to give the Germans breathing space but drive them westward without stopping, forcing them to spend their reserves before spring, when we will have new great reserves, and the Germans will have no reserves, thus providing the complete destruction of the Hitlerite forces in 1942."

The recapture of Tikhvin and a successful Moscow offensive reminded the political leadership of the old adage, "The summer was yours but the winter will be ours."

It was a rather cumbersome piece of literary work, but its military implications would prove outright deadly for the Soviets.

According to this plan, a few major strategic operations were to be conducted in which nine out of 10 Soviet Fronts, or army groups, including a newly created Crimean Front, were destined to take part. In the south an immediate campaign to liberate the Crimea and the besieged city of Sevastopol would begin. The Southwestern Front was to retake Kharkov and secure Donbass, with its rich coal deposits. In the west, the offensive toward Smolensk and Byelorussia was to continue.

In the north, the combined efforts of the Leningrad Front and the recently created Volkhov Front would break through the German 18th Army defense line. The armies of the Volkhov Front, advancing in a northwesterly direction, would meet the troops of the Leningrad Front driving south, thus shattering the German ring around Leningrad. The enemy units in the area of Chudovo-Luban would be isolated and destroyed.

The situation in Leningrad, the second largest city of the Soviet Union and one of its most important industrial centers, was catastrophic. The city had been under siege since September 8, 1941, when German troops captured the town of Shlisselburg, where the Neva River exits Lake Ladoga, and severed all land communications with the rest of the country. In the west, Finnish troops reached the pre-Winter War border on the Karelian Isthmus and took up a defensive position there. In the north, they stopped at the Svir River in the Ladoga-Onega gap. The Germans cut off the city from the south, effectively blockading it.

Since the end of November, the city had been supplied by auto road across the frozen surface of Lake Ladoga. The volume of delivered supplies was not even close to providing enough food for the fighting armies of the Leningrad Front and the remaining civilian population, which was still more than two million. People had begun dying from famine by the end of October. By the beginning of November, there were no dogs or cats left in the city. In December, the famine was exacerbated by the unusually low temperatures, pushing the death toll to 55,000. In January this climbed to 95,000. No less deadly, February was ready to follow.

Stalin was informed about the conditions in the city. It is difficult to surmise what his real feelings were when he learned details about life in the frozen and dying city, about massive death from starvation, frozen corpses on the streets, cases of cannibalism. Allegedly for the safety of this city, he had started the war with Finland only two years earlier. When told of these details, he simply shrugged and said, "This is war. People are dying everywhere."

The strategic goals of the planned operation were very ambitious. The 4th Army of the Volkhov Front and the 54th Army of the Leningrad Front were ordered to break through the German defenses along the Volkhov River and advance in the direction of Tosno, a town on the Leningrad-Moscow railroad, capture it, and link with the advancing 55th Army of the Leningrad Front. This would isolate and eventually destroy the German forces in the Mga-Shlisselburg corridor.

The 59th Army and the 2nd Shock Army,

representing the main striking force of the coming operation, received the mission to attack northwest toward the Siverskiy station on the Luga-Leningrad railroad, conducting a deep envelopment of Leningrad from the south. A combined effort with the 4th Army would cut off the German XXVIII Corps in the Chudovo-Luban area. The 52nd Army was ordered to strike south, capture Novgorod, and link up with the forces of the Northwestern Front.

The Soviet High Command expected that the result of this operation would be not only the end of the siege of Leningrad, but also the destruction of German Army Group North and the liberation of the Baltic republics. At the end of 1941, the Red Army was about to bite off more than it could chew.

Lieutenant General Mikhail Khozin was appointed to command the Leningrad Front. Commanding the newly created Volkhov Front was Army General Kirill Meretskov, former chief of the general staff of the Red Army. He had only recently been the object of torture and humiliation in the cellars of the notorious Lubianka Prison in Moscow. The new Front received four armies, the recently formed 52nd and 4th, already blooded in the stubborn battle for Tikhvin, and two fresh armies from the Reserves of Stavka, 2nd Shock and 59th Regular.

The influx of men and equipment gave the Volkhov Front and the left flank of the Leningrad Front numerical and technical superiority over their opponents in men, artillery, and aircraft. In the sector of the 2nd Shock Army, this advantage was an overwhelming five to one in men and three to one in tanks. However, a catastrophic shortage of ammunition, especially for artillery, seriously diminished these advantages.

The terrain where the attack was planned was extremely unsuitable for military operations. It was a thickly wooded, roadless area with impassable marshes and numerous though relatively small rivers and streams, with the sole exception of the 450-yard-wide Volkhov River. This forbidding terrain prohibited the use of armor; even infantry would be hard pressed to advance and keep its lines of supply and communications functioning.

What were the Soviet High Command considerations for embarking on a strategic offensive on such difficult terrain? First, in the middle of a severe winter most marshes and all rivers were frozen solid and could provide enough support for armor and supply columns to move. It imposed, of course, rigid time restrictions on the operational schedule. The goals had to be successfully achieved before the spring thaw set in.

The Soviet High Command, encouraged by recent success in fighting under winter conditions, believed that snow, cold temperatures, and difficult terrain would be allies of the Red Army. They based this assessment first on the fighting around Moscow, where the Germans proved to be completely unprepared for winter warfare. Second, the recapture of Tikhvin and a successful Moscow offensive reminded the political leadership of the old adage, "The summer was yours but the winter will be ours." Stalin, euphoric with high expectations, could not see what field commanders and the leadership of the general staff already realized—that the Moscow offensive was quickly running out of steam.

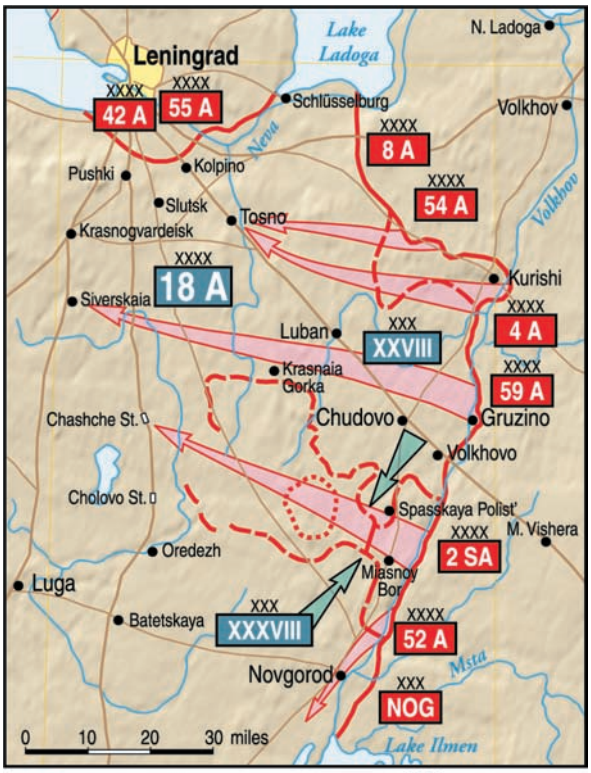
The Luban offensive was scheduled to start at the end of December, but harsh winter weather impeded the concentration of troops and supplies. Stavka was forced to postpone the operation until January 6. Even this extra week could not remedy the numerous problems, but this time Stalin was adamant and refused any further delays. He ordered four armies to start their attack on January 6, without waiting for the 2nd Shock Army to get ready.

Despite its numerical superiority, the Volkhov Front was clearly unable to mount a successful offensive. It was short of ammunition, fuel, and food. Its attacking troops were not properly concentrated. Its rear and reserve units were not in position to efficiently support advancing front-line troops. To add to the list of problems, the Germans were fully aware of the coming attack and were well prepared to meet it.

After four days of continuous bloody attacks, the Soviet troops gained no ground and suffered heavy losses. The attack was called off on January 10. The troops received a few days of respite to prepare for a new assault. The simultaneous attack, this time by all five Soviet armies, was resumed on January 13.

After a few days of heavy fighting, the 2nd Shock Army under its new commander, Lt. Gen. Nikolay Klykov, finally succeeded on January 17 in crossing the Volkhov under enemy fire and penetrating the German defensive line, pushing aside the enemy's 215th and 126th Infantry Divisions. After two more days of bitter fighting, the 2nd Shock Army broke through and captured the station and settlement of Miasnoy Bor on the Novgorod-Chudovo railroad. This promising news was immediately reported to Moscow. The response was not long in coming: "When the 2nd Shock Army consolidates this success, commit to the battle the 13th Cavalry Corps of General Gusev. I rely on you, comrade Meretskov. Stalin." A cavalry corps consisting of three divisions, supported by the 111th Infantry Division, was thrown into the breach early in the morning of January 24. In five days, while brushing aside light covering detachments of the enemy, this force managed to advance 30 miles to the northwest. Its task was to reach the Moscow-Leningrad railroad between the Luban and Chudovo stations, thus cutting off the main supply line of the German XXVIII Corps.

In the beginning of the offensive, the 2nd Shock Army concentrated its forces and delivered a blow on a relatively narrow 15-mile front. Unsupported by either the 52nd or 59th Army on its flanks, the 2nd Shock Army was eventually forced to widen the front of its advance. Originally ordered to head west-northwest with the goal of cutting off the Luga-



Note: Soviet armies are approximately equivalent to German corps

Leningrad railroad and blocking the retreat of the German 18th Army, the 2nd Shock Army was forced to advance northeast toward Luban and meet the 54th Army of the Leningrad Front, thus encircling the XXVIII Corps in the Luban-Chudovo area. Moreover, the army's failure to widen and secure the six-mile gap between the villages of Spasskaya Polist' and Lubtsy, the umbilical cord through which all supplies and communications of the army were flowing, was to haunt the advancing army and eventually seal its fate.

The attempt of the Leningrad Front's 55th Army to break the German encirclement from inside was repulsed. Though starved and exhausted, the army managed to tie down the German forces, thus preventing them from reinforcing the troops facing the attack of the 2nd Shock Army in the south.

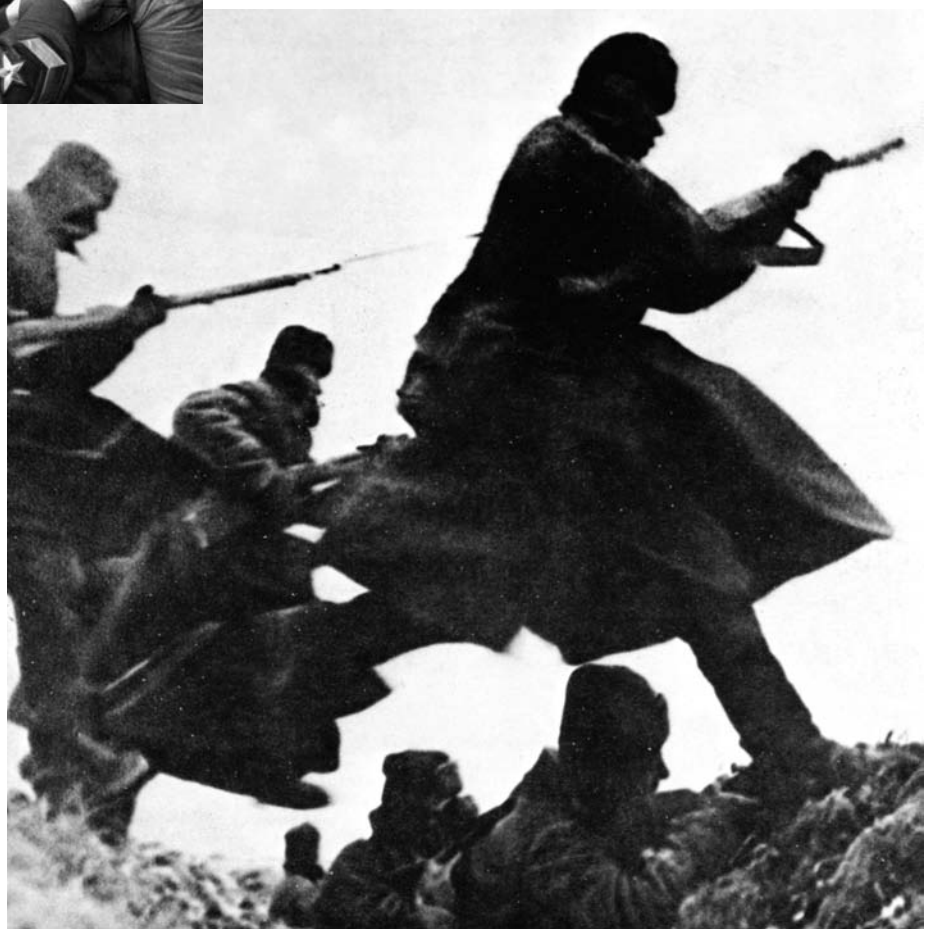
The 54th Army of the Leningrad Front was originally aimed west toward Tosno on the Leningrad-Moscow railroad. After one and a half months of unsuccessful and bloody attempts to break through, Stalin expressed dissatisfaction with its commander, Maj. Gen. Ivan Feduninsky. Stavka ordered the army reorganized. The operational direction was changed, and the army was ordered to strike southwest no later than March 1 to exploit the success of the 2nd Shock Army and join it at Luban no later than March 5. All these Stavka orders turned out to be too optimistic.

