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Cover: *U.S. Marine Raiders, known for being skilled jungle fighters, pose in front of a Japanese dugout on Bougainville, which they helped to capture in January 1944. Photo courtesy of the National Archives.*

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The late AP photographer Joe Rosenthal captured the spirit of the Marine Corps.

When U.S. Marines stormed ashore on the island of Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945, American involvement in World War II was in its fourth year. A bloody campaign of island hopping across the Central Pacific and jungle fighting through New Guinea, the Philippines, and the China-Burma-India Theater to the south and west had seen the tide turn in favor of the Allies. Still, it was apparent to all that many months, perhaps years, of difficult, costly fighting lay ahead before a final victory over Imperial Japan could be achieved. The American people, and indeed peoples around the world, mourned their lengthening casualty lists. Meanwhile, Allied armies were squeezing the Nazis in a vise of steel from both east and west. In less than three months, the war in Europe would be over. No such promise of a near-term conclusion to hostilities in the Pacific existed. The daunting prospect of an invasion of the Japanese home islands loomed somewhere in the future.

The capture of Iwo Jima, a pork chop-shaped spit of land only 750 miles south of Tokyo, was deemed critical to the U.S. strategic bombing campaign against Japan. Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers, laden with incendiary bombs and flying from bases in the Marianas, rained destruction on Japanese cities. An airstrip on Iwo Jima would serve as a haven for crippled bombers returning from raids on Japan, and the lives of thousands of airmen would be saved. Further, the island could serve as a forward staging area for the invasion of Japan.

Mount Suribachi, 546 feet high, dominated the island and presented a formidable defensive position. Four days after the Marines landed on Iwo Jima, a patrol reached the summit of Suribachi and raised a small U.S. flag there. Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal was not so sure that a trek up Suribachi would be a worthwhile exercise since a flag had already been raised. Besides, Japanese snipers still lurked in caves and spider holes. A decade after the landings, though, he wrote that he decided to go up and see what he could.

Rosenthal, who passed away last August at the age of 94, had made a momentous decision. When he reached the summit, the raising of a second, larger flag was in progress, and Rosenthal captured on film a moment that defined the courage and fortitude of the U.S. Marine Corps and the will of a nation to see the war through to final victory.

"Out of the corner of my eye, I had seen the men start the flag up," Rosenthal remembered. "I swung my camera and shot the scene. That is how the picture was taken, and when you take a picture like that, you don't come away saying you got a great shot. You don't know."

The famed photograph of the flag raising on Mount Suribachi stirred the hearts of Americans and provided Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander of U.S. naval forces in the Pacific, with a fitting backdrop to his comment that at Iwo Jima "uncommon valor was a common virtue."

The Rosenthal photo was later immortalized in sculpture and dedicated in 1954 as the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. Not only does the memorial pay tribute to the Marines of Iwo Jima, but the names of engagements in which the Marines have participated since colonial times ring the base of the monument.

In 1999, a New York University survey listed the flag-raising photo at number 68 on the list of the 100 best examples of journalism in the 20th century. The late Joe Rosenthal, however, thought a great deal less of his own accomplishment and remembered the bravery of those who fought in the name of freedom.

"What I see behind the photo is what it took to get up those heights," he said years later, "the kind of devotion to their country that those young men had, and the sacrifices they made. I take some gratification in being a little part of what the U.S. stands for. □

Mike Haskew

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Hooray for Hollywood!

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed Flint Whitlock's article on the film stars in WWII, but I think you forgot one. Lew Ayres (*All Quiet on the Western Front* and others) served as a medic in the Philippines in 1944-1945. Check it out, as my memory is not always correct. (I am 90 and was in the Pacific in WWII.) Otherwise, OK.

Walter Huecker
Portland, Oregon

You are right. Ayres, who was a major star by the 1940s, was a conscientious objector who served in the Medical Corps in the Pacific.

Dear Editor,

Flint Whitlock's article, in your November 2006 issue, concerning the WWII service and efforts by many of our movie stars was great. Despite the much-touted personal views of the present Hollywood gang, it is good to know we still have many patriots to look up to.

I did notice some inaccuracies that may have resulted from Mr. Whitlock's research or your staff's editing. The article states that Jimmy Stewart was qualified to fly B-17s. He actually was an instructor on B-17s but transferred to a B-24 squadron to qualify for combat. All of his combat service was in the Consolidated B-24. Your photo of Henry Fonda identifies his Navy rank as "Captain" which equates to an Army colonel (O-6). Wrong. As the photo shows, he attained the rank of "Lieutenant" (O-3). His biography only gives his rank as "Lieutenant Junior Grade" (O-2) but the photo proves he was promoted. The photo of Ronald Reagan states he was in the U.S. Army Air Corps. Wrong. The Air Corps was redesignated the U.S. Army Air Force in 1941, and Reagan is pictured wearing the crossed sabers of the U.S. Army Calvary although he was transferred to the USAAF due to his hearing loss. Clark Gable is identified as a "Major" while wearing Army "Captain" insignia. Glenn Ford was identified as serving in the Navy but he actually served in the Marines. Other than that, I can only wish Mr. Whitlock had expanded his article and revealed the military service of more stars. Keep up the good work.

Roy E. Billet, Jr.
Springfield, Virginia

Dear Editor,

Once again Flint Whitlock outdoes himself by, this time, taking on the daunting task of covering Hollywood in WWII. No small task! Great article! Although there'll never be enough room to cover *all* the celebs who participated in this conflict, I thought I'd add to Flint's comments regarding actor Werner (Colonel Klink of *Hogan's Heroes*) Klemperer and his part in the conflict. Other members of the *Hogan's Heroes* cast were likewise "cast" in various roles in the big one.

John (Sergeant Shultz) Banner emmigrated to the U.S. in 1938 and wound up in the USAAC as a tech sergeant between 1943 and 1945 ... he also became a "poster boy" for the recruiting department!

Leon (General Burkhalter) Askin, after being beaten by the Gestapo, emigrated to Paris from Vienna and then to the U.S. in 1940. He was drafted into the USAAC and wound up a tech sergeant, specializing in linguistics. Robert (Le Beau) Clary, while *not* in the military during the war, wound up in a Nazi concentration camp in 1942. He was the only member of his family to survive incarceration. Bernard (Colonel Crittendon) Fox spent the war as a rating in the Royal Navy.

As one final aside, it may interest readers to

know that the series *Hogan's Heroes*, obviously fiction in its purist form, actually was "based" on a real location. One need only read of the flawed effort to rescue Lt. Col. John Waters (son-in-law of George Patton) in 1945. Waters and numerous other POWs were held in prison camp OFLAG 13B (think stalag) near the town of Hammelburg. *Hogan's Heroes* series took place in Stalag 13 near the town of Hammelburg. Nawwww, just a coincidence!

Robert Hill
via e-mail

USS *Coolidge*

Dear Editor,

I recently read an article by Charles E. Heller in the May 2006 issue of *WWII History* regarding the sinking of USS *Coolidge*. I was aboard as a member of U.S. Army Combat Company A, 172nd Infantry, 43rd Division en route to Guadalcanal to relieve the Marines. Little was said about it at the time because a mistake in signaling caused the ship to strike our own mine field at the entrance to the harbor. Fortunately, it was the two mines closest to the island, allowing Captain Nelson to beach the ship on the island of Espiritu Santo, where it lies today. The captain was flown back to Washington for a hearing in which he was acquitted of any fault. The ability to successfully evacuate all troops with the loss of two men is to the credit of those who efficiently directed the order to abandon ship. After receiving new equipment, we arrived on Guadalcanal in February 1943 and prepared for the New George Campaign with a landing on Rendova Island, June 30, 1943.

Wilbur O. Root
Mechanicville, New York

Baker Sings for Troops

Dear Editor,

I found the article by Flint Whitlock to be very interesting. His comment about Josephine Baker caught my attention. He mentions that Baker "remained in France after the Nazi takeover and worked as a spy providing intelligence information to the Allies." I am presently writing a WWII book using letters sent by my uncle, James G Delaney, as the primary source. I thought Mr. Whitlock would enjoy the following section about Josephine Baker taken from a June 1943 letter to my grandparents from their son Corporal James G. Delaney, stationed in North Africa:

Dear Mother and Dad, At our last station we were fortunate enough to have quite a bit of entertainment. We were only there a week but there was a movie about every other night and there were two stage shows. The first stage show was put on by a group of French actors and actresses—a varied program and a good one. The second was a band of boys from the 41st Engineers, and they were really good. The best we have heard since we left the States. They were accompanied by Josephine Baker, a Blues singer, who was the rage in Paris for quite some time. The program was well received. I imagine it's the last entertainment we will have for a while.

Maura Bridget Delaney
Dorchester, Massachusetts

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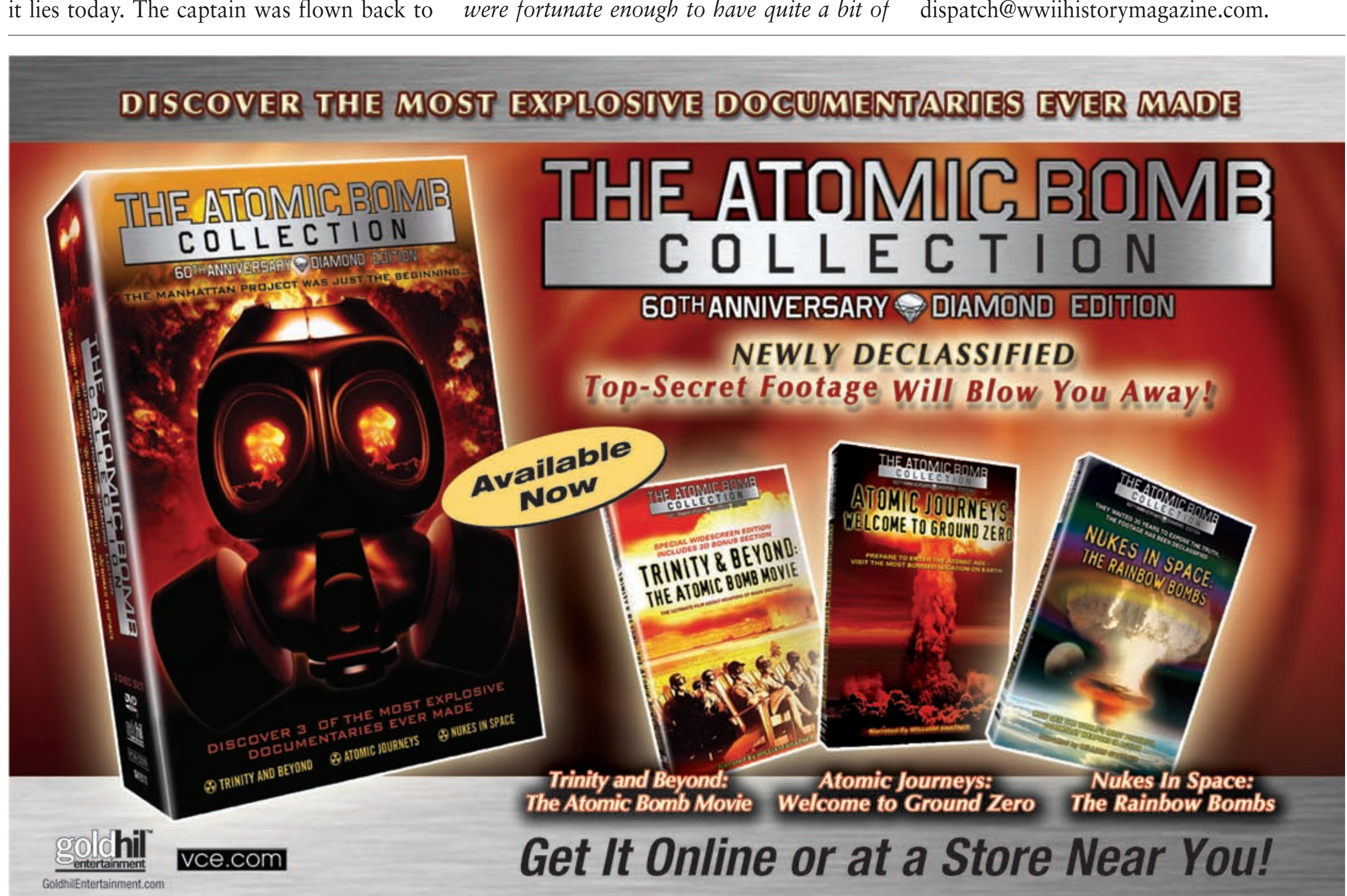

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The German Army employed a number of motorcycles during the fighting on two European fronts.

BY G. PAUL GARSON

After September 1, 1939, and Germany's invasion of Poland, a trickle of so-called "death cards" began appearing in homes across the Third Reich. Each of the 2- by-4.5-inch paper rectangles bore the image of a soldier killed in action and was posted to friends and relatives by the deceased's family. The trickle increased in 1940 as the blitzkrieg swept through France. It became a torrent after June 22, 1941, and Operation Barbarossa, Nazi Germany's doomed effort to conquer the Soviet Union. One such death card was issued in the name of Josef Hamperl, the resident of Kolenzdorf having fallen on August 23, 1944, in the south of France two days after U.S. forces had reached the Seine River north and south of Paris as the Allies pushed toward the borders of Germany. The grenadier was 19. He was also a motorcyclist, his military life spent, literally, on two wheels. His death card photo shows him wearing his riding goggles, the young soldier one of thousands who rode to war on two or three wheels.

Churning up a cloud of dust, two members of the 21st Panzer Division ride toward the front on a BMW R75 motorcycle. The red "waffenfarbe" piping on their caps indicates they are artillerymen.

Motorcycles have been going to war for as long as motorcycles have been around: American Harley-Davidson and Indian; British Triumph, BSA Matchless, and Norton; Italian Motor Guzzi and Gilera; French Terot and Gnome Rhone; Belgian FN and Gillet. More manufacturers were producing them by World War II. If you had a war to go to, motorcycles would get you there, often faster and through terrain inaccessible to other vehicles.

The German military was the largest employer of motorcycles during World War II. In addition, as German forces swept across conquered lands they acquired a wide array of British, French, and Belgian machines, painted them Wehrmacht gray, and sent them into battle. German military motorcyclists played an important role either as solo couriers or as scouts, as teams of tank hunters, or in divisions of rifle troops.

What did the German soldiers think of their warhorses? One rider of a motorcycle manufactured by NSU wrote back to the company the following words of praise, often echoed by his comrades. "On September 21, it has been five years since I bought it new at your Stuttgart branch, where I worked as a mechanic since August 1939. Since the end of August, I have been in Wehrmacht service with the motorcycle, which I myself have always driven since then. During the four years of my private driving, the machine always functioned to my complete satisfaction, as it has now, since I have been drafted. In this year I have driven it 20,000 km, at first in the Polish campaign, then during service in the operational area of the western front and on duty in France. During the campaign in France I drove about 7,000 km.... If possible, I want to buy back the machine after the end of the war we have been compelled to wage."

This letter was penned in the early part of the war when Germany seemed invincible. There is no word if the satisfied customer was ever able to claim his beloved motorcycle.

During the campaigns that spread across Europe and into the Soviet Union, motorcycle

National Archives

ABOVE: Struggling to traverse a muddy road in the Balkans, German troops push and pull a motorcycle and its sidecar through a quagmire. RIGHT: A wounded dispatch rider, who is a junior member of the 21st SS Panzer Division "Hitler Youth," sits astride his motorcycle.

troopers served a variety of functions including chauffeuring officers, delivering dispatches and even hot meals, and scouting on patrol. Motorcycles also were point vehicles taking the brunt of battle, sometimes as specially equipped tank destroyers. As with all motorcyclists, there was a kinship among these soldiers who called themselves "*kradfahrer*." They rode exposed without the armor plating of the Panzers, without the safety of hundreds of foot soldiers beside them—moving targets, as it were, or sniper magnets. And then there were minefields, artillery fire, and strafing aircraft to contend with.

The other enemy was inclement weather, particularly on the Eastern Front. By autumn, the roads had turned into nearly impassable bogs, the fields over which the motorcycles traveled turning into seas of mud three feet deep at times. Pack horses sank to their bellies, boots were sucked off the soldiers' feet. Motorized forces that had once traveled over 70 miles in a day now were lucky to make 10. By winter temperatures fell to minus 40 degrees Farenheit, engine oil and exposed soldiers freezing solid. Some 113,000 cases of frostbite were reported. Some German motorcycle riders benefited from special heating systems grafted onto their bikes, including foot and hand warmers. They, along with the foot soldiers, ate horse meat provided by over 100,000 animals that died in the freezing cold. But the two-wheeled iron horses pushed on.

In an effort to improve their motorcycles, BMW sent designers to the front lines. One such designer reported the following: "While we were following the movement of the front in daily stages, we spent the nights in tents on the steppes.... We had crossed the Don, and then gone in the direction of Stalingrad, and we sought out the field repair shops, which operated in the most primitive conditions, directly behind the front line. There the machines were examined and reports on the troops' experiences were taken. My opinion was correct. The machines went under the liquid mud, which flowed over the motors by the bucketful and was sucked into the low-lying air filter, ruining it—the mud got into the motor, and often the oilpans no longer held oil, but only sand....

"One clearly saw the enormous difference between the soldiers out there on the front and the back-line people, who were real bureaucrats, while the troops were trying to build one usable machine out of 10 ruined ones. The new oil filter on my machine, screwed onto the tank high up, performed without trouble. But the improvements—although we worked on them day and night to change the whole series at once—were no longer sufficient for Russia. Stalingrad had changed everything. All the machines that went to the east were lost, at least we never heard of them again."

At war's end, many if not most of the German motorcycles, along with their riders, did not return home. The grim words of a German motorcyclist's poem called *The Hat, The Table and the Broom,* relate the sentiments of these extraordinary soldiers.

In the East the cyclist's lot was not light
and I often believe the prophet was right,
When I saw a cyclist engulfed in the flood,
Trying to free his machine from the mud.
And when I saw the man around Riga again,
A frustrated cyclist, with puzzled brain,
Stood there with a cycle that just wouldn't start
A load on his mind and a pain in his heart
The man said: "Your faith is delusion, of course.
You can only depend on the great iron horse,
Or a horse with a saddle, if not a train's around.
In no other way can you cover this ground.

The Germans' lightning war required machines of high caliber in more ways than one. Although horses and even bicycles carried battalions of combatants, as did trucks and tracked vehicles, motorcycles led the way. These were often purpose-made BMW and Zundapp military bikes, as well as civilian models made by NSU and DKW and a host of other manufacturers, that "served" either by contract or requisition.

National Archives

For heavy-duty sidecar use, the German military relied upon the Zundapp KS750 and the BMW R75, both motorcycle manufacturers producing their own sidecars although those built by Stoye, Royal, and Steib were also employed. Next in line were the motorcycles manufactured by DKW and NSU. Non-German motorcycles, bought under license, included the Triumph, with more than 12,000 250cc units built in Nuremburg, which was also home to Steib sidecars of the era, and later the site of the war crimes trials.