The 54th Army managed to start the new assault on February 28, but it achieved meager results after several days of heavy fighting against well entrenched Germans. Regrouped and reinforced, the army resumed its offensive on March 5, again unsuccessfully. Only on March 15, after five days of bitter fighting, did it finally manage to penetrate the German defenses and advance 14 miles to Luban. There were only 10 miles left between Soviet frontline units and Luban, but covering these 10 miles was beyond the army's capacity. The road to Luban turned out to be two years long.

In March, the 2nd Shock Army continued its advance northwest toward the Leningrad-Novgorod railroad, which it managed to sever, and northeast toward Luban and the Leningrad-Moscow railroad. Originally planned as a blow by a tightly clenched fist, the operation turned into a two-fingered poke. In mid-March, the 80th Cavalry Division of the 13th Cavalry Corps broke through enemy defenses near the village of Krasnaya Gorka, less than 10 miles from its objective. It appeared that one more desperate effort would tip the balance, cutting off the XXVIII Corps. A couple of days later, German infantry and artillery hurled the Soviets back from Krasnaya Gorka. Still, some considered this only a local setback. It could possibly be reversed by a renewed effort from the 2nd Shock Army.

Then, the weather turned brutally cold. The winter of 1941-1942 was unusually severe, with temperatures dropping to -35 degrees Fahrenheit on a daily basis. Tired and half frozen men would frequently fall asleep around campfires. Heavily padded jackets and pants would catch fire like powder, often causing serious or even life-threatening burns. The most vulnerable of the soldiers' winter clothing was their felt boots. When burned through, they would become useless, forcing the soldiers to look for new ones. There were fully clothed corpses all around, but it was impossible to remove the boots from frozen bodies. There were reports of some soldiers obtaining axes and hacking off the booted legs of the dead. Others reportedly broke off a leg at the knee and then dragged the limb to the campfire, warming it sufficiently to remove the coveted item.

The terrible cold thickened the ice on rivers and streams to five feet or more, enough to support not only wheeled transport but also armor. Despite such cold, some marshes were left unfrozen, and many trucks, artillery pieces, and men sank to their deaths, betrayed by treacherous snow cover, which was hiding the danger. From the beginning, the Soviet command knew about the terrain and was racing against time. At the end of March it became clear that spring had arrived ahead of Soviet military success.



Another factor intervened on March 19. The six-mile-wide corridor at Miasnoy Bor was the only passage connecting the advancing army with its supply base. It was the most vulnerable place in the whole disposition of the 2nd Shock Army; entrenched German units on both sides of the corridor were poised like two daggers aimed at a jugular vein. It had never been easy for reinforcements and supply columns to cross this narrow valley of death under the enemy's artillery fire. However, columns were going in both directions, into the cauldron with ammunition, food, and medicine, and out of it

with wounded and sick. On March 19, this flow stopped; the Germans closed the corridor. The implications were felt immediately. The 2nd Shock Army had already been short of ammunition. During the advance the army was not able to build up adequate depots, and as soon as the flow of supplies stopped the shortage was immediately and painfully felt. The main casualty of this interruption was food, which on the list of priorities was allocated to the second or even third position, after ammunition and medical supplies. Hunger became part of daily life.

It took the Russians two weeks of fierce fighting to restore the corridor, but the situation improved only marginally. The restored supply line was substantially narrower, and German artillery was able to completely shut down the flow of supplies during daytime. The April thaw finally arrived, and frozen roadways became seas of impassable mud, pockmarked with shell craters. The response to this new, though expected problem, was to build corduroy roads. Thankfully, there were abundant trees for these tasks. The work itself was backbreaking and time consuming. Units were mobilized to cut down the trees, drag them through the melting snow and mud, and put them into place.

In March the first cases of scurvy and night blindness appeared, unmistakable signs of malnutrition. In the middle of the month, when these cases were growing at an alarming rate, the decision was made to employ a remedy used in gulag camps and in besieged Leningrad. This involved drinking a concoction of fir tree needles steeped in hot water. It was an effective, yet repulsive and bitter, liquid.

By the end of March, it became clear that the Soviet troops had lost their race against time. Rations were reduced to a nonsustainable level, a few ounces of crumbs daily, occasionally accompanied by flour or oats. Men were reduced to scavenging. The horses, which had fallen during winter, their bodies now exposed by the melting snow, were consumed. The worst was yet to come.

In desperation, the Soviet command turned to resupplying the troops by air. For this purpose they used the old workhorse of the air force, the light bomber and transport U-2 (since 1944 known as PO-2), which it was said could land on a five kopeck coin. It was a two-seat, single-bay light biplane used mostly for night missions, taking full advantage of the long winter nights in these latitudes. Because of its low speed, only 105 miles per hour, it was completely defenseless against German fighters. The number of available planes was very limited, a few dozen at best, with a maximum load capacity of only 550 pounds, or roughly five to six sacks of flour, 12 to 15 with dry bread, or 10 to 12 boxes of canned goods. They were flown by young lieutenants, who, to avoid attacks by marauding German fighters, were flying at treetop level over the forest and even below that along the river valleys and marshes. In turn, it made them very vulnerable to ground fire, but it was the price of their deadly game. At the end of April, the Northern Lights took away their advantage of nocturnal cover.

ABOVE: Their bravery fortified by alcohol, drunken Soviet soldiers charge into heavy German fire in this stark, surreal drawing of life and death on the Eastern Front. OPPOSITE TOP: Red Army General Kirill Meretskov decorates a young Soviet soldier for heroism on the battlefield. The Soviets sacrificed thousands of troops in their effort to break the German ring around Leningrad. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Uniformed against the cold, Soviet soldiers with fixed bayonets advance on the run toward entrenched German positions during bitter fighting in the winter of 1941-1942. (Above: U.S. Army Art / Opposite Both: National Archives)

It was impossible to feed an army of 80,000 men with occasional deliveries of a few dozen sacks of flour, but those brave pilots continued their suicidal, hopeless work. Those young lieutenants often died before accomplishing their fifth mission.

One day an American-built Douglas transport arrived. The pilot steeply banked his plane to the left, locked it into a circling pattern, and started passing over a clearing in the woods, dumping sacks of dried bread. A German fighter came out of nowhere, and its machine-guns set the transport's right engine ablaze. "Jump, jump!" yelled the people on the ground, as though the crew could hear them. But they did not want to jump. They continued their doomed flight, trailing black smoke, dumping and dumping the sacks. The German fighter repeated its attack. The Douglas shuddered, wrapped itself in a black cloud of smoke, and went down.

Each pound of food in those planes was worth its weight in gold, and every hour of flight was a hide-and-seek game with death. Yet, the political leadership saw fit to displace a portion of the food cargo with propaganda leaflets exhorting the starved soldiers to fight heroically for the Bolshevist cause and for Stalin. These pieces of paper could not even be used to roll a cigarette. There was no tobacco anyway.

On January 18, Field Marshal Wilhelm Rit-

ter von Leeb, commander of German Army Group North, was dismissed from his position because of poor health and replaced by Colonel General Georg von Kuechler, the 18th Army commander. The health issue was, of course, a convenient excuse. In fact, the field marshal had persisted in his demand to withdraw the army group westward to a more defensible position. Leeb's dismissal was the last in a chain of a major reshufflings at the top of the German High Command due to setbacks, which began with the fall of Rostov in November 1941.

Now, in April, it was Stalin's turn to rearrange his commanders. On April 16, the 2nd Shock Army commander, Lt. Gen. Nikolai Klykov, who had fallen seriously ill, was flown out of the cauldron to a hospital. He was replaced by the recently appointed deputy commander of the Volkhov Front, Lt. Gen. Andrey Vlasov, a hero of the defensive battles in the Ukraine in the summer of 1941 and a victorious commander of the 20th Army during the fighting around Moscow.

On April 20, the new commander of the 2nd Shock Army arrived in the pocket. On April 23, a dumbfounded General Kirill Meretskov read a new directive from Stavka saying that the Volkhov Front had been abolished and its armies incorporated into the Leningrad Front under Lt. Gen. M.S. Khozin. Meretskov was ordered to depart for the western front line and to take the 33rd Army under his command. This untimely reorganization was the result of Khozin's many tireless appeals to Stalin with promises of long-awaited success. Stalin finally relented despite the objections of the Chief of General Staff, Marshall Boris Shaposhnikov.

The presence of Meretskov in Malaya Vishera at the headquarters of the Volkhov Front in April and May would not have changed the strategic outcome of Luban operation; the campaign was lost, and the 2nd Shock Army was doomed. The only issue now was the extent of the catastrophe.