By 1938, some 200,000 motorcycles were produced annually in Germany and the adja-

A motorcycle rider gingerly crosses an improvised bridge during the German conquest of Greece.

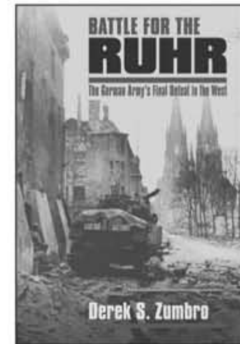
cent areas it had annexed. The principal manufacturers were BMW, DKW, NSU, Triumph (under German license), Victoria, and Zundapp. In comparison, BMW alone posted 93,836 units sold for 2004.

The BMW motorcycle, first launched in 1923, had broken the motorcycle speed record with a supercharged 750 in 1937, reaching 173.68 miles per hour. In June 1939, three months before to the start of World War II, German rider George Meier won the famous British Isle of Man TT, the first for a foreign rider on a foreign bike. In addition to the vaunted 750cc R75, BMW also supplied the military more than 36,000 side valve R12 motorcycles. The Wehrmacht used the following BMW models: R4, R12, R23, R35, and R75.

Also known as the "Type Russia," the R75 sidecar was literally unstoppable until it encountered the snowdrifts outside Stalingrad. Designed between 1939-1941, the tank-tough R75, with its crankshaft-driven sidecar, proved itself to be a major success, boasting 52 miles to the U.S. gallon, a range of 225 miles, and a carrying capacity of over 1,000 pounds, about equal to its own 929-pound weight. Specifications included a 745cc air-cooled four-stroke overhead valve twin-cylinder engine. An 8-speed transmission had two reverse gears as well. Top speed was a reported 60 miles per hour. The shaft final drive featured a split-tongue differential, two thirds going to the bike, one third to the sidecar. But R75 arrived too late in the war and in too small numbers (16,500) to affect the final outcome; its factory in Eisenach was destroyed in 1944 by Allied bombing. Today, the R75 is a most sought after

MODERN WAR STUDIES

Battle for the Ruhr
The German Army's Final Defeat in the West
Derek S. Zumbro



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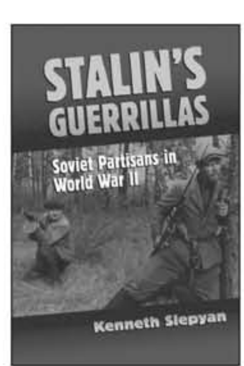

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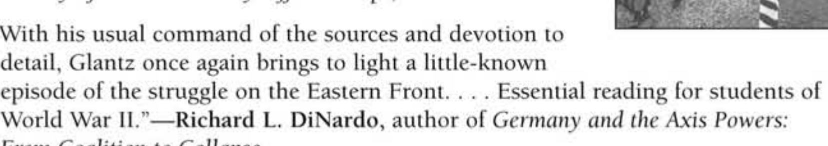

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Author's Collection

ABOVE: In 1935, BMW introduced its side-valve R16 which, along with the overhead-valve R17, was the world's first production motorcycle using a telescopic fork. **OPPOSITE:** Taking a nap along a dusty roadside, a motorcyclist tries to get some rest during the German advance across Russia.

collectible, fetching as much as $45,000.

Established in Zschopau, near the city of Chemnitz in 1919 by a Danish entrepreneur, DKW became the largest brand not only in the German Reich, but in the world. In 1932 the company merged with Auto Union, composed of DKW, Audi, Horch, and Wanderer. Postwar DKW later became MZ, then more recently Hercules while retaining the DKW name because of its reputation. German military models included the RT125 and NZ350.

The marque of this manufacturer was derived from the city in which its motorcycles were made, Neckarsulm, and thus the letters NSU. Initially, in 1873, the company produced knitting machines, then moved on to bicycles and automobiles as well as V-twin motorcycles. NSU built prototypes that eventually appeared as the Volkswagen, Hitler's "people's car." German military models included the Pony 100, 201 ZDB, 251 OSL, 351 OSL, 501 OSL, 601 OSL, 501 TS, and 601 TS.

Victoria started out as bicycle maker in 1886, introducing its first motorcycle in 1899. The Nuremberg facility later added an engine factory in Munich, the engine designed by an ex-BMW engineer. In 1926, the Victoria supercharged racer broke the speed record with 104 miles per hour. In the 1930s, the company began producing two- and four-stroke machines from 98cc to 248cc. German military units included the KR 35 WH and K 6.

Established in 1917 to make fuses for artillery guns during World War I, Zundapp began building high-quality bikes in 1919, both two- and four-strokes. By 1933 the company had produced 100,000 motorcycles. Between 1938-1941, more than 18,000 Zundapp 600cc KS W sidecar rigs were built for German military use. The best known Zundapp was the KS 750 flat twin-built exclusively for the Army. German military models included the DB 200, K 500W, KS 600 W, K 800 W, and KS 750.

The KS 750 went into production in 1940 with approximately 18,695 units built. Its

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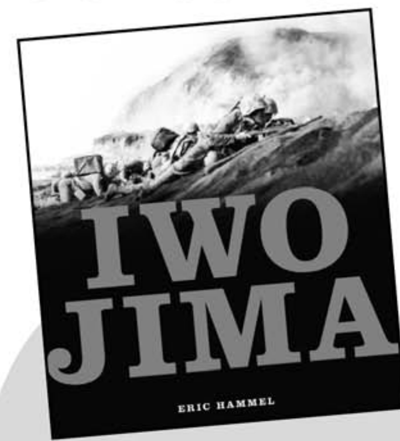

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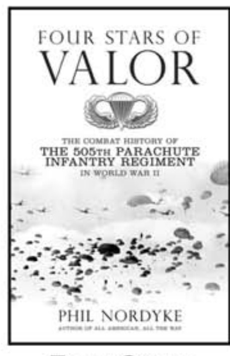

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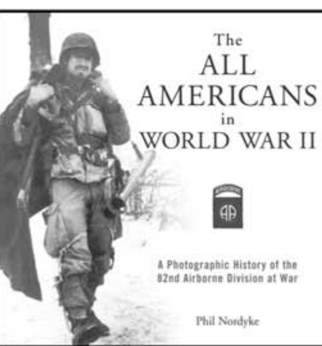

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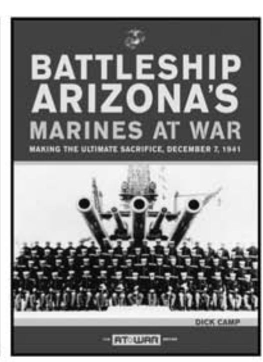

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weight was 920 pounds with a top speed of about 60 miles per hour. It was frequently equipped with an MG-34 machine gun attached to the sidecar.

Before the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Russia, a joint venture of sorts involving motorcycle sidecar production took place between the eventual adversaries. The arrangement served to outflank the Treaty of Versailles restrictions that prohibited Germany from any form of military vehicle production, including large-capacity motorcycles and sidecars. However, while BMW was already developing more advanced R75 engines, it supplied the Soviets with the older R71 design.

Josef Stalin himself established IMZ-Ural in 1941, specifically to build copies of the BMW R75 as combat vehicles for the Red Army; these were designated the Soviet Ural M72, almost identical to the German BMW R71. Ultimately some 10,000 of the M72s, fabricated in a Siberian factory east of the Urals, went to war. After the collapse of the Third Reich, the Soviets appropriated all BMW tooling and engineering designs, including the R75 motorcycle OHV engine and dual-wheel drive system technology, which was then used to create the more advanced Russian "Ural" and "Dnepr" models. The Ural region of Russia is still home to modern Urals. In the mid-1950s, civilian Urals went into production. In 1993, updated mechanically and cosmetically, they were introduced into the United States. Recent estimates assert that approximately three million Urals

National Archives

are now serving on- and off-road duties in Eastern Europe and Russia.

After the Chinese Communists acquired Russian copies of German World War II BMW's from the Soviets, they eventually came up with their own variations, which were used by the Chinese Army. In 1957, the Chinese M72 went into production under the name of Chang Jiang 750, initially incorporating a number of Russian M72 parts.

The Chang Jiang 750 has been built in the millions since then and is rather sturdy. They have been manufactured in the same factory that produced military CJ 6 airplanes, 105mm artillery, and Model 56, 60, and 62 battle tanks in the heartland of JianXi province. The Chang Jiang 750 is considered to be the earliest vintage sidecar motorcycle still in production, and while no longer in use by the regular Chinese Army, it is still employed by the local PLA and police. The motorcycle is currently available from various sources.

Even America's legendary Harley-Davidson Motor Co., at the behest of the U.S. military, produced a copy of the Wehrmacht's vaunted BMW motorcycle. Known as the XA model, it featured the BMW signature flat twin engine with shaft drive. The U.S. Army ordered 1,000 of the XA's at $870 each; however, it dropped the order in favor of the less complicated and less expensive overhead valve Harley-Davidson WLA, of which some 88,000 were ultimately built. A prototype sidecar design, also using the German "boxer" engine design and shaft-driven sidecar wheel, faded from the planning stages with the advent of the all-conquering Jeep. □

First-time contributor G. Paul Garson is a motorcycle enthusiast who resides in the Los Angeles area.

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Backward in battle: Andy Doty served as a tail gunner aboard a B-29 Superfortress heavy bomber in World War II.

BY ROBERT F. DORR

UP FRONT, GUNS CHATTERED. OUT BACK, IN HIS PRESSURIZED COMPARTMENT ABOARD A Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber high over Japan, Andy Doty heard a warning shouted over the intercom. Doty did not know which crewmember had spoken and did not at first see the Japanese fighter that was attacking his bomber from the front. He could not because, in his tail gunner's position, Doty was facing to the rear.

"He's coming through our formation!" a crewmember cried out. Only after the Zero crossed his line of sight would Doty actually lay eyes on it.

Moments ago, Doty had been focused on keeping his tail guns angled straight up in the air, knowing that men aboard bombers behind his were nervous if weapons were pointed their way. Now, the Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighter tore through the swarm of B-29s, rushing from front to back. When it crossed his line of sight, Doty pointed his guns at it. Everyone was shooting now. Doty caught a glimpse of the Japanese pilot's face turned toward him. Doty fired; the Zero flashed past. Doty fired again. Now, the Zero was shedding pieces, passing through a rain of flying shell casings.

That was how the war began for the tail gunner of a B-29 high over Japan. It was his first mission.

Men like Andy Doty—American aerial gunners—wonder today if their war has been overlooked. The United States manufactured 35,000 four-engine heavy bombers during World War II and lost 10,000 of them in combat, each typically with a 10-man crew of whom about seven were gunners. There were another 10,000 medium bombers. The Army Air Forces, or AAF, lost 55,000 men killed in combat during the war, or about 40 percent more than the entire Marine Corps—and most were gunners.

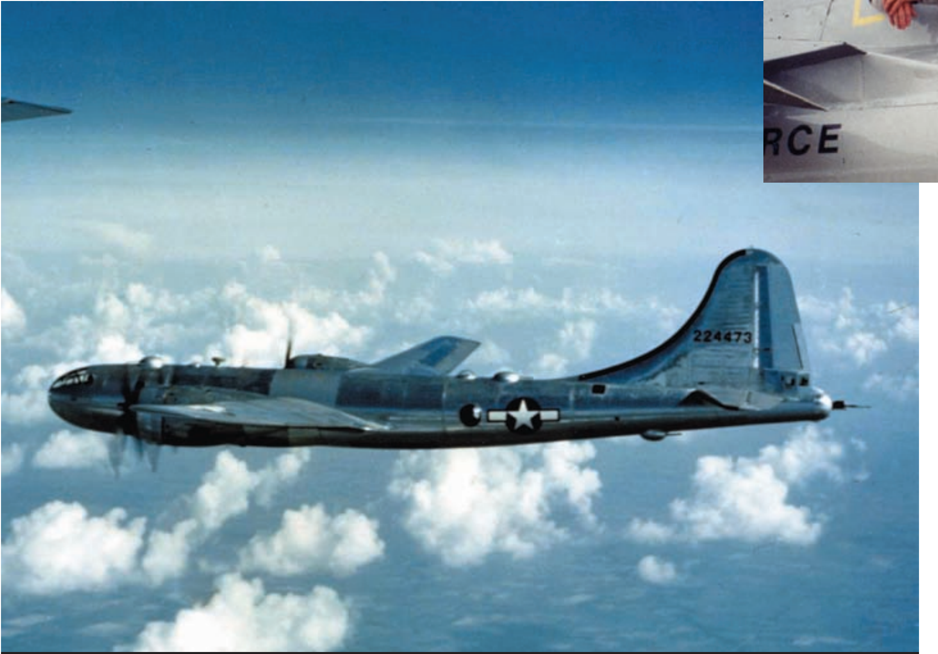
To meet its constant demand for gunners, the AAF ramped up production of gunnery school graduates to a rate of 3,200 per week, or 166,400 per year. By September 1944, AAF Training Command had turned out 227,827 new gunners.

For many of these men, the ultimate weapon was the Browning M2, or "Ma Deuce" heavy .50-caliber (12.7mm), belt-fed, recoil-operated, air-cooled machine gun that could tear through the skin of an enemy aircraft and chop it apart. "That gun was every bit as sturdy as it looked," said Doty. "It didn't jam, and it didn't break. You could mow down anything with it."

Photo courtesy of Andy Doty

Some aerial gunners operated smaller .30-caliber guns, although not on the B-29. Some tail gunners on the B-29 had a 20mm cannon in addition to the "Ma Deuce." But the M2, five feet, five inches in length, with a rate of fire of 550 rounds per minute, was the gold standard for gunners. It was first fielded in 1919 and also used by ground forces. Neither Doty nor his buddies could guess that the M2 would still be in use with U.S. forces in the 21st century—the longest serving military gun in history.

"Beside the tent peg, or possibly the mess kit, I can think of no other piece of equipment that has served (and continues to serve) virtually unchanged after nearly 100 years of service," said one aerial gunner.



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High above the clouds, a four-engine Boeing B-29 Superfortress heavy bomber wings its way toward a target in Japan. INSET: During a 1997 tour of "Fifi," the only surviving B-29 in flying condition, tail gunner Andy Doty returns to a familiar position.

Author's Collection

ABOVE: Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers, most of them from the 29th Bombardment Group, line North Field on the island of Guam in the Marianas. BELOW: The tail gunner on a B-29 used a General Electric gunsight to train his remote-controlled guns on the enemy.

Author's Collection

Doty remembers an instructor cautioning him about the M2. "It can fire 12 to 14 rounds a second, maximum," the sergeant said. "But that will burn out the gun barrel fast if you keep it up for long. So don't ever do it. Instead, we rapid-fire 40 rounds per minute, in bursts of six to nine rounds, at five- to ten-second intervals to save the barrel."

Doty's aircraft, although initially plagued with technical troubles, became a triumph of the American industrial heartland. A four-engine, mid-wing bomber classified as "very heavy," with a crew of 11, the B-29 Superfortress was powered by proven 2,200-hp Wright R-3350 Duplex Cyclone 18, twin-row turbocharged radial piston engines. The wing of the B-29 spanned 141 feet, 3 inches (43.05 meters). It was an innovative design, a long and narrow, high-aspect ratio wing equipped with large Fowler-type flaps. The unusual shape and configuration of the wing enabled the B-29 to fly very fast at high altitudes while handling well during the slower speeds required for landing and takeoff. Boeing liked to advertise that at almost 27 feet, 7 inches (9.02 meters), the slab-like vertical tail of the Superfortress was as tall as a three-story house. Most importantly, the B-29 was pressurized.

Doty acknowledges that his B-29 tail gun perch was cool and comfortable in contrast to aerial gunners in Europe aboard B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators. They "wore oxygen masks in the bitter cold for hours on end, fighting off dozens of aggressive attacks, being killed or wounded with bombers exploding and falling in flames around them."

Doty also acknowledges that, as a B-29 gunner late in the conflict, he had things easier than some aerial gunners. Although his group and squadron suffered losses—five B-29s on his first mission—he never witnessed a B-29 falling from the sky. Although he fired at Japanese fighters, he also flew missions without seeing any.

Born in 1925, Doty typified many Americans by fighting in World War II as a "citizen soldier." He grew up in Hudson Falls, N.Y. He received an induction notice from his draft board in January 1944. He took gunnery training at an airfield in Harlingen, Texas, where he first fired the formidable M2. Further training and an introduction to the B-29 followed in Fairmont, Nebraska.

Doty's first look at the tail gunner's compartment was unforgettable. In the rear fuselage of a B-29, he recalled, "I walked ahead for 15 feet, hunched down to move farther as the fuselage narrowed, then dropped to my knees to crawl the remaining distance on the wooden walkway. On either side were long, narrow metal boxes that held coiled belts of ammunition. The belts rolled along tracks that ran beneath the pressurized tail compartment and into the gun turret.

"Just ahead was a circular steel door. It opened toward me. I crawled in, closed the door, and stood up in a cubicle just big enough for me to turn around in comfortably. The walls here were also padded.

"I shook my head with approval. Compared to the cramped, drafty B-24 ball turret used in training, the tail position on the B-29 was downright spacious."

Doty learned the tail gunner's job, joined a B-29 crew, and flew to Guam to join the 19th Bombardment Group. On March 30, 1945, his crew flew its first mission, a tough one against Japan's Mitsubishi aircraft works in Nagoya. That was the mission on which Doty fired upon a Zero fighter that passed through his formation.

Two weeks earlier, on the night of March 9, 1945, U.S. strategy took a dramatic turn when bomber commander Maj. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay struck Tokyo at low level, at night, with 346 Superfortresses carrying incendiary bombs. For two hours, B-29s filled the night sky over the Japanese capital. The raid leveled 16 square miles of the city, and 84,000 people died. Hold-

With the clear blue sky as a backdrop, a B-29 heads for home. These heavy bombers rained destruction on Japanese cities during the latter stages of the war.

ing a secret inside his head about yet another weapon soon to come, LeMay could not fly the mission, so Maj. Gen. Thomas Power led it. Historical records indicate that when he shifted to low level, LeMay removed all armament except the tail guns from B-29s. However, Doty's group on Guam never dispensed with any of its guns.

Nor was every moment of each mission characterized by grimness. "Some of my most pleasant experiences of the war have to do with the hours spent with the other gunners in the waist, returning home after a mission," Doty said. "Once bombs were dropped, the airplane was lighter and happier, engines purring. The afternoon sun streamed into the ship as we listened to music, ate a packed lunch (with the inevitable canned fruit cocktail), and unwound. I can still hear Charley Barnett's 'Pompton Turnpike' in my headset as we cruised home."

Doty flew a firebomb mission to Tokyo near the end of April. By then, the B-29 was laying waste to Japan's military installations, industry, and cities.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt died in April 1945, news Doty learned via radio while on a mission, his successor, President Harry S. Truman, learned that American scientists in New Mexico were developing a new weapon. In May 1945, when a remarkable 54 Superfortress missions were mounted, Allied commander General Douglas MacArthur finalized plans to invade Japan. The first phase, Operation Olympic, called for amphibious landings on Kyushu in November 1945. The second, Operation Coronet, was projected for March 1946, with an amphibious assault on the beaches of Kanto Plain near Tokyo. Five million men (25 times the number at Normandy) would assault the Japanese homeland. Meanwhile, the B-29-equipped 509th Composite Group under Colonel Paul W. Tibbets was in training to use the secret weapon that LeMay had already been briefed on.