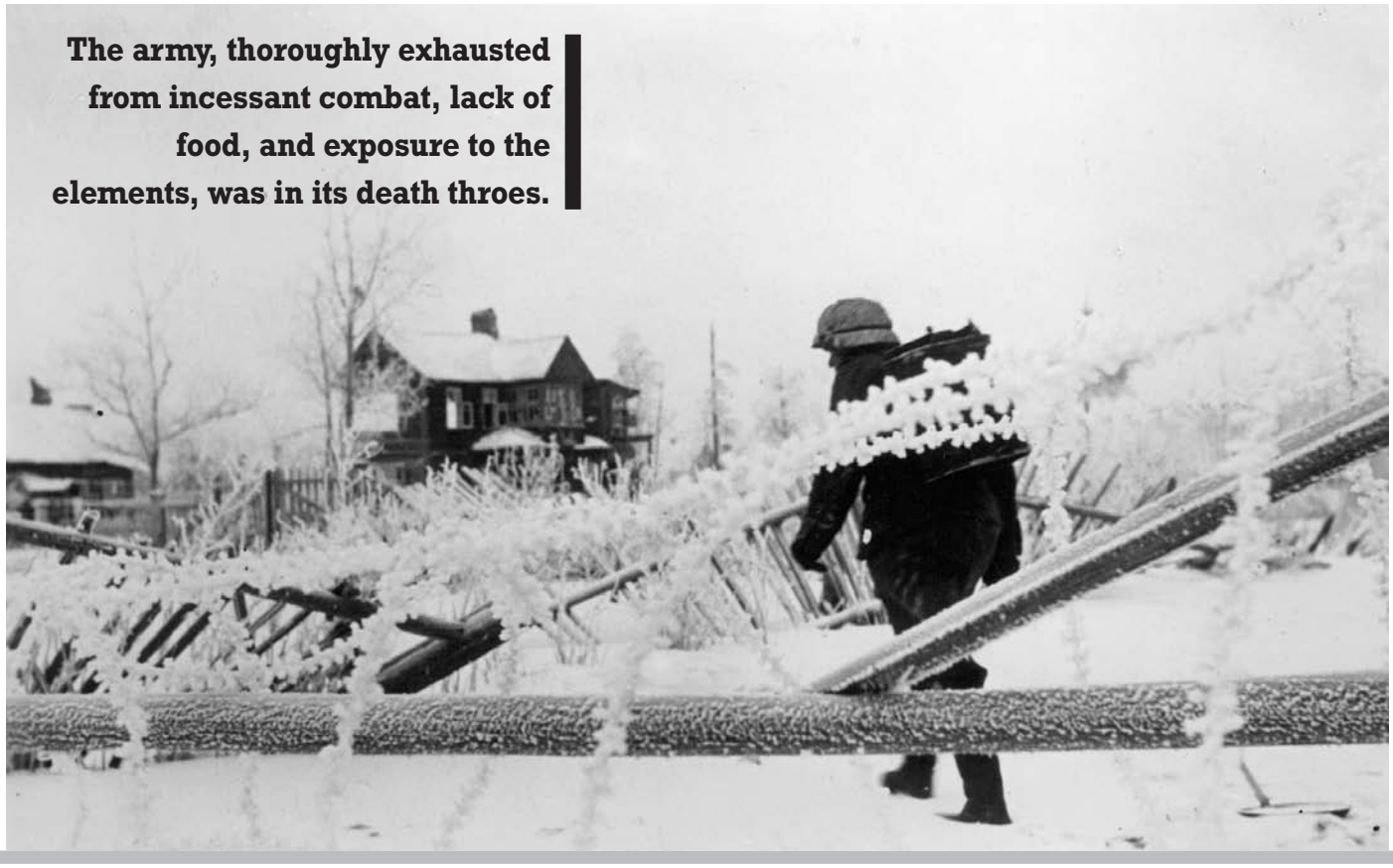
On April 30, the 2nd Shock Army was ordered to stop all offensive operations, switch to strategic defense, and begin the gradual withdrawal of a few selected units toward Miasnoy Bor. The process of withdrawal started immediately and was conducted in an orderly manner under very challenging circumstances. The brave cavalrymen of the 13th Cavalry Corps, who in the middle of March were so close to Luban, were withdrawn, together with a few depleted infantry divisions and one armored brigade.

Stavka issued a new order two weeks later under the signatures of Stalin and Alexander Vasilevsky, deputy chief of the general staff, who replaced the sick Shaposhnikov. The order authorized the 2nd Shock Army to break out of semi-encirclement. The line of the new defensive position for the 2nd Shock Army was designated along the western bank of the Volkhov River in the area of Miasnoy Bor-Spasskaya Polist'. It meant, for all practical purposes, that the 2nd Shock Army must return to the same position it had occupied at the beginning of the operation four months earlier. It was a final admission of the fact that the operation had failed. By May 20, the strength of the 2nd Shock Army had decreased by half.

On May 31, the Germans again closed the corridor—this time permanently. The last act of the 2nd Shock Army tragedy had begun. The army, thoroughly exhausted from incessant combat, lack of food, and exposure to the elements, was in its death throes. The already meager rations were reduced again, this time to 1.5 ounces of bread crumbs per day. In the cauldron, young trees, at first aspens and lindens, then all others, were stripped of their bark. Buds and later fresh leaves disappeared, worms, frogs, and tadpoles became rare delicacies. The army staff reported to the Front headquarters in one of its last radio communications, "Massive mortality from hunger is taking place."

Incidences of suicide increased among officers and enlisted men. The corpses of dead soldiers were found with pieces of flesh cut from their bodies. Occasional deliveries from death-defying U-2s were not even drops in the bucket. Prevented from landing, they had to resort to dropping canned goods or sacks with dried

The army, thoroughly exhausted from incessant combat, lack of food, and exposure to the elements, was in its death throes.



bread. Those cans that managed to land on solid ground were were sometimes the cause of fights among the soldiers. Those who succumbed to temptation and hid or ate food instead of surrendering it to their commanders were all shot.

Besides the absence of food, ammunition, and medicine, there was a lack of water. It was everywhere, in trenches, shell craters, inside the tents, in men's boots, but there was none to drink, nothing with which to wash already used bandages, nothing to sterilize surgeons' instruments. Even snow, the seasonal water provider, melted and turned into undrinkable water. In desperation, a method was developed to obtain drinking water that would horrify any reasonable man. Large wooden boxes without bottoms were built. They were wrapped in layers of medical gauze and lowered into holes dug in water-logged soil. In several hours, these improvised wells were full of dark brown water. It was picked up by buckets, filtered through multilayered gauze again, and distributed to medical stations, the wounded, and units in the field. The ration was one cup per day per man.

On June 8, the Volkhov Front was reestablished. After Khozin was removed and sent to a command in the western area, he never managed to rise again to the position of Front commander. In March 1944, he was sent from the fighting army to command a secondary military district in the rear. In his place, Lt. Gen. Leonid Govorov, the valiant commander of the 5th Army during the fighting around Moscow, was appointed as commander of the Leningrad Front.

General Meretskov came back to his resurrected Front with the specific task of saving the 2nd Shock Army. Meretskov was a good commander, but he was not a magician, and the task of extricating the 2nd Shock Army would have required a miracle. This miracle would have to be accomplished without any additional forces; Stavka had nothing left in reserve.

At the end of May, two major Soviet offensives in the south, near Kharkov and in the Crimea, failed. A total of 240,000 troops of the Southwestern Front and 150,000 of the Crimean Front were facing annihilation. Besieged Sevastopol was doomed. The offensive of the Western and Kalinin Fronts in the Rzhev-Viasma area had come to a screeching halt, at the cost of 270,000 dead. In light of these catastrophes, the destruction of the 2nd Shock Army was a relatively minor setback. Since it had become clear in mid-March that the ambitious goals of the Luban operation were unrealistic, Stalin had begun losing interest in it.

As soon as hopes of lifting Leningrad's blockade and defeating German Army Group North were dashed, there was not much left to attract Stalin's attention to this theater of operations. After all, just the capture of Luban, a name hardly known to anybody, rang hollow. Later, simply overwhelmed by the magnitude of the Red Army's multiplying disasters, Stalin switched his attention to other sectors.

ABOVE: The charred hulk of a Soviet tank sits derelict following a clash with German armored units during a winter battle in 1942. Although Soviet forces were committed to the Luban offensive in large numbers, the resourceful Germans repelled them with great loss. OPPOSITE: A German soldier slogs through snow toward a field kitchen at his unit's winter quarters near Leningrad. This man had drawn the hazardous duty of transporting food to troops on the front line by means of a sled. (Both: ullstein-bild/The Granger Collection, New York)

Only one thing related to this area still attracted his attention: the fate of the 2nd Shock Army commander, General Vlasov. Stalin ordered special army groups and partisan detachments to conduct searches for him. The reason for Stalin's level of interest in Vlasov is unknown. The fact remains that he wanted him back. From the end of June until the middle of July, when the Germans announced Vlasov's capture, Stalin asked daily about the progress in the search for him.

In the middle of June, the Soviets, retreating to the southeast while engaged in heavy fighting, were squeezed out of their Olkhovka-Finev Lug defensive line. An attempt to stop the German advance along the Novgorod-Leningrad railroad at Glukhaya Kerest also failed. The distance from this abandoned line of defense to Miasnoy Bor in the center of the now-closed corridor was 16 miles. The 2nd Shock Army, finding itself inside the tightening ring, continued its retreat toward Miasnoy Bor. The Germans regrouped their forces and organized a defense line along the eastern bank of the Polist' river. The Soviets were stopped cold.

The desperate Soviets had to abandon the only available landing strip, near the village of Novaya Kerest'. The corduroy roads were clogged with trucks, prime movers with artillery pieces in tow, and buses carrying wounded. Soviet artillerymen received orders to destroy the immobilized columns to prevent equipment from falling into the enemy's hands. They fired through open sights. Many of those trucks and buses are still there today, 60 years later.

On June 24, the staff of the 2nd Shock Army received its last radiogram from the Stavka, an order to filter through the enemy lines by dispersing into small, separate groups. By this time the army had ceased to function as a unified body. The army had been abandoned: there would be no help.

Some groups tried to break through the German lines in the south, literally walking on corpses. Only a few managed to reach Soviet lines. More than 10,000 wounded were left behind in the meadow between the Glushitsa and Kerest' Rivers, appropriately named "Valley of Death." A few groups attempted to move north, hoping that the Germans would not expect them to move deeper into the German rear. The Germans set ambushes along the Kerest' River, where a great number of the Red Army soldiers perished or were taken prisoner.

The group that included General Vlasov moved away from the slaughterhouse along the Polist' River. They managed to avoid German

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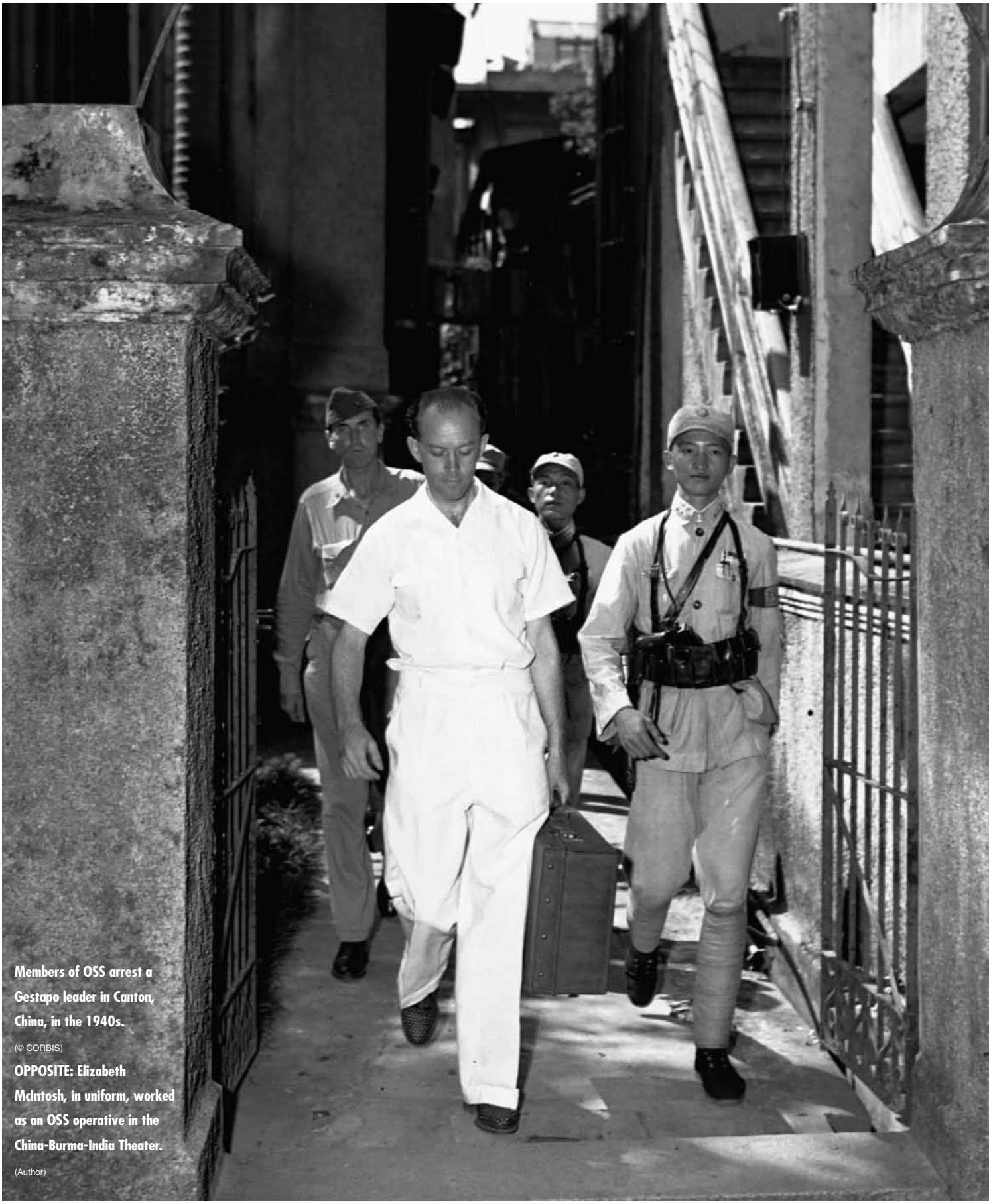


Members of OSS arrest a Gestapo leader in Canton, China, in the 1940s.