Doty almost never saw it happen. Coming off the Japanese coast following a June 7, 1945,

Author's Collection

ABOVE: First Lieutenant George Wale stands on a B-29's horizontal stabilizer near the tail gunner's position. The centerline-mounted 20mm cannon and dual .50-caliber machine guns made the B-29 a formidable opponent for enemy fighters attacking from the rear. RIGHT: Recently graduated from gunnery school at Harlingen, Texas, in 1944, Andy Doty wears gunners wings on his uniform.

strike on Osaka, Doty looked down to his far lower right and spotted a twin-engine fighter popping up above cloud cover, then dropping into the clouds again, stalking Doty's B-29. Doty recognized it as a Nakajima J1N1 Gekko "Moonlight," known to the Allies as an Irving. The intercom aboard the B-29 was meant to be used sparingly, but Doty knew it was time to speak up.

"Tail to crew," said Doty. "A fighter just came out of the clouds at seven o'clock and dropped back in. Get ready."

Doty entered the Irving's known wingspan of 56 feet (17 meters) into his gunsight. The all-black Irving abruptly popped up a few thousand feet to the rear, climbing rapidly.

"Five o'clock, low!" Doty said, He began squeezing off bursts just as the Irving opened fire. While glowing tracer rounds whipped past, Doty kept adjusting his aim and firing new bursts. He saw the sparkle of his bullets striking the Irving's left engine. Still, the all-black fighter was shooting at him—until the Japanese pilot veered sharply and fell back toward the cloudbank, spewing black smoke. Doty was not credited with an aerial victory and does not know whether the Japanese pilot survived.

He also doesn't know whether the Irving shot down his B-29. Did his hits cause fuel to leak? That is not clear, but as the B-29 drew farther from Japan and closer to Guam, it became clear the bomber did not have enough fuel to get home. By then, the bomber had also passed the point where it could divert to Saipan.

"The bail-out bell began ringing," Doty recalled. "I unplugged my headset, unsnapped my throat microphone, and opened the escape window. The air whipped by in a fearsome roar. As I moved to dive out, I could not. I was caught by the life raft strap, which had become snagged in the folded seat. I felt a wave of panic and began tugging desperately at the strap. It would not come loose. The bell kept ringing. I thought of cutting the strap with my knife but told myself to calm down to work the strap free. I unfolded the seat, slid it back down, and released the strap. I pushed the seat up and went out the window…"

Doty and several others from his crew survived parachuting into the sea and spending a night in life rafts before being rescued. Three members of the B-29 crew lost their lives. It remains unclear whether the fuel starvation that led to the loss was caused by gunfire from the Irving.

Being shot down was grounds for a brief furlough to Hawaii. After that, Doty resumed flying missions. Now, even enlisted B-29 crewmembers were hearing rumors of a new weapon being developed.

U.S. scientists detonated the first atomic device in the New Mexico desert on July 16, 1945. The 18.6-kiloton, tower-mounted device, equivalent in destructive power to 18,600 pounds or 8,436 kilograms of TNT, was a ball-shaped prototype of the "Fat Man" plutonium bomb later dropped on Nagasaki. The gun-type uranium bomb dropped on Hiroshima, the "Little Boy," was never tested.

On the night of August 5, 1945, crews began loading the "Little Boy" aboard Tibbets' B-29, the *Enola Gay.* The bomb detonated at 1,800 feet (550 meters) above Hiroshima, an altitude calculated to make the most of the blast effect. Seventy thousand people, including some American prisoners of war, died.

On August 9, Major Charles W. Sweeney took off from Tinian in *Bock's Car,* carrying the "Fat Man" plutonium bomb. *Bock's Car* skipped its primary target, the industrial city of Kokura, and bombed the port of Nagasaki, killing about 35,000. Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945.

Andy Doty and his fellow B-29 crewmembers, most of whom were aerial gunners, know they

Author's Collection

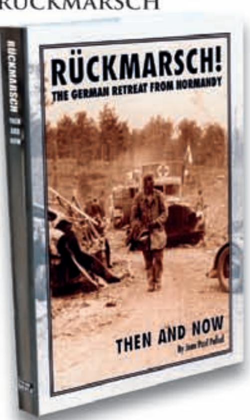
made a contribution. B-29s dropped 104,000 tons of bombs on Japan and reduced to rubble 169 square miles in 66 cities. Between June 1944 and August 1945, B-29 crews flew 380 missions, mounted 27,611 bombing sorties, were credited with shooting down 871 Japanese aircraft, and lost 402 bombers. The April 1945 firebomb raid on Tokyo inflicted the greatest damage of any raid in history; the Hiroshima and Nagasaki raids were less effective but had historic psychological impact. Never before occupied by a foe, Japan was defeated without an invasion—thanks to the B-29.

Doty flew 21 combat missions, including firebomb raids on Tokyo, Nagoya, and Sapporo. Like many "citizen soldiers," he was discharged shortly after war's end. □

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

WORLD WAR II ...*THEN AND NOW*

RÜCKMARSCH



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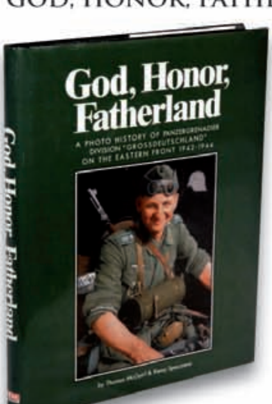

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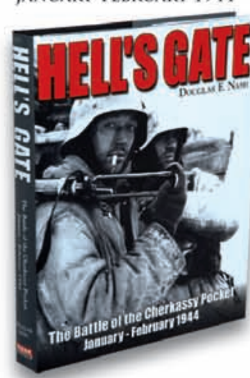

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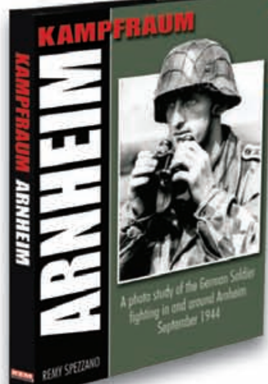

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Double agent Dusko Popov, code-named Tricycle, may have attempted to warn U.S. authorities of the impending attack on Pearl Harbor.

BY PETER KROSS

On March 18, 1941, an accident took place in the crowded streets of New York's Times Square. Normally an accident like this would not make news. After all, such things happened frequently. This incident, however, was different.

The victim, while lying on the ground, was then run over by a second vehicle, which sped away. The man died the next day in a New York hospital. In his possession was a Spanish passport in the name of Don Julio Lopez Lido. New York police officers traced the man to the Taft Hotel in New York City. Upon searching his room, they were shocked to find secret documents, including a report on the defenses of the U.S. Army base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and nearby Hickam Field. This information was then turned over to the FBI. After a thorough investigation, Don Julio Lopez Lido was identified as Ulrich von der Osten, a top member of Germany's military intelligence service, the Abwehr, who had been sent to the United States to set up a spy ring.

Unknown to the FBI was that the death of Ulrich von der Osten would lead to another spy case involving Great Britain, the United States, and Germany. It would also involve two of the most influential spymasters in the United States, William Donovan, who would later become director of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which was the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, as well as the super-secret British XX Committee (or Double Cross System). An added feature of this budding case involved Japanese interest in the defenses of Pearl Harbor, nine months before the attack on December 7, 1941.

National Archives

Smoke and flames engulf Battleship Row after the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Dusko Popov reportedly attempted to warn the American government about the Japanese plans.

The man at the center of this international spy game was Dusko Popov, a flamboyant Yugoslav, who was born in 1912. At the start of World War II, Popov began working for the Abwehr, headed by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris. Popov had been recruited into the Abwehr by a German friend, Johann Jebsen. His first assignment was to go to France and report on any political leaders who might be helpful to the Nazis.

Popov gave the required information to the Abwehr. As time went on, Popov became deeply disturbed by the way Hitler was carving up Europe, as well as the way he was dealing with dissent inside Germany. Making a decision that would alter the rest of his life, Popov decided to offer his services to the British and become a double agent, if they would have him.

After a detailed debriefing session by MI-5 it was ascertained that Popov was truly what he said he was, and the British Secret Service made plans for their new recruit. He was given the code name Tricycle, due to the fact that Popov was often engaged in sexual activity with two women at a time.

Popov was ensconced in a room at the Savoy Hotel in London where his initial training was conducted. One of his early British handlers was a certain Major T.A. Robertson, who was a frequent social companion of Popov. They often went dining at posh London restaurants, played billiards, and met various women during their nightly sojourns. After one nocturnal trip during the Christmas season in 1940, Major Robertson wrote of their escapades, "I think he [Tricycle] enjoyed himself thoroughly once he took part in the Christmas champagne. We were picked up by a couple by the name of Keswick who took us to the Suivi nightclub where we danced. Early in the morning we returned to the Savoy, both viewing things through rose-tinted spectacles."

The British initiated an elaborate plan to pass Popov off as a genuine Nazi agent, while all the time he was under the constant direction of the British Secret Service. Popov was run by the so-called Double Cross System, a department of

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British intelligence, which was responsible for the running (and turning) of all captured German spies who were caught trying to burrow their way into British society.

The unsuspecting Germans gave Popov a file stamped "most secret" in which they wanted him to provide them with the state of the British arms industry, including which types of military equipment were being manufactured at facilities in the towns of Weybridge, Wolverhampton, and Dartford. The Germans also wanted to know how many squadrons of Supermarine Spitfires and Hawker Hurricanes were operational in the Royal Air Force. Bogus information concerning these queries was secretly sent back to Berlin.

With the untimely death of Ulrich van der Osten in New York in March 1941, the Abwehr decided that Popov should be sent to the United States to fill the important vacancy. That decision by the leadership of the Abwehr was a boon for Popov and an intelligence disaster for the Germans.

Popov left for the United States in early August 1941. He carried with him $58,000 provided by the Abwehr to set up his New York espionage network. First, he had to make a small side trip to the posh casinos in Estoril. As the dashing Popov gambled at the roulette tables and made a killing using his Nazi-provided funds, a man stood only a few feet from him, watching his every move. That man proved to be Commander Ian Fleming of the British Naval Intelligence Service, who had been dispatched by MI-6 to watch Popov's every move. When Fleming created his famous fictional spy, James Bond, Agent 007, it is widely believed that he used Popov as his basis for the character. He also included a scene very much like that of Popov at the Estoril casino in his book *Casino Royale*.

Popov arrived in the United States on August 12, 1941, disembarking at LaGuardia Airport from the Pan Am Clipper. After checking through immigration, he took a cab to the posh Waldorf Astoria Hotel, overlooking Park Avenue in New York City.

Just before he left for the United States, the dashing 29-year-old Popov had been given a vital, new piece of spy paraphernalia by the Abwehr. It was a list of questions written on a microdot that would allow pages of information to be reduced to the size of a pinhead. The microdot was affixed to a telegram, which Popov kept on his person.

Once in New York, Popov contacted the FBI and asked that someone come to meet with him. To his disappointment, he had to wait five long days until the Bureau responded. He was

finally met by Agent James Foxworth, who was the FBI's bureau chief in New York. Popov handed over the microdot. As Agent Foxworth began to read its contents, he knew he had something important. The paper contained a list of questions that the Germans wanted answered for their allies, the Japanese. Among the queries were information on American defenses at the giant naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, including the exact locations of the airbases at Hickam, Wheeler, and Kaneohe airfields, sketches of Pearl Harbor, the depths of the water inside the harbor, and the number and locations of any antitorpedo nets.

If FBI personnel had been paying any attention, they would have noticed that the material carried by Popov was the same as that found in the room of German agent Ulrich van der Osten only five months before.

Foxworth gave Popov's questionnaire to Hoover, who did not trust Popov, believing that he was still working for the Germans. Another strike against Popov was his playboy lifestyle. He was a flagrant womanizer who had engaged in numerous affairs, including one with French actress Simone Simon and her mother. He had also spent the Abwehr's money lavishly.

Popov's every move was watched closely by the FBI, and what the Bureau's agents noticed was that after three months of living the high life in New York, Popov had not contacted any German agents in the city. The Abwehr, too, was beginning to have second thoughts about its prize agent, becoming suspicious that he might have been "turned."

Retna

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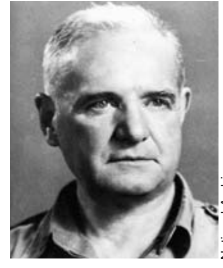

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TOP: Former Allied agent Dusko Popov poses with his wife years after the end of the war. Popov was known for his penchant for living the high life. BOTTOM LEFT: J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, was said to have doubted the credibility of information provided by Popov. BOTTOM RIGHT: General William "Wild Bill" Donvan headed the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA.

Popov transferred the Pearl Harbor intelligence to the FBI under orders from the British MI-6. His case was personally supervised by Stewart Menzies, head of MI-6, who contacted Hoover and "loaned" Popov to the Americans.

Popov now would become a pawn in the looming intelligence battle between FBI Director Hoover and his nemesis, William Donovan who had recently been appointed head of the COI (Coordinator of Information), America's newest intelligence organization with responsibility for all overseas espionage work.

Donovan was a World War I hero, a Republican lawyer in New York, and a classmate of FDR's at Columbia University's school of law. He traveled extensively to Europe and the Middle East on behalf of the U.S. government during the interwar years and collected much valuable intelligence on the people he met and the places he visited. He was also Roosevelt's personal emissary to Great Britain immediately following that nation's declaration of war against

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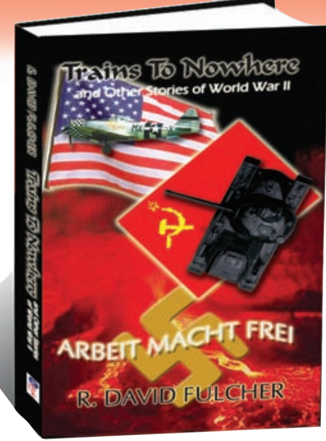

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For decades historians have wrestled with the idea that the Allies might have mounted a successful invasion of Western Europe in 1943.

BY LT. COL. JOHN FENZEL III

On June 6, 1944, the Allies unleashed on land, air, and sea the largest invasion force in world history in an enormous effort to liberate Europe from Nazi tyranny. Code-named Operation Overlord, the invasion consisted of five divisions, more than 7,000 ships and landing craft, and 195,000 naval personnel from eight countries. The massive invasion of the European continent included 133,000 troops from the United States, Great Britain, and Canada.

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A month after D-Day, over 850,000 men, 148,000 vehicles, and 570,000 tons of equipment and supplies had been landed on the Normandy coastline. Less than a year later, on May 7, 1945, German General Alfred Jodl signed the unconditional Nazi surrender at Reims, France.

An invasion of Nazi-held Western Europe had been considered as early as 1943, but the decision to delay the cross-Channel operation and conduct the peripheral strategy advocated by the British was perhaps the defining strategic decision of World War II. More than six decades have passed, and speculation still remains whether the Normandy invasion could have been conducted a year earlier, thereby securing a German surrender sooner.

In hindsight, historical and strategic considerations seem to fully justify postponing the Normandy invasion from 1943 to 1944. Only in 1944 had three fundamental objectives for a cross-Channel invasion been achieved. The Allies had agreed on a coherent, viable strategy. They had achieved peak strength in terms of combat experience, naval and air supremacy, military intelligence, and logistical readiness. It had also been decided that the German war machine had been sufficiently weakened.

Although the potential rewards of a 1943 cross-Channel invasion in 1943 were significant, it is conceivable that such an operation would have proven premature, exposing Allied forces to unacceptable levels of risk with an array of potential outcomes that could prove catastrophic.

U.S. Army Art

ABOVE: On the beach at Slapton Sands, American troops train for Operation Overlord. During one exercise at Slapton, Operation Tiger, attacks by German E-boats caused more than 700 casualties. TOP: Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, commander of the German Atlantic Wall defenses, inspects the work of laborers during a tour to assess preparedness to repel an Allied invasion.

The 1943 cross-Channel invasion of the European continent proposed by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme Allied commander, and General George C. Marshall, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, attracted support with the plan's straightforward logic. Eisenhower and Marshall developed a plan that would require a concerted effort to determine the nature of the war prior to mobilizing forces.

Two main assumptions dominated their approach. First, it had previously been decided that the European Theater would take priority over the Pacific. Second, the initial engagement of the campaign to liberate Europe required a decisive blow against the Germans. The timing and location of the invasion, therefore, became the predominant considerations of American strategy.

In 1941, justifying a 1943 invasion of Europe hardly seemed necessary. The American planners argued that Europe's increasingly desperate situation mandated an early cross-Channel invasion. Indeed, the Soviet Red Army was in danger of collapse under the weight of the Nazi juggernaut on the Eastern Front. American planners were convinced that opening a second European front offered the best chance to defeat Germany and avoid a protracted war in Europe.

The appeal of such a 1943 invasion strategy was enhanced by its basis in a distinctly American way of waging war: seizing the offensive, concentrating forces at the decisive place and time, and attacking from a secure base along the shortest lines of communication. The wisdom of such a strategy, embodied in an operation codenamed Roundup, could hardly be disputed.

The only alternative offered was a British strategy of peripheral, nondecisive operations and slow attrition. Winston Churchill advocated the conduct of such peripheral operations in Africa and the Mediterranean.

Both plans were framed in a long debate that rendered them distinct and mutually exclusive. Proponents of a 1943 invasion feared that a peripheral strategy in a nonessential theater would sway the Allies from the war's main strategic objective, victory in Europe. The resulting diversion of crucial resources from a concentrated effort in Europe, they argued, would at the very least prolong the war or cause it to end in a stalemate. Critics of the peripheral strategy were quick to label it as speculative "wait-and-seeism" and as merely "doing something for the sake of doing something."

Perhaps more scathing and divisive were the allegations of British political opportunism, asserting that the underlying motives for such a strategy were to relieve endangered British colonial enterprises along Europe's Nazi-occupied periphery. Most compelling, however, was the argument that American public opinion could not be buoyed with a strategy that would ultimately prolong the war in Europe. An incidental perception that emerged from the "Europe First" strategy was that prolonging the war in Europe was also synonymous with postponing the war in the Pacific. Taking this passive course was more and more unpalatable to the U.S. Congress and to the people whose memories of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor were still fresh.

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General Dwight D. Eisenhower (left), Supreme Commander of Allied forces in Europe, confers with General George C. Marshall, Army chief of staff.

Anticipating an inevitable Allied invasion, Germany began to prepare its defense in depth. The urgency of the situation was reflected in Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's assignment as the new commander of Army Group B in France. Upon taking command in November 1943, Rommel inspected France's coastal defenses and reported, "The Army forces were barely adequate for a vigorous defense, the Luftwaffe and Navy very weak. There was no uniform defense plan ... almost every commander had his own ideas, not always very clear on how to defend his area."