(© CORBIS)

OPPOSITE: Elizabeth McIntosh, in uniform, worked as an OSS operative in the China-Burma-India Theater.

(Author)

Elizabeth P. McIntosh worked for the Office of Strategic Services during World War II.

By Bob Bergin

OSS Undercover Girl

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was America's first strategic intelligence organization. President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized its establishment on June 13, 1942, six months after World War II began, to collect and analyze strategic intelligence and to conduct special services, including subversion, sabotage, and psychological warfare.

The OSS was conceived, organized, and led by General William "Wild Bill" Donovan, a New York lawyer and hero of World War I. The OSS attracted some very imaginative, capable, and colorful personalities who did incredible things during the war. Among them was a young journalist, Elizabeth P. McIntosh, who lived in Hawaii and was fascinated by Japanese culture. After Pearl Harbor, she was ready to go off to a war zone as a correspondent. She was having problems getting overseas—until she met a man from the OSS.

WWII: Tell us about your early life.

EPM: My family moved to Hawaii in 1925. I started school in Honolulu, at a missionary school, a fine place where they taught you Latin and French and how to write. I went to university in Hawaii for a year, and then to the University of Washington. I graduated from the school of journalism and came back to Hawaii to start my career as a journalist.

WWII: Your first jobs were with newspapers?

EPM: My father was the sports editor at the *Honolulu Advertiser.* He got me a job writing sports. I didn't like it very much and went over to feature work. I covered the waterfront, which was great fun then. There were all kinds of people coming in on boats in those days. That's where I started my real writing career. There was a fellow named Alexander MacDonald at the newspaper then, covering the police beat. His desk was right in front of mine in the city room. We got friendly, and in time got married. We had a wonderful marriage for years, until the war came along. [MacDonald was a Naval Reserve officer who went on active duty and was later recruited into the OSS. At the end of the war, he accepted the Japanese surrender in Bangkok. He stayed on in Thailand and founded the prestigious English-language newspaper, the *Bangkok Post.*]

WWII: Did you share the same interest in Japanese culture?

EPM: Both of us wanted to go there to get jobs with newspapers or with the AP or UPI. We thought it would be great to speak Japanese. We moved in with a Japanese family and learned the language at night while we had dinner with the family. It was a completely Japanese home, and we really got to know the culture. We learned to speak Japanese, and Alex even learned how to write it. We stayed with the family until Pearl Harbor. At that point everything changed.

WWII: Where were you on Pearl Harbor day?

EPM: We had a house across the island from Honolulu, a place called KoKo Head. It was up in the mountains, overlooking a lagoon. The morning of December 7, Alex was still sleeping. It was around 7 o'clock, I was making breakfast and had the radio on, listening to a choir. All of a sudden the announcer broke in and said, "The Islands are under attack. This is the real McCoy." And then the choir came back on. I wondered what that was all about.

The phone rang. It was "Hump" Campbell, my photographer, who lived nearby. He said something was going on at Pearl and the office wanted us to cover it. Hump was working for the Scripps-Howard news syndicate. I worked for them part-time and also worked for a newspaper in Honolulu. I drove

in with him. It seemed like a regular Sunday, people walking dogs, playing golf, going to church, until we got closer to Honolulu. We passed an open-air market that had been hit by something. It was demolished. There were Christmas wrappings and toys all over the place, and in the middle of it all was this little Japanese boy, having a wonderful time playing with all this stuff. He had a big smile on his face. "This would make a great picture," Hump said, "but the kid is too happy. Would you do something about that?" I went over and pinched him. He started to cry, and Hump got a wonderful picture that was used in *Life* magazine.

Hump got into Pearl Harbor, but they wouldn't let me in because I was a woman. I went to the hospital that covered Hickam Field, where they were bringing in the badly wounded. I still remember one little dead girl. She still had a jump rope in her hands, just the wooden handles; the rope was burned away. We had only a few doctors; most were at Pearl. I worked there all day. That night, people were afraid to go home because of rumors that the Japanese were going to land. About 10 of them [refugees] came home with me to be safe.

WWII: What kind of work did you do after the attack?

EPM: I interviewed people coming in from different parts of the Pacific. A group from one of the islands included a Catholic priest, who had a good story. When the men he was with came under fire, they set up a line to pass ammunition from one to the other and on to the guns. The priest got in the line with his black suit and collar still on. Somebody yelled, "Father, you're not supposed to be doing this." He yelled back, "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition!" I wrote that up. It was where that song came from.

WWII: What were your career aspirations at the time?

EMP: I wanted to go overseas like some of the other correspondents, who were getting into the war zones, but somehow they wouldn't let me go. Scripps-Howard decided to send me to Washington instead, to cover the White House.

WWII: Did you have a specific area to cover?

EPM: Mrs. Roosevelt was my special interest. I covered everything that involved her and also wrote a weekly column called "Homefront Forecast" that was carried in all the Scripps-Howard newspapers. I had a lot of fun with that. It was also how I first met a person involved with OSS.

WWII: How did that come about?

EPM: I came across a story about a man who had invented a machine to cut sugar cane.

Among the members of the OSS New Delhi team were (left to right) Captain Oliver Caldwell, Marjorie Severyns, Colonel Herbert Little, Elizabeth McIntosh, Lieutenant Victor Beals, Ali (an Indian bearer), Lieutenant Robert Ettinger, and Elizabeth's dog, Angel Puss. (Author)

Workers were all in uniform by now, and no one was left to cut cane. It sounded like a good story for Hawaii. I went to interview the man, and it turned out that he knew my father pretty well. We got talking, and I told him that I had studied Japanese and was disappointed that I never got there. He asked if I would like to work for the government. I said, "Only if they would promise to send me overseas." He said, "I think we can do that." He wouldn't tell me what department he was with, only that he would send me some papers to fill out. It turned out he was on General Donovan's staff. And that was how I got into OSS.

WWII: At the time did you have any idea what OSS was?

EPM: I had no idea, absolutely none. Nobody else did either. It was called "Oh So Social" and "Oh, So Secret." And it was really quite a secretive organization.

WWII: Was it called "Oh So Social" because many of its people were coming from the upper strata of society?

EPM: Yes. General Donovan was a New York lawyer. His wife, Ruth, was a very wealthy woman. Donovan had to start OSS from scratch, and he needed people he knew and could trust. Ruth was able to get her friends involved, while the general called on his lawyer friends and others he knew. Because of that it was really quite upper class for a while. The ladies had all gone to very good schools like Vassar, and the men were mostly Ivy Leaguers. When you got to be a part of OSS and got to know them, it was a wonderful group.

WWII: How did the OSS come about?

EPM: The president had named Donovan the Coordinator of Information (COI) in July 1941. This was the first U.S. attempt to put espionage, propaganda, and related activities under a centralized agency. The OSS grew out of that. Some of the things under the COI, like the overt propaganda, didn't mesh with the secret stuff that Donovan really wanted to do. The overt COI operations were transferred to the Office of War Information, and OSS was established in June 1942 to provide strategic intelligence and "special services," which would include guerrilla and psychological warfare.

Donovan traveled around Europe a lot before the war, trying to find out what was going on. He was very interested in intelligence, and he spent a lot of time with the British. He knew William Stephenson, the man in charge of British Intelligence in New York. His office was near Donovan's, and the two of them were quite close. It was from his British contacts that Donovan got the idea on how to set up the OSS. He used these associations to convince the president that we should have a separate organization to do that kind of work, and that it should be called the Office of Strategic Services. It was rather a good name for it.

WWII: Donovan was a Republican, but he had direct access to FDR. How did that come about?

EPM: Donovan and FDR got on awfully well together. The president was interested in a lot of different things. Donovan had a great personality and was full of good ideas. I think Donovan influenced the president with his ability, his thinking, and his planning, all of which appealed to Roosevelt.

WWII: Donovan was also one of America's most decorated soldiers. He had received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

EPM: Donovan had a very fine experience in World War I. He was tremendously brave. That's where his name "Wild Bill" came from. He had the reputation for being able to dash in when everyone else was hanging back and get them to go on. He earned the medal. General Douglas McArthur served in Europe at the same time, but it was Donovan who came back as the most decorated soldier of the war. In later years, we wondered if that was why McArthur didn't like Donovan. The two never got on, and McArthur never let OSS operate in the Pacific Theater. Actually, OSS did sneak into the Philippines, but that was as far as we could get.

WWII: What was your first impression of Donovan?

EPM: I was terrified, but terribly impressed. He was not a physically impressive type, like General McArthur. I once described him as "penguin-shaped." He said, "May God forgive

you for that." He had beautiful blue eyes; everyone remembered his blue eyes. In the OSS days you never really got to know him. There was a very military air about him. You would see him arrive at the office and walk up the steps—march up, really. He wouldn't stop to talk, and you didn't just go up to him. I never did get to know him in Washington, but only in later years.

WWII: Could you describe how the OSS was organized?

EPM: There were quite a few sections. The most important one was R&A, Research and Analysis. R&A acquired all the information available and passed it on to the other OSS groups that could use it. I was in Morale Operations (MO). We did subversive work to try to change peoples' minds. Today we would call that "disinformation." R&A gave MO things we might be able to use. From R&A, the SO or Special Operations people would find out, for example, where the Germans were building a new factory, and then SO would do something about it. SI, or Secret Intelligence, collected intelligence and depended on R&A to identify what facts were needed in the areas that SI was trying to infiltrate. There were other groups, like MU, the Maritime Unit, that worked the small boats out in the Adriatic, and later in the Pacific. And, of course, there was a Commo unit that handled all OSS communications and dealt with cryptology.

WWII: There was an OSS group called X2, which sounds very mysterious.

EPM: It was. No one could really talk to them. They were very secret. They were doing top-level stuff that nobody really should know about, and we never did.

WWII: What were your duties while you were stationed in Washington?

EPM: Mostly I was training to go overseas. A lot of the training was done at the Congressional Country Club in suburban Maryland. I learned to shoot there. Some of our men worked at blowing up things on the greens and made a mess of the club. After the war, when OSS made restitution, one of the bills was for "footprints on the ceiling." The story was that our men were billeted in one of the beautiful houses that are still used today for special events. There were layers of cots, and the men on the top layer used the ceiling to balance themselves when they pulled their shoes on. There were other training areas where we were given assignments to tail people, or they would try to tail you. There was also a lot of psychological stuff, like trying to lure you to have a couple of drinks and break your cover. It was all kind of interesting fun.

WWII: When you finally went overseas, where were you initially assigned?

EPM: I was originally scheduled for China, but there were chiefs out there who didn't want women assigned. They claimed there was no place to put us, which was not true. I got stuck in New Delhi for almost a year, but we were able to do a lot of work there.

WWII: What activities did you engage in during your time in New Delhi?