In 1943, the German Army was fully engaged on the Eastern Front with the Battles of Stalingrad and Kursk. German planners would have been extremely hard-pressed during this period to quickly shift reinforcements to a western front. Facing harsh reality, Rommel directed preparations on a grand scale and at a frenetic pace. The Germans came to refer to the period between 1943 and 1944 as the "Days of Improvisation." The scale of this Axis endeavor is best illustrated by considering that in the spring of 1943 there were 29 German divisions in northern France. Only a year later, the Allies faced 56 divisions on what was described as the most heavily defended coastline in the world.

A compelling argument can be made that a 1943 invasion would have enabled Anglo-American forces to reach Berlin by 1944, liberating Eastern Europe well before the Soviet Red Army would have been able to advance as far to the west as it ultimately did. Given the weakness of Rommel's Atlantic Wall prior to 1944, it can also be argued that a 1943 cross-Channel invasion would have sustained fewer casualties in the Allied drive to Berlin.

Proponents of a 1943 invasion also assert that the creation of a western front in 1943 would have placed the Americans and British in a far stronger postwar negotiating position. By providing the Western Allies more favorable geographic zones of occupation at the end of the war, a 1943 invasion could have preempted one of the underlying causes of the Cold War.

These arguments, however, seem to ignore the Allied concerns that Stalin might accept a separate peace with Germany as Lenin had done in 1917. This possibility provided a dark backdrop for the British and American strategic debate. Since 1942, the Russians had been urging the British and Americans to open a second front to relieve their beleaguered army in the east. If the Soviet Union were to sign a separate peace settlement with Germany, any attempted cross-Channel action would be quickly rendered suicidal. Launching the invasion sooner rather than later, the American planners argued, was required to ensure Russia continued to occupy Germany's 157 divisions on the Eastern Front. Delaying a cross-Channel invasion would only serve to further alienate the Soviet Union.

The British desire to conduct a peripheral strategy against Germany was founded on a deeply rooted desire to maintain the will of the British people. This strategy was most certainly regarded as a desperate struggle for national survival. Likewise, Britain's recent memory of its overwhelming casualties during World War I was also a dominant concern. No one could deny that the risks of a 1943 invasion would have to be borne by a predominantly British invading force.

During General Marshall's final attempts to persuade Churchill to accept the Roundup plan, one of Churchill's closest advisers, recognizing the futility of the general's efforts, remarked to him, "It's no use—you are arguing against the casualties on the Somme." Indeed, throughout this period of debate, Churchill vowed to avoid a repeat of the British tragedies at Paschendaele, Dieppe, and Dunkirk. As a result, Churchill employed an array of fatalistic imagery to argue against an early cross-Channel invasion, warning Roosevelt at one point that the result of such a strategy would be

Continued on page 92

THE STRIKING COBRA

BY DAVID ALAN JOHNSON

After weeks of sluggish progress in France's hedgerow country, the U.S. Army's Normandy breakout opened up a rapid advance toward Germany.

U.S. Army Art

WE'VE BEEN SLOGGING OUR WAY THROUGH HEDGEROW COUNTRY, half an acre a day, and we've got to find a way to break out."

In the 1970 film *Patton*, General Omar Bradley, played by Karl Malden, tells General George S. Patton, played by George C. Scott, that he has a plan called "Cobra." If Cobra works, Bradley goes on to say, it will allow the American troops to break through the Normandy beachhead perimeter and advance into the open plains of France. Whether or not Bradley ever really said this to Patton is not known, but he was certainly thinking it.

Following the landings at Normandy on June 6, 1944, and the consolidation of the five Allied beachheads, the capture of the port of Cherbourg became the number one priority. Cherbourg surrendered to the U.S. First Army on June 26, and the Americans turned south toward the bocage, or hedgerow, country and the town of St. Lô. Breaking out of Normandy then became the primary goal. The objective was to get beyond the hedgerows and execute "an enormous left wheel," as General Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme Allied commander in Europe, put it in his book *Crusade in Europe*, a maneuver that would bring "the whole area lying between the river [Seine] and the Loire and as far eastward as Paris in our firm possession."

In this painting by *Life* Magazine artist Ogden Pleissner, American tanks advance through the devastated town of St. Lô toward the front during Operation Cobra. Despair and defeat are evident in the faces of the German prisoners marching under guard to the rear.

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ABOVE: In a photo discarded by retreating German soldiers, Wehrmacht personnel pose wearing camouflaged helmets and smocks over their uniforms. **BELOW:** Firing away at retreating Germans in St. Lô, an American tank destroyer is watched attentively by a GI who is undoubtedly glad to have such firepower nearby.

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But in fighting their way south, the Americans found themselves fighting two enemies. The first was the Wehrmacht. The second obstacle, which would prove to be as persistent and as deadly as the German Army, was the land itself. The bocage consisted of a series of hedges and ditches that crisscrossed fields for miles on end, favoring the defending German troops and making any advance by Allied troops very slow and extremely costly. General Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's chief of staff, described the bocage as a hellish place "where every small field was a fortress, every hedgerow a German strongpoint." In 17 days, American forces lost about 40,000 men in the hedgerows. Eisenhower and his generals were becoming desperate to find a way out of them.

German troops used the hedges for natural camouflage. The bocage gave machine gunners and infantry perfect positions for firing on unsuspecting troops. The 90th Infantry Division suffered replacements of 150 percent of its officers and more than 100 percent of its enlisted men in six weeks. Tanks did not fare any better. In his book *Overlord*, Max Hastings states that the 746th Tank Battalion lost 44 of 51 Shermans in 23 days.

By July 20, the U.S. VII Corps had fought its way to St. Lô. By that time, there was nothing left of the town except bomb craters and the rubble of destroyed buildings. But in taking St. Lô, American forces had cracked General Eugen Meindl's elite II Parachute Corps, a psychological as well as military victory. The GIs had proved to themselves that they could hold their own against even the best troops the enemy could send against them.

Because radio signals from panzer units in Normandy had been picked up by Ultra intelligence cryptanalysts in England, General Eisenhower knew that Hitler was planning a counterattack against the British and Canadian positions at Caen. With this in mind, Eisenhower asked his ground forces commander, British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, to draw up plans for an attack against the Germans from Caen, which was on the eastern end of the Normandy front. In other words, Eisenhower wanted Montgomery to launch an attack before the Germans could begin their counteroffensive.

Montgomery's plan called for a joint attack by British and American units from each end of the Normandy beachhead. The British offensive against German units outside Caen was given the code name Goodwood. After this phase was under way, the Americans would launch Cobra, an attack on panzer and infantry units at St. Lô. If the two-pronged offensive succeeded, it would trap the German Seventh Army between the British and American pincers.

At 5:30 AM on July 18, more than a thousand Royal Air Force bombers released their loads over the German positions at Caen. When the RAF had finished, 571 heavy bombers of the U.S. Eighth Air Force dropped still more bombs on Caen. This was followed by an artillery barrage and air strikes by about 800 fighter bombers. When the bombardment ended, about a quarter-million men and 1,500 tanks began moving out of their positions and advanced toward the German lines. The tanks were slowed by the thousands of bomb craters, which allowed the SS panzer units time to recover. British armored units advanced about three miles before encountering withering German antitank fire.

"Withering" is an appropriate word to describe what happened to the British offensive. Some units lost 50 percent of their tanks, and the offensive began to lose momentum. By July 21, British and Canadian troops had taken most of Caen but had lost up to 400 tanks and suffered more than 5,000 casualties. Most important, the breakout from the Normandy beachhead had been stopped by the SS divisions. The Germans were still in position on the other side of the River Orne.

Because Goodwood had failed to achieve its objective, Montgomery came under harsh criticism from both British and American commanders. Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder was one of Montgomery's most vocal critics, along with General Frederick Morgan, one of Operation Overlord's original planners. But Eisenhower told Monty to stand by to begin another offensive from Caen.

The Germans had lost as many men and tanks as the Allies and could not replace them. German commanders realized that another breakout attempt would be coming but did not know when or where to expect it. Field Marshal Guenther von Kluge, who had replaced Gerd von Rundstedt as commander of all German forces in the west when the latter suggested that the Germans should negotiate an armistice or face disaster, had a much higher opinion of British and Canadian troops than of American units and thought that the next attack would probably come from the Caen sector as well.

The American offensive at St. Lô, Operation Cobra, was to have begun on July 20, but had to be postponed twice because of heavy rain, clouds, and poor visibility. The attack finally opened on July 25 with a devastating artillery barrage and air bombardment. The opening aerial assault included saturation bombing by hundreds of Allied aircraft. The German units in the areas of the heaviest bombing were stunned, either devastated by the intensity of the aerial assault or rendered inoperable by the tremendous concussions of the bombs. One unfortunate casualty of the bombing was Lt. Gen. Leslie McNair, commander of U.S. Army ground forces, who was killed when his position was bombed accidentally.

Armored and motorized units of the U.S. First Army moved out of their positions after the barrage and air attack lifted, only to discover that some tanks of the Panzer Lehr Division were shooting back at them. "It was hard to believe that any living thing could be left alive out in front of our positions," said Lt. Col. George Tuttle of the 30th Division. "On moving on to enemy-held territory, our men ran into some determined resistance." All along the front, the Americans frequently found themselves held up by tanks, supporting infantry, and the almost inevitable 88mm field guns.