EPM: We had one particularly effective MO operation. Japanese soldiers had always been taught never to surrender, but to fight to the end and die for the emperor. That took its toll on a lot of our people. How could we get the Japanese to surrender when they were already in bad shape, surrounded, out of ammunition, out of food? At the time it just happened that there was a change in the Japanese cabinet, which gave us an idea. With the change in the government, why couldn't there also be a change in the Japanese policy on surrender?

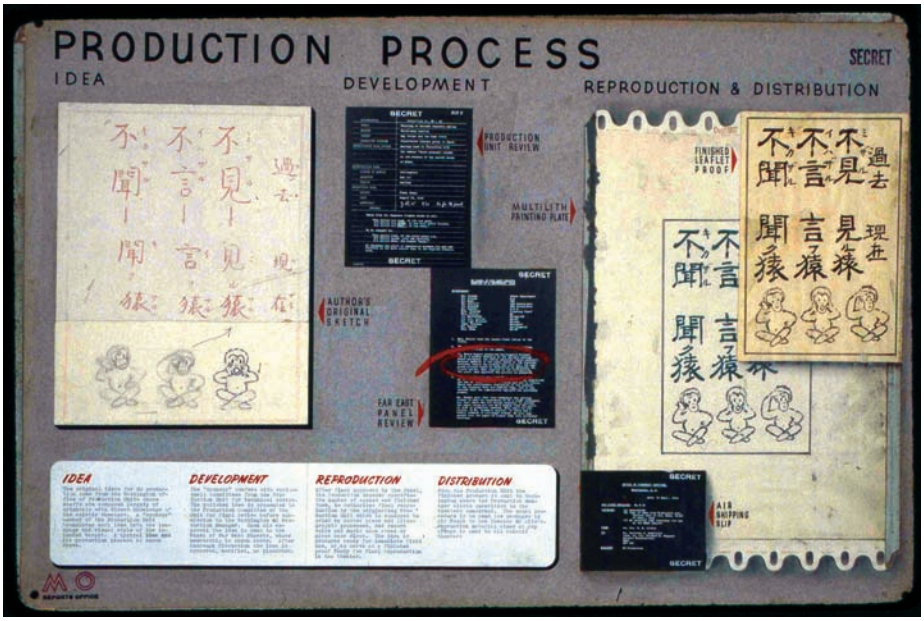
This fellow I worked with, Bill Magistretti, had studied in Japan before the war and was a wonderful Japanese scholar. We learned that the British had captured some orders that the Japanese had issued in Burma. We could use these orders as an example, and rewrite the text to say that under a new law enacted by the new cabinet the Japanese soldier could now surrender under certain conditions. We had everything we needed to do that, the chops, the paper, the inks. The problem was that there was no one who could help us write the order in the official Japanese language.

Then we heard about a Japanese prisoner who the British were holding at the Red Fort in old Delhi. He was a very educated man, which was very unusual for a prisoner. We arranged to see him. The Red Fort was quite a place. The prisoner was sitting in this room, in a yellow outfit, looking out a window. He wouldn't even look at us when we walked in. Then Bill said something in Japanese, and the man turned around, and this funny look came over his face. "Biru!" he said, "Biru Magistretti!" It was amazing! This Japanese prisoner was a friend of Bill's. They had been in college together in Tokyo. I just couldn't get over it—old friends meeting like that. We explained what we wanted and eventually he agreed that what we wanted was also the best for his country. He wrote the order for us.

The house in New Delhi where the OSS Morale Operations team produced "disinformation" still stands today. Often, the goal of the team was to demoralize Japanese troops opposing the Allies in the CBI. (Author)

So we had the order. Now, how do we get it back into the Japanese chain of command? Colonel Ray Peers, the commander of OSS Detachment 101, came into town, and we met him at a party. Detachment 101 was running guerrilla operations in north Burma. We told him about our idea and asked if he could help us. He reacted coldly at first, but as we told him more, he began to get interested. He finally just grabbed the order and said, "I'll take care of it for you." And he did.

The rest of the operation was kind of gruesome. Colonel Peers had some tribal Kachin guerrillas working for him in Burma. One of them knew the trails the Japanese couriers used to move through the jungle. The Kachin waylaid a courier, killed him, and put our order in his pouch. Then the Kachin went on to the next Japanese camp and told them that someone had killed their courier. The Japanese went tearing back—the Kachin with them—found the



Much of it written in Chinese, material from an OSS Morale Operations training and orientation manual is displayed on a board in a museum. (National Archives)

courier, and looked through all the stuff in his pouch. According to the Kachin's report, when the Japanese came across the order, they got excited about it and discussed it.

Much later we heard that as the fighting in north Burma went on, it became less desperate. Japanese soldiers were surrendering now, not fighting to the very end anymore. It seemed our operation had worked. Bill and I were both very pleased about that.

WWII: One of your books says that you were involved in an interesting operation with postcards in New Delhi.

EPM: That one was fun. The British in Burma found a big cache of postcards that Japanese soldiers had written home and had already gone through the Japanese censors. They were all written in pencil, and in very simple Japanese. So, Bill and I gathered a bunch of our Nisei friends, some of whom were friends of mine from Hawaii and all in OSS with us now. We got together at the office after hours, erased some of the messages, and put in new ones, like, "The emperor has let us down, we are fighting with no food, no ammunition." We wanted to show the total disillusionment of the Japanese soldiers in Burma. Or else we would say things like, "I found a beautiful Burmese lady, mom, and I won't be coming home." We had more fun just thinking these things up. We got the cards back into the Japanese system and off to Japan. We don't know what happened there, but sometime after this, they did change their government. We hoped our postcards helped a little bit with that.

WWII: What kind of relationship did you have with the British in New Delhi?

EPM: The British had everything we needed to do our MO operations. They had printing presses and all different kinds of type. We kept ordering that stuff from the States, but it never seemed to arrive, or if it did it went to the wrong place. We were just strapped for things that we needed to get our job done, and the Brits had it all. At first they were cool to us. They didn't really want to help us, but we worked on them.

WWII: Your job was to get what you needed from the British?

EPM: We had to use their stuff to do our job. In return, we had to exchange information with the Brits, tell them a bit about what we were doing. OSS did not want us to tell them too much. It was a funny setup. They were our Allies. At least that was the theory I worked on, and it worked out pretty well.

WWII: Donovan visited Delhi. Did you get to see him there?

EPM: Only in the distance. But there was another time when I did get to see him closer. We were working on an MO operation in Ceylon, trying to get some information to the Indonesians. We needed a way to do it. One of my OSS friends in Ceylon, Jane Foster, had a friend in the British Navy who had access to a submarine and was willing to help us. We had figured out that the way to get our packets of information ashore was to float them in, inside inflated condoms. We were all in the MO shop one day, preparing the packets. There were condoms all over the place. All of a sudden somebody shouted, "A-ten-shun!" The door opened and in walked General Donovan. He took one look at us and what we were doing, smiled, very faintly, then turned and left. And that was all I ever saw of him overseas.

WWII: How did your transfer to China come about?

EPM: They finally opened up China for women. I flew there from India over the Hump. It was a terrible ride, about three hours of storms and lightning and jagged cliffs all around us. You could look way down below and see snow, and on it, like little crosses, the planes that hadn't made it. And sitting there across from me was this girl, unconcerned, reading a book. She did that all the way over, and I just hated her. It was Julia Child, who later became the famous TV chef. We finally got to China, and Julia was the first out. She looked around very calmly, at the pagoda in the background, at the blue-coated coolies. "Oh, it looks just like China," she said in that sort of warble she had. In those days she didn't know how to boil an egg.

WWII: What was the city of Kunming like?

EPM: Today, Kunming is a fine city. Back then it was just a small town, like an outpost in the Wild West. There were a lot of pack animals around and people coming in from the hills. It was an old walled city, and there really was not much of anything to do. There were a couple of French restaurants because of the French who used to come up from Indochina. The American presence was very big, but we kept in our own compounds. We lived in what we called "the girl's house," which was nice. Once there was a little war between the local Chinese, and some came in and used our balcony to shoot from. My dog got away, and when I ran out after him they shot at me too. A jeep came and got us every morning and took us to the OSS compound that was surrounded by mud walls and sentries. The MO shack was a kind of mud house. But living wasn't bad. We had good food, but you couldn't get things like liquor, which they didn't think was worth sending over the Hump. We survived and worked hard.

We didn't mingle much with the Chinese people, which was too bad. I had a little dog, and I liked to go walking. I met the most interesting people. I couldn't speak Chinese, and they had no English, but we got on all right. I remember a funny old man once, sitting there with a fire going. He was eating something. It was kind of crackling. He handed me chopsticks and invited me to join him. They were nice little things—didn't taste bad at all. I asked what they were. He picked up a fresh one and showed me. It was a grasshopper. This was the sort of thing you did when you went on walks by yourself.

WWII: How did your MO work in China compare with what you did in New Delhi?

EPM: In China MO mainly sent things out to OSS people in the field, and they would turn it over to the Chinese who worked with them. In Kunming, we mainly provided the ideas about how to handle the problems that we wanted to influence. For example, the Chinese were asked by the Japanese to join their kamikaze corps. The Chinese really didn't think that becoming a kamikaze was such a great idea, and we were able to play off that pretty well. In China MO wasn't as much work as it was in Delhi because a lot of the practical aspects of it were done by the Chinese our field people were working with.

The end of the war came, and everything broke up. Most went home. Some of us went on to Shanghai, where we had a headquarters for a while. OSS was asked to carry out mercy missions at the end that were very important. OSS teams were sent out to locate Allied POWs all over China and other parts of Asia. Eventually, all of us came back to the States and were discharged. I went to work as a writer for a publication in New York City.

ABOVE: During an inspection tour of OSS headquarters in New Delhi, General William "Wild Bill" Donovan stands fifth from left. To Donovan's right is Colonel John Coughlin, commander of the New Delhi unit. Elizabeth McIntosh stands third on Donovan's right. LEFT: Amid heavy flooding in 1945, Elizabeth McIntosh is carried to high ground by Sergeant William A. Smith. Famous Chinese cartoonist Tong Ting smiles broadly as the trio exits the Morale Operations print shop. (Both: Author)

WWII: OSS had some wonderful personalities who did incredible things during the war. In your book, *Sisterhood of Spies,* you tell the stories of some of the women of the OSS. Who among them most stands out?

EPM: It would be "The Limping Lady," Virginia Hall. She was a great woman. Before the war, she was working in Turkey for our State Department when she had a hunting accident. They had to amputate her leg, and State said, "You can't work for us anymore, you don't have a leg." When the war broke out, she was recruited by Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) and sent to France, ostensibly as the stringer for a U.S. newspaper, but secretly to set up resistance networks. When it became too dangerous for her and SOE ordered her out of France, she walked across the Pyrenees into Spain—in winter. When she got back to London, she transferred to OSS and went back [to France] to organize sabotage and resistance groups before D-Day. She was known to the Gestapo, which put out an order for her arrest. She eluded them by disguising herself as an old peasant who herded cows and goats. She did a magnificent job under difficult and very dangerous conditions.

WWII: How well did you get to know Donovan after the war?

EPM: I was married to Richard Heppner, who had been a member of Donovan's law firm before the war. He became head of OSS in China and after the war went back to work with Donovan again. Alex MacDonald and I had drifted apart. He stayed in Bangkok and started a newspaper there; I wanted to get home and do some writing. We had a very amicable separation and stayed in touch until he died in 2001. I met Dick Heppner again, back in New York. We got married, and that was how I got to know Donovan. In 1950, I was with them in Hong Kong, when the two of them were trying to get back a fleet of airplanes that General Claire Chennault had bought from Chiang Kai-shek, but were claimed by the Communists. That's when I got to know Donovan pretty well.

We had a wonderful time in Hong Kong. Donovan loved to go shopping. I can remember having tea with him, and he would excuse himself and go out on the balcony and talk with some strange man in the shadows. He would come back and say it was someone from mainland China who had come to bring him up to date on what was going on. He was still in touch with the underground folks. He was quite a guy.

WWII: Donovan was out of intelligence work by then, wasn't he?

EPM: When the war ended, OSS was disbanded and Donovan went back to civilian life. He stayed involved for a little while, but then they established the CIA, and Allen Dulles got the job. Donovan would have liked it, but President Roosevelt was long gone, and there was a lot of political maneuvering going on. Donovan returned to his law practice in New York.

WWII: Did you eventually come back to intelligence?

EPM: It was after Dick died unexpectedly, and I had to go back to work. I went to Allen Dulles and asked if he could give me a job. He said, "Where do you want to go?" I said, "Japan." He said, "Okay, when did you want to go?"

WWII: When you finally got to Japan, was it all you expected?

EPM: I enjoyed every minute of it. It was terrific. □

Elizabeth P. McIntosh did serve in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and continued as a journalist, writer, and editor. Along with Sisterhood of Spies, *she is the author of a second book,* Undercover Girl.

Bob Bergin is a resident of Fairfax, Virginia. He last wrote for WWII History *on the POW experience of Flying Tiger Charlie Mott, which appeared in the March 2007 issue.*

By Mason B. Webb

History is often stranger than fiction

A new book reveals a Nazi plot to kidnap Pope Pius XII.

JUST WHEN ONE THINKS THAT THERE COULD NOT BE ANOTHER "UNTOLD" story about World War II, along comes a writer like Dan Kurzman with a new book about a previously untold story: the Nazis' plan to kidnap Pope Pius XII. So fast paced and well told is *A Special Mission: Hitler's Secret Plot to Seize the Vatican and Kidnap Pope Pius XII* (Da Capo Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2006, 304 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $26.00, hardcover) that it seems like a fictional plot—a worthy follow-up to *The DaVinci Code*. Yet, it is all true.

In *A Special Mission*, Kurzman details the operation. SS General Karl Wolff, in the wake of Mussolini's ouster and Italy's capitulation to the Allies in September 1943, is sent to Italy by Hitler to carry out an audacious plan—occupy the Vatican and kidnap the Pope.

Kurzman tells the tale convincingly, writing, "Berlin Radio warned of 'severe measures unless the pope accepts the policies of Hitler and Italian fascism.' All food stocks were seized, with Vatican rations halved; postal facilities from the Vatican were cut off; and telephone lines to Rome were tapped—all taking place even as [Ambassador Ernst von] Weizsäcker was told to assure the Vatican that the Germans would 'protect the Vatican City from the fighting.' The ambassador, who by now knew of Wolff's mission, was more apprehensive than ever."

To get to the heart of the story, Kurzman interviewed General Wolff following his release from prison in May 1945—the only journalist to have done so.

The fact that Wolff never carried out the plan is obvious. How he avoided doing it forms the crux of this exciting, fast-paced narrative. Wolff and his co-conspirators persuaded the Pope to maintain his silence about the impending roundup of Rome's Jews and their transport to Auschwitz, arguing that it could save both his life and the treasures of the Vatican as well as soften the blow against the Jewish community. Pius XII's decision not to criticize the ongoing Holocaust is well known (and is discussed at length by Kurzman); the story of the kidnap plot adds a new layer to that discussion.

A Special Mission is the first book to tell this remarkable, almost unbelievable, story and is vital for understanding the Vatican's controversial wartime activities—including the Pope's refusal to speak out forcefully against the slaughter of the Jews—which remain controversial to this day. The only question is why it took so long for this story to come out.

Pope Pius XII, then Papal Nuncio to Berlin, strides out of a German government building to head back to Rome in this ca. 1929 photo. (© Bettmann/CORBIS)

Berlin Games: How the Nazis Stole the Olympic Dream, by Guy Walters, William Morrow, New York, 2006, 368 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $24.95, hardcover.

The Nazis almost pulled off the impossible.

In 1936, Germany hosted both the Winter (in Garmisch-Partenkirchen) and Summer (in Berlin) Olympic Games, nearly convincing the world that the Nazi regime was no threat to mankind.

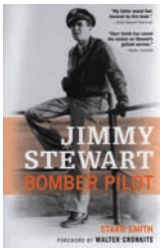
Nearly.

In *Berlin Games,* British author Guy Walters, armed with a staggering amount of research, recreates those heady, prewar days when the world's biggest sporting pageant was held in a country that, within three years, would launch a new and terrible global catastrophe.

The 1936 Olympics were nothing less than the most political sporting event of the 20th century. Far from being merely

a friendly contest of amateur athletes, it was an epic clash between proponents of evil and those on the side of civilization.

Hitler and his minions did their best to present their kindest face to the millions who came to Germany that year. Visitors from everywhere marveled at the new Germany, so different from the Germany they had read about in the papers. Gone (for a few months, anyway) were the signs of anti-Semetism. The anti-Jewish newspapers took a hiatus; the placards urging Germans not to buy from Jewish merchants mysteriously (but temporarily) disappeared. The Germany that Hitler wanted everyone to see was clean, prosperous, orderly. The Germans seemed happy and carefree, belying all the stories about atrocities and persecution that began in 1933—stories that were dismissed as mere fiction dreamed up by journalists with an anti-German ax to grind.



As Walters writes about the opening of the Winter Games, "Although many were excited by the ten days' sport that lay ahead of them, most of the crowd were more thrilled by the imminent arrival of the star of the show— Adolf Hitler. The spectators could hear the cheers greeting Hitler, quiet at first, and then increasing in volume, as his train from Munich approached. 'You could hear the 'Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!' coming up the valley when he arrived,' Albert Washburn recalled. For the few American visitors, it was hard not to get caught up in the excitement—Washburn even stuck his arm out. His wife did the same.... The Fuehrer had overshadowed the event before it had started."

Berlin Games is the complete, fascinating history of both the 1936 Winter and Summer games; how the Nazis went to great lengths to obscure the sinister truth about what was going on within Germany's borders; how Hitler attempted to use the games as a model of Aryan supremacy and Nazi efficiency; and how Avery Brundage and the International Olympic Committee bent over backward to keep from offending the host nation. It is an outstanding, truly important work.

Jimmy Stewart, Bomber Pilot, by Starr Smith, Zenith Press, St. Paul, Minn., 2006, 288 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $14.95, softcover.

It goes without saying that James Maitland Stewart was one of Hollywood's greatest and most enduring stars. But, he was also an American patriot of the first order.

Giving up his safe, glamorous life in Tinseltown for a rugged and uncertain future at the controls of bombers over occupied Europe, Stewart was an inspiration to an entire generation of Americans who wanted to serve their country, no matter what the cost.

Veteran journalist Starr Smith has captured the true essence of the man in this superbly written and profusely illustrated biography. In March 1941, the 33-year-old Stewart, although already an established star making thousands of dollars a month, enlisted in the Air Corps, for which he was paid $21 per month. After becoming an officer, the affable Stewart won swift promotions, flew 20 combat missions, became commander of the 703rd Bomb Squadron of the 445th Bomb Group, then was promoted to full colonel and, after several other posts, commander of the 2nd Combat Bomb Wing. Eventually he would spend 27 years on active and reserve service, including flying missions over Vietnam. In 1968, he retired from the Air Force as a brigadier general at age 60.

Smith also touches on the last phase of Stewart's remarkable life and military career, when he flew combat missions in B-52s during the Vietnam War, a war in which his stepson, Lieu-

Silent Wings: The American Glider Pilots of WWII

When people think of airborne divisions they think of paratroopers descending from the clouds to fight behind enemy lines. But paratroopers were not the only airborne attackers. Glider pilots took soldiers into battle in flimsy, defenseless metal and fabric (and completely disposable) aircraft, then they picked up rifles and fought alongside their airborne brethren.

The DVD *Silent Wings: The American Glider Pilots of WWII* salutes those pilots and their contribution to the Allied victory in World War II. The documentary, narrated by Hal Holbrook, stars Walter Cronkite and Andy Rooney, as well as veteran glider pilots reminiscing about their experiences in the war. The pilots prided themselves on fighting as infantry after their landings.

The DVD covers all the theaters where gliders touched down. From Sicily to Burma, Normandy, southern France, Holland, Bastogne, and Germany, glider pilots brought troops, heavy weapons, and supplies to the battlefields of the world, helping to tilt the balance in favor of the Allies.

Inspired by the German airborne attack of Eben Emal in Belgium, the American Army began developing glider craft and training crews in 1941. Gliders were towed into combat behind C-47 transport planes, sometimes two gliders to a transport. Once a landing zone was reached, the glider pilot would release the tow cable and begin descending. Landings were really a controlled crash that resulted in a wrecked glider, and, often, casualties. Piloting a glider was not a job for the meek.

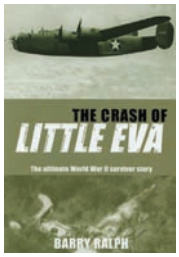
The glider's mission, and that of airborne troops in general, got off to a rocky start. After a disastrous friendly fire incident off Sicily, and scattered landing behind German lines, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the commander of the invasion, wrote a letter to Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, stating, "Sir, I do not believe in the airborne division." A glider crash in the United States at an air show did not help matters.

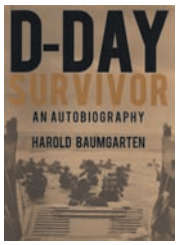
But airborne troops proved their worth in Normandy, France, when they delivered troops and supplies behind the lines on D-Day and D+1. When the Germans launched the Battle of the Bulge in Decembe and surrounded the Belgium town of Bastogne, glider pilots flew medical personnel and personnel to the besieged 101st Airborne Division, before General George S. Patton broke through the German lines. The Bastogne operation was one for the most deadly for glider pilots. Of the 100 gliders that took off to relieve Bastogne, Only 65 reached the town. In crossing the Rhine River in 1945, gliders landed right on top of the German defenders.

Silent Wings is a must see for anyone interested in the modern tactics of World War II. The footage is engaging and the interviews with the pilots are riveting. Every veteran tells harrowing stories of the precarious landings. While gliders were a hi-tech tactical achievement, the men who flew the planes prove to be the real story. They put it best themselves when they said that the "G" on their flight wings did not stand for "Glider," it stood for "Guts." □

Kevin M. Hymel

tenant Ron McLean, was killed. Stewart frequently told reporters that his military experiences were "much greater" than those associated with a movie star's career.





Stewart's daughter Kelly pays a fine tribute to him at the book's opening: "My father's experiences during World War II affected him more deeply and permanently that anything else in his life. Yet his children grew up knowing almost nothing about those years. Dad never talked about the war. My siblings and I knew only that he had been a pilot and that he had won some medals, but that he didn't see himself as a hero. He saw only that he had done his duty.... I know that the war held terrible memories for my father, as it must for anyone who lived through the combat. But he was also deeply proud to have served his country."

With so many of the current generation of Hollywood stars decidedly antiwar and antimilitary, this book is a refreshing, nostalgic look back at a time when personal fame, money, and safety took a back seat to the ideals of duty, honor, and country. Not to be missed.

The Crash of Little Eva, by Barry Ralph, Pelican, Gretna, La., 2006, 209 pp., photographs, maps, bibliography, index, $18.95, softcover.

The story of *Little Eva,* an American B-24 bomber from the 321st Squadron, 90th Bomb Group, stationed at a remote U.S. air base in far northern Queensland, is eerily similar to that of the *Lady Be Good,* a B-24 that became lost over the Mediterranean and crashed in the North African desert. Its crew wandered for days before finally succumbing to the harsh elements. Their remains were found decades later.

In *Little Eva*'s case, she took off from her base on her maiden combat mission on December 1, 1942, with 23 other B-24s from her group on a mission to attack Japanese naval targets near eastern New Guinea. But something went amiss during the bomb run. The plane's bomb rack malfunctioned, and she tried going around again. Separated from the rest of the group, and slammed by an unexpected tropical storm and the sudden onset of night, the navigator became confused and completely lost. With fuel running low, the pilot made the decision to abandon ship. All the crewmen—or so the pilot thought—bailed out.

Little Eva crash-landed in the wilds of northern Australia, not far from the coast, with three crewmen still on board. Some of the survivors managed to be rescued, but others straggled on, using their wits to stay alive, searching desperately for food and water in the unbearably hot climate, trying to avoid poisonous snakes, man-eating crocodiles, hungry mosquitoes, and deadly, swiftly flowing rivers.

Basing much of his research on detailed police reports of the search for the plane and survivors by American and Australian authorities, Barry Ralph, an Australian broadcast journalist and military historian, takes the reader along on the search.

The Crash of Little Eva is a spellbinding story of courage, survival, and the will to live, one of the best of its genre, and a book that will not easily be forgotten.

D-Day Survivor: An Autobiography, by Harold Baumgarten, Pelican, Gretna, La., 2006, 256 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $25.00, hardcover.

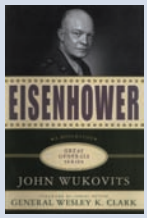
What was the Allied invasion of France really like? One way to find out is to listen to a veteran of that operation. And few veterans have told the story of that cold, gray June morning better than Harold Baumgarten, then a young soldier with the 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division.

Few units suffered more on June 6, 1944, than the 116th, and few soldiers suffered more and lived than Baumgarten, the Jewish son of

Short Bursts

Eisenhower, by John Wukovits, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2006, 204 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $21.95.

For anyone wishing a concise biography of Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower,



John Wukovits's new book is certain to fill the bill. In the third installment of Palgrave's Great Generals series, Wukovits explores Ike's leadership strategies and his contributions to American warfare. Not only was Ike the architect of Operation Overlord (the Normandy invasion), but he was also the brains behind Operation Torch (the invasion of North Africa) and Operation Husky (the invasion of Sicily), struggling mightily to hold together a multinational coalition that was as difficult as trying to defeat a determined enemy.

Wukovits captures the essence of the man, a high-ranking general seemingly without ego. He writes, "Reflective of Eisenhower's familial approach was his selection of living quarters in Great Britain. Within a week he had moved out of the exclusive Claridge Hotel, London's most expensive establishment, for a simple three-room suite at the Dorchester Hotel. He then arranged for an unobtrusive home in the country, called Telegraph Cottage, to serve as a sanctuary in which he could escape the pressures of command. Located along a golf course, the retreat offered time for Eisenhower to read his Western novels, play bridge and golf, and recuperate from an exacting schedule."

Eisenhower is a very personal look at one of America's greatest generals and most beloved presidents.

Pointe du Hoc (Secret Operations), by Peter Howard, Casemate, Barnsley, England, 2006, 96 pp., photographs, maps, $29.95.

A large format (9x12), profusely illustrated book, *Pointe du Hoc* is an up-close look at one of Operation Overlord's most daring and

spectacular missions, the attack by 225 men of U.S. Ranger Force A, from the 2nd Ranger Battalion, up the sheer cliff to assault the German guns on top.

Following the Rangers from their early days, through training, then the audacious assault, Peter Howard gives the reader a comprehensive study of what many planners—and Rangers themselves—feared was a suicide mission. Knocking out the guns at Pointe du Hoc was of prime importance, for the Overlord planners worried that they could wreak havoc among the invasion fleet assembled off Utah and Omaha Beaches.

As it turned out, 135 Rangers were wounded or lost their lives in the mission only to discover that, prior to June 6, 1944, the Germans had removed the guns from their casemates and hauled them several kilometers to the rear. All the time, effort, and cost in human lives expended at Pointe du Hoc was for naught, making the operation tragic but no less heroic.

An index and bibliography would have made this superb book even better, but the great number of photographs, many never before published, make up for this deficiency. □

By Eric T. Baker

Submarine warfare is an excellent genre for gaming.

It is funny how genres come and go. A book becomes a best seller and suddenly there are a plethora of submarine games (and movies). And then time passes and fashion moves on to the next thing. But fashion to the side, submarines are an inherently excellent genre for gaming. At their core, they are one ship against many, cunning and stealth vs. overwhelming might. The player is the underdog from the word go and satisfaction of success is thus guaranteed in a way that it isn't when the odds start out balanced.

All of these things are on display in *Silent Hunter: Wolves of the Pacific* from Ubi Soft for the PC. *SH:WotP* is actually a follow up to 2005's *Silent Hunter III,* which put players in the role of a U-boat commander in the Atlantic. This time the player commands one of a variety of American boats against Japanese shipping in the Pacific. There is a choice of several scenarios, a patrol mode, a career mode, and a multiplayer mode. Multiplayer is the only mode where a player can run the Japanese; in all the other modes the player is an American and in command of a submarine.

The form of the game is as complex as the players want it to be. They can move through their boat from station to station, assigning crew to shifts and duties, plotting movement and attack runs. Or they can change the settings and make things as simple as pointing the periscope and pushing the "fire button." The game is at its best, however, when the settings are most of the way toward simulation and the player is taking half an hour to maneuver his boat in the perfect position to take out the prize at the heart of the convoy, and to get away afterward, as all the while their virtual crew members quietly provide atmospheric chatter. It is at these times that the game best conveys the tension and danger of the real hunts.

A genre that has not been underrepresented the past couple years has been real-time strategy games of the ground war in Europe. *Frontline: Fields of Thunder* from Paradox Interactive for the PC is a simulation of the battle for Kursk in Russia in 1943. Well known to all WWII gamers, Kursk is famous as the largest tank battle ... ever. *F:FoT* represents it in two campaigns of 10 scenarios each. Players can go through it from one side and then the other, or alternate, but in form each of the historically accurate engagements is similar. The computer's troops are dug in at a town or around a bridge or some similar feature, and the player must use his troops to root them out.

F:FoT is noticeably harder than many similar games. Typically, the computer forces in these games can be overwhelmed by a tank rush, smashing the forces in detail as the computer fails to mass enough firepower to blunt the thrust. In *F:FoT* this tactic will fail because in most scenarios, the computer starts out in position to blow a rush apart. In fact, the player will probably have to play each scenario several times to find weak points and to learn which order of battle will best exploit them. Some players will enjoy this increased difficulty; others will be put off by game play that feels more like looking for the one possible solution than it does inventing winning strategy.

This column doesn't often mention miniatures gaming, but for those with the time and money, there is no better way to simulate historical battles since miniatures provide both unlimited customizability and a "war room" feel that computer and even board games lack. Having invested the time and money in creating a miniatures army, players still need both rules to resolve the battles and scenarios to battle out. TreadHead Games is filling the demand for the latter with a series of scenario books set in some of the less commonly modeled battle fields of WWII.

The first book of the series is *Balkans on Fire: The War in Greece 1940-1941*. It is 48 black and white pages with a color cover, and it contains nine historical scenarios. The first seven pit the Greeks against their Italian invaders. The eighth details a battle of the German SS vs. the Greeks, and the final is the SS against a Commonwealth force. Each scenario write-up contains sections for the battle's historical perspective, its historical outcome, the turns and victory conditions, the weather and ground conditions, a map of the terrain, an order of battle for each side, and often a sidebar on some historical element of the battle such as the history of the Bersaglieri, the elite light infantry of the Italians. The book begins with four pages of history on the period and place, and has another section on adapting the scenarios to various different rules sets. It will take some renaming for most players to put these forces together, but these challenging battles are practically guaranteed to be ones the players have never fought before. □

Austrian parentage. Wounded five times within a span of 32 hours, he continued to press forward into the fire, not willing to give up on the mission he had worked so hard to take part in.

The book begins with the author's tough upbringing in New York and follows his dream to play baseball for the Yankees, his being drafted into the Army in 1943, his basic training, and his preparations for D-Day in England. He recounts the frightening hours before and during the landing at Omaha Beach as he battled ashore, and his being wounded numerous times by bullets and shell fragments.

After being ambushed near Vierville and badly hurt, Baumgarten recalled, "At 3:00 AM [on June 7] I felt like I was dying. I was cold and clammy and had a 'needles and pins' feeling throughout my whole body. I was awake, with no severe pain, even though I had been wounded four times in the last twenty hours. The last time I had eaten anything was more than thirty hours earlier. I kept drinking water from canteens that were no longer of any use to their owners."

Baumgarten was finally rescued by an ambulance crew, but his ordeal was not yet over, for the medics, too, came under enemy fire, and he was wounded again. After recovering from his wounds, he was discharged from the Army and returned to rebuild his war-shattered life; he became a physician. Many years later, Stephen Ambrose learned of Baumgarten's adventures and featured him in his epic book, *D-Day: 6 June 1944*. Feted at gatherings and reunions of the 29th Division, Baumgarten soon became fast friends with Ambrose, Steven Spielberg, and Tom Hanks, the latter two who would be responsible for making *Saving Private Ryan*.

Baumgarten believes that his life was spared so that he could give a face and a voice to his fellow brave Americans who lost their lives that day. Determined to make his autobiography a testament to those men who made the ultimate sacrifice for victory, Baumgarten's story ensures that the memory of the buddies he left behind on the bloody sands of the Dog Green sector of Omaha Beach will never be forgotten.

The Germans in Normandy, by Richard Hargreaves, Casemate, Barnsley, England, 2006, 271 pp., photographs, maps, bibliography, index, $32.95, hardcover.

Most accounts of the Normandy invasion are told from an American, British, and Canadian point of view; very little draws upon German accounts of the battle. But, at last comes a book that draws heavily on German sources. In this splendid new work, Richard Hargreaves, a British journalist who spent 15 years researching it, presents the planning, the battle, and the aftermath as the enemy saw it.

Using letters, diaries, firsthand accounts, unit histories, newspaper articles, and official records, plus a host of secondary sources, Hargreaves gives the reader a penetrating look into the lives of the men—both high- and low-ranking—who manned Hitler's vaunted Atlantic Wall, men who believed both in their cause and their ability to throw any Allied invasion back into the sea.

But belief in victory quickly turned to disappointment, and then to disaster. Within 48 hours of the start of the invasion, it was clear to the Germans that they would not be able to hold back the inexorable Allied tide, that their cause was doomed. Hargreaves details the Germans' frantic effort to hold back that tide—delaying actions in the towns and villages of Normandy, the failed counterthrust at Mortain, the horrific casualties at the Falaise Gap, the loss of Paris, the retreat to the Rhine.

On July 18, 1944, an unprecedented Allied saturation bombing of German lines near Caen was called by one soldier, "The worst we had ever experienced in the war."

Hargreaves writes, "For four hours, the bombers came, 4,500 of them. The first wave alone released 6,000 tons of explosives; two more waves followed. And then the artillery barrage—from land and sea, a quarter of a million rounds in all. The men in the front lines were buried. The bombs turned over the earth, filled in fox holes, covered weapons. Telephone lines were cut, radio trucks smashed, guns and panzers disappeared beneath piles of mud or were covered with soil. When the enemy attack came, they were not ready for battle."

One panzer lieutenant reported, "Some of the 62-ton machines lay upside down in bomb craters thirty feet across. They had been spun through the air like playing cards. Two of my men committed suicide; they weren't up to the psychological effect."

At least 60,000 Germans, and probably many more, died trying to defend Normandy. However odious was the regime and cause they served, they fought bravely and, for the most part, honorably against overwhelmingly superior forces.

To read about the battle from the losing side's perspective is a sobering and informative experience, one that should not be missed. □

morning of December 7, 1941.

While the president was pursuing prewar goals, he followed up on another avenue to further U.S.-British covert relations. He wanted to create a covert intelligence-sharing arrangement with the British government, and the man he appointed to lead this effort was World War I hero William "Wild Bill" Donovan, a Republican lawyer from New York. Donovan's most important champion in the Roosevelt administration was Republican Frank Knox, whom FDR appointed to be his Secretary of the Navy. On Knox's advice, President Roosevelt asked Donovan to come to the White House for a meeting. Donovan met with the Secretaries of War, State, and the Navy. At the end of the conference he was asked by the administration to make a trip to Britain "to learn about Britain's handling of the Fifth Column problem."

Donovan accepted, and on July 14, 1940, he left New York as the personal representative of the president of the United States. Accompanying Donovan to London was a reporter from the *Chicago Daily News,* Edgar Mowrer. The ostensible reason for their trip was to report on the activities of Fifth Columnists in England and how the government was tackling the situation. Donovan's trip to England was unprecedented for a civilian. He arrived with letters of introduction from prominent Washington luminaries. Before his departure, Donovan dined with Lord Lothian, the British ambassador to the United States.

Donovan's secondary purpose was to learn as much as possible about the military situation in England. He inspected many British military installations, spoke with their commanders, and came home with a recommendation that the United States do as much as possible to aid England militarily. William Stephenson, Britain's Passport Control Officer in the United States, pulled considerable strings with his contacts in British intelligence, asking that the British secret services give as much time to Donovan as he needed.

Donovan met with all the top military and political leaders of the country, including Prime Minister Churchill, King George VI, and most importantly, Stewart Menzies, the head of British Intelligence. Menzies took Donovan under his wing, imparting many of England's most vital intelligence secrets, including the code-breaking operation at Bletchley Park and the existence of Ultra, the means by which the British decoded much of Germany's military wire traffic.

The other important British intelligence official Donovan met with was Rear Admiral John Godfrey, head of Naval Intelligence. Godfrey introduced Donovan to his naval aide, Commander Ian Fleming, who would later accompany Godfrey to the United States to help the U.S. design its own intelligence division. Fleming would later use his wartime experiences to create his fictional spy, James Bond.

Donovan was so impressed with Godfrey that upon returning to Washington he urged the president to appoint a person who would travel back and forth between England and the Untied States in a liaison capacity. He also urged full cooperation in intelligence sharing.

Donovan listened as his British counterparts asked for military help and assured him that if America gave England the tools of war necessary to defend itself, they would be able to stave off the Germans. Donovan returned to the United States on August 4 and met with Secretary Knox the following day. Over the next several days, he also met with other important military and political representatives of the president, including members of Congress who had been briefed on his trip.

Donovan traveled with the president to Hyde Park and reported on all he saw and did while in Britain. He told the president that in his opinion the United States should give the British all the military help necessary to win the war. As for the official reason for his trip to England, to study Fifth Column activities, Donovan and Mowrer wrote a number of articles on the dangers of such activity, which were published in the nation's press. FDR was successful in hiding from the public the real reason for sending Bill Donovan to England.

Also unknown to the public, and with the permission of the president, Donovan began a working relationship with William Stephenson, Britain's master spy in the United States. Donovan was a frequent visitor to the New York headquarters of Stephenson's BSC, British Security Coordination, located at Rockefeller Center. Soon, the two men joined forces in an unofficial intelligence-sharing alliance. Donovan gave an account of his work with Stephenson to FDR, and in December 1940, FDR asked Donovan to once again travel overseas as his personal emissary.

Donovan's official presidential authorization was to "make a strategic appreciation from an economic, political, and military standpoint of the Mediterranean area." Stephenson accompanied Donovan, leaving Baltimore for Bermuda on December 6, 1940. *The New York Times* reported that Donovan was off on "another mysterious mission."

Due to bad weather in the Atlantic, the two men were forced to stay in Bermuda for eight days. This time was really a boon to Donovan in learning how the British operated foreign intelligence. The island of Bermuda was a vital British listening post, which intercepted radio messages from around the world in transit to the Western Hemisphere. Mail arriving from Europe was intercepted and read, giving British intelligence an upper hand in tracking down Nazi sleeper rings in the Americas.

In England, Donovan met with Prime Minister Churchill. He was then off to Gibraltar, Portugal, Bulgaria, Malta, Egypt, Greece, and other places of interest. Donovan's hosts all asked him for military and economic aid in order to stave off defeat. Returning to the United States on March 18, 1941, he soon found himself debriefing the president and his cabinet on the long voyage. He told his listeners that the British would be able to defeat the Nazis with adequate support.

It was also during this trip that British intelligence agents approached Donovan with the idea of a centralized American intelligence agency. Donovan presented the idea to FDR, but military leaders met it with open hostility.

General Sherman Miles, head of Army Intelligence, wrote to General Marshall, "In great confidence O.N.I. (Office of Naval Intelligence) tells me that there is considerable reason to believe that there is movement on foot, fostered by Col. Donovan, to establish a super agency controlling all intelligence. This would mean that such an agency, no doubt under Col. Donovan, would collect, collate, and possibly even evaluate all military intelligence which we now gather from foreign countries. From the point of view of the War Department, such a move would appear to be very disadvantageous, if not calamitous."

Despite the military's objection, President Roosevelt took the first tentative step in the creation of an American espionage establishment when he appointed William Donovan as head of an intelligence-gathering body called COI, Coordinator of Information. In his new capacity, Donovan would begin to build up America's secret intelligence-gathering empire.

Even before a shot had been fired in anger against the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was inching America ever closer to war. Historians have debated the nature of Roosevelt's actions. However, perhaps the term that describes them best is "pragmatic." While the United States may not have been fully prepared for war on December 7, 1941, Roosevelt had come to the conclusion that war with both Japan and Germany was virtually inevitable. □

Peter Kross is the author of Spies, Traitors and Moles: An Espionage and Intelligence Quiz Book *and* The Encyclopedia of World War II Spies.

Lausdell

Continued from page 64

on a pair of severed legs clad in paratrooper pants. He also felt pain radiating through his own right leg and hand. Shell fragments had stung him. Blood covered his face and uniform, most of it splatter from Popielarcheck. The injured sergeant crawled away to the battalion command post, where a medic dressed his wounds and pointed him toward the rear.

Busi limped away, moving from foxhole to foxhole as bullets whizzed overhead. He chanced upon a large hole containing four or five wounded soldiers, men who had suffered everything but death. He joined them and said, "Guys, we might as well pray. The Germans are coming like crazy with big tanks. They're gonna kill us all." Everybody started to pray.

The nerve-grinding rumble of tanks soon followed.

Prepared for the worst, Busi poked his head above the lip of the hole. The tanks belonged to Lieutenant Barcellona's platoon. They were attacking in an attempt to spring free the remaining Lausdell defenders. Medics arrived shortly thereafter and evacuated the injured men to a barn at Rocherather Baracken, which served as the battalion aid station. Busi eventually became a patient at a hospital in England and never returned to the 9th Infantry.

Many others also never returned to the 9th. They became prisoners of war, and their ranks included Captain Garvey of Company K. From inside the Palm farmhouse, he watched German infantrymen capture his soldiers and most of Company A. He remained in the house with several wounded men until an enemy tank parked outside the building and trained its cannon on the front door. Garvey threw in the towel and saved the lives of everyone in the house.

McKinley, Captain Harvey, and Captain Ernst were the last men to escape Lausdell. As they hightailed it out, German soldiers shouted at them: "*Hände hoch! Hände hoch!*"

The next day, the defenders who had dodged death and captivity retreated toward Elsenborn, Belgium. Each of the exhausted men felt numb and hollow as an empty shell casing. Yet, McKinley could see beyond the agonies of the present day. While shambling along a sodden road, he said to Captain Ernst, "We're treading on a page of history." Ernst glanced down at his boots. "All I see is mud, Colonel." McKinley shook his head, smiled, and trudged on.

The first head count after the retrograde found only 217 men and officers, although other soldiers made their way home in the coming days. The least fortunate never lifted their faces from the mud and snow. Graves Registration teams recovered 31 fallen GIs from Lausdell after the 2nd Division reclaimed the area in February 1945.

The casualty roll also included 146 soldiers who found themselves on the rueful road to prisoner of war camps in Germany. All but 18 of the soldiers belonged to Companies A and K. Among the internees, Garvey and Truppner were the highest ranking. They became residents of Stalag XIIID and survived the war. Only two of McKinley's men died in captivity.

Days after the men became prisoners, *New York Times* correspondent Harold N. Denny began interviewing those soldiers who had avoided captivity. His writing invested the Lausdell defenders with heroic stature for their role in what newspapers called the Battle of the Bulge. Denny authored a front-page article with the headline: "U.S. Battalion's Stand Saves Regiment, Division and Army." Those words represented more than journalistic hyperbole. The men under McKinley's command, and their comrades in the artillery, had staved off the 12th SS Panzer Division for 18 hours. Without that delay, the enemy would have been in position to inflict a devastating defeat upon the 2nd Division and the U.S. First Army.

During those crucial hours, McKinley's soldiers upheld the motto of the 9th Infantry Regiment: "Keep up the fire."

McKinley's battalion and its attached units received a Presidential Unit Citation in April 1945. Individual awards among the men are lited in the box above.

Jennings had no idea he had received the Silver Star until 2005 when this author informed him. Congressman John Murtha's staff subsequently helped the 83-year-old veteran receive his medal, albeit 60 years late.

McKinley's award encompassed the Lausdell and Wahlerscheid actions.

Plumley had returned to duty eleven days before his death, having spent months convalescing from wounds suffered in France. His buddies called him "Pluto" because his nose resembled that of the Disney character.

McKinley recommended Gaetano Barcellona for a Silver Star, but higher headquarters downgraded it to a Bronze Star.

Odis Bone of Company B never received the Silver Star promised him. □

Bill Warnock is a U.S. Air Force veteran and author of The Dead of Winter, *a recently published book chronicling present-day efforts to recover the remains of missing U.S. soldiers killed during the Battle of the Bulge.*

Luban

Continued from page 73

patrols and cross the Kerest'. After a few days of wandering in the woods, the group split up on June 25. Vlasov, accompanied by a few men, moved northwest. On July 12, Vlasov was arrested by pro-German local police in the village of Tukhovezhi, 30 miles northwest of the city of Novgorod. He was handed over to the German XXXVIII Corps. The following day, he was delivered by truck to 18th Army headquarters at the Siverskiy railroad station.

Individual stragglers from the 2nd Army continued appearing at the front-line positions of the Soviet armies of the Volkhov and even Northwestern Fronts until the end of August. The fate of most of them was not enviable. They were brutally interrogated by Special departments of the NKVD, the predecessor of the KGB, the dreaded Soviet secret police. Many of them landed in the gulags or in deadly penal companies.

The once 85,000-strong 2nd Shock Army ceased to exist, melting into the mass graves, bottomless marshes, and prison camps, or left unburied in the woods to the west of the Volkhov River. Almost 70,000 men were lost. The cumulative casualties of the Luban operation were staggering. During the offensive from January 7 to April 30, a total force of 325,700 comprising four armies of the Volkhov Front and the 54th Army of the Leningrad Front lost 308,367 soldiers. The casualty rate was 95 percent. Among them were 50,000 POWs.

On June 29, Stalin instructed the Soviet Information Bureau to broadcast the following communiqué: "The Fascist scribes are quoting astronomical figures of 30,000 supposed prisoners of war and saying that even more than this were killed. Needless to say, this is a typical Fascist lie. According to incomplete figures, at least 30,000 Germans were killed alone … Parts of the 2nd Shock Army withdrew to a prepared position. We lost 10,000 killed and about 10,000 missing …"

The remains of some of the dead Red Army soldiers still turn up 60 years later in the marshy woods, startling occasional hikers and mushroom hunters. After his capture, General Vlasov collaborated with the Germans. This betrayal cast a dark shadow over the memory of his vanished army for years to come. □

Edward Paraubek was born in the Soviet Union and served in the Red Army with the rank of senior lieutenant. He emigrated to the United States in 1978 and resides in Stoughton, Massachusetts.