Colonel Hammond Birks of the 120th Infantry reported, "The going was very slow ... the boche had tanks dug in, hull down, and were shooting perhaps more artillery than they had ever previously used along the American sector." Not only had there not been a breakout, but some senior American officers began to worry that Cobra might become another Operation Goodwood—a costly stalemate at best. But General Bradley was not terribly worried. He told Eisenhower that it was always slow going in the early phases of such an attack, but that progress would become more encouraging in the coming days. Eisenhower was satisfied with Bradley's explanation, which turned out to be more than correct.

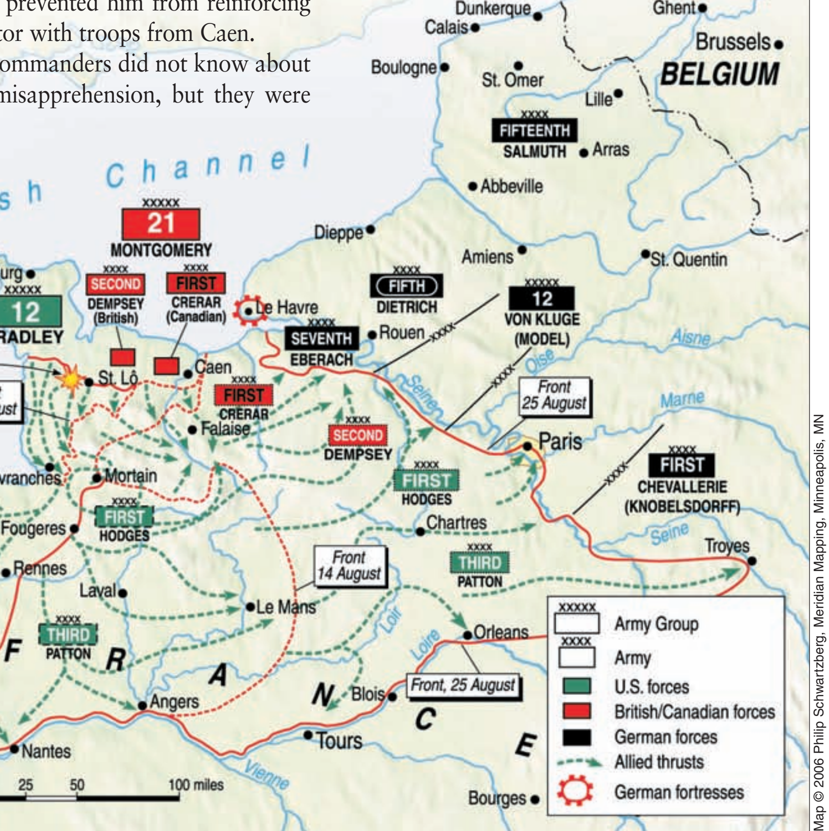
The American attack had one great unforeseen advantage. Field Marshal von Kluge still believed that the main attack would be coming in the Caen sector. This line of thought was reinforced by a Canadian attack near Caen on July 25. Although it was stopped by the 9th SS Panzer Division, the attack gave von Kluge the illusion that he was facing a two-pronged offensive. British and Canadian forces faced a total of 14 divisions, six of which were armored. The American attack had to contend with 11 divisions, and only two of these were armored. Many of the German divisions, including Panzer Lehr, had been weakened by fighting and by the Allied bombing. Von Kluge's notion that the Canadian attack was a major assault prevented him from reinforcing the St. Lô sector with troops from Caen.

American commanders did not know about von Kluge's misapprehension, but they were aware that German resistance did not form one continuous line. The panzer and infantry units were giving the Americans a fight that they had not expected, but these "hot spots," as one officer called them, seemed to be isolated. Individual pockets of resistance could be outflanked and bypassed, no matter how hard the Germans fought.

Major General J. Lawton Collins, commander of VII Corps, sized up the situation and ordered his mobile columns to go around the enemy positions. On the morning of July 26, American units started breaking away from engagements with German tanks and moving into open country. Operation Cobra took on an entirely different complexion.

The breakout finally began to gather momentum. Any German positions that could not be overwhelmed were simply bypassed. This change in strategy had an immediate effect. The 17th SS Panzergrenadiers had been ordered to hold their position for 24 hours. "But we found out that American units in company strength [about 100 men] had bypassed us," said a sergeant with the German unit. "There was no choice but to order us to withdraw."

This summed up the situation all along the front, which had suddenly become highly mobile. At 3 AM on July 27, the first Cobra



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objective was reached. By noon, the 9th Infantry Division had broken free of German resistance and was moving south at a steady pace. The offensive was now beginning to encounter a new problem: American supply columns were having trouble keeping up with the advancing troops. As they tried to make their way south, the supply vehicles were running into the retreating Germans.

By the evening of the 28th, "Packs of American tanks and motorized columns swarmed toward the south on all roads between the Vire and the Atlantic coast," said German writer Paul Carell. "There was no cohesive German line left ahead of them." German morale was crumbling as quickly as their lines of defense.

"We were marching, marching back all the time," a German soldier recalled. "The roads were crowded with American vehicles, and all that we could do was to take to the fields on foot." He compared this to the retreat in Russia and considered this even worse. In Russia, at least they retreated with their units still intact. In Normandy, there were no intact units, only individuals and small groups trying to escape the rampaging Americans.

If the Germans were dejected and low-spirited, the Americans were exhilarated. Infantrymen rode on tank hulls or sat up in their trucks, waving merrily to French civilians as they raced southward. German tanks were confronted once in a while, but these encounters were usually short and one-sided. "The highlight of the day," reported the diary of First Army on the 29th, "occurred when a considerable force of enemy tanks, vehicles and guns were bottled up on the Roncey-St. Denis-le Vêtu highway by elements of the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions, and was pounded to bits by armor, artillery and aircraft."

At this stage, the American columns were strung out for many miles and heading south for all they were worth. On July 30, the 2nd Armored Division was attacked by German reinforcements. Outside the town of Percy, about 15 miles southwest of St. Lô, German mortar shells began exploding all around an American column, killing and wounding infantrymen and knocking out two Shermans. Two 75mm rounds were fired into the local church steeple, which was being used as an observation post. This put a stop to the mortar fire, but it took a full two days of fighting before the Germans withdrew.

Once again, the Americans were elated while the Germans resigned themselves to the fact that their attack had failed. "Without proper artillery and armored support, the panzergrenadiers would not hold," was the complaint of Heinz-Gunther Guderian of the 116th Panzer Division. "These were not the men of 1941-42." With this German counterattack out of the way, American units kept pressing relentlessly southward. "All the American virtues of speed and energy had at last come to play on the battlefield," wrote Hastings.

On August 1, one of the most colorful and controversial American commanders of the war entered the fighting. General George S. Patton had been the leader of the fictitious First U.S. Army Group (FUSAG), a "shadow" army in southeast England intended to decoy the Germans into believing that a major landing would come in the Pas de Calais area. He hated the job of commanding a make-believe army and lobbied for a combat command. In

FIELD MARSHAL GUENTHER VON KLUGE REPORTEDLY WAS ACTIVE IN THE ANTI-NAZI MOVEMENT.

FIELD MARSHAL Guenther von Kluge was relieved from command of Army Group B during the Falaise disaster. He was replaced by Field Marshal Walther Model, who was called "the Führer's fireman" because of his unusual talent in Russia for taking crisis situations and turning them around. But by the time he relieved von Kluge, the situation in Normandy had gone beyond the crisis stage and into full-blown catastrophe.

But von Kluge's inability to prevent the destruction of Seventh Army was only part of the reason behind his dismissal. It might only have been an excuse. Hitler had heard rumors that von Kluge was planning to surrender Seventh Army to the enemy. At the time, Hitler thought that von Kluge would surrender to the British, but an article in *Time* magazine indicated that he intended to hand himself and his command over to General George S. Patton, Jr., and the U.S. Third Army.

Hitler had begun to distrust von Kluge shortly after he replaced Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt as commander in chief of German forces in the West. When von Kluge did not show up at a meeting with one of his panzer leaders, Hitler ordered all division commanders to keep an eye on him and to report his whereabouts. Rumors began to circulate that he had gone off to a secret surrender meeting with the enemy.

Hitler's suspicions were based upon fact—von Kluge had indeed planned to meet with American officers. In August 1944, an attempt

July, although he had some misgivings, Eisenhower gave Patton the Third U.S. Army. Patton had a history of being difficult. He was nearly sent back to the United States in disgrace after slapping a private in Sicily in 1943. In spite of Patton's past, Eisenhower decided to take a chance with him.

Command of a combat unit like the Third Army was exactly what Patton wanted. "Patton was never happier," said biographer Carlo D'Este. "It was as if he had been freed from jail."

The U.S. Fourth Armored Division had captured the strategic town of Avranches on July 31, the day before Patton took command of

ullstein-bild

ABOVE: German soldiers hurry to take cover during the stubborn defense of Caen. LEFT: The crew of an American 81mm mortar springs into action during the fighting in Normandy. OPPOSITE: On August 20, 1944, American troops march into Argentan.

National Archives

Third Army. Patton used Avranches as the jumping-off point for his 400-mile run across France. It was another cause for celebration for the Americans, who took thousands of demoralized German prisoners. Even General Eisenhower was moved to call this a clear and decisive breakout. The tanks and motorized units of the U.S. First and Third Armies drove forward with a rush that astonished Allied commanders as much as the Germans. Operation Cobra was succeeding beyond supreme headquarters' most optimistic predictions.

Hitler decided to stop this headlong advance with a counterattack, which was code-named Operation Luettich. For this attack, he allowed von Kluge to take units away from Fifteenth Army, which was stationed in the Calais area. Von Kluge wanted to start moving against the Americans right away, before the Allied forces became any stronger and gained any more ground. During the night of August 6, elements of four panzer divisions, including what was left of Panzer Lehr, began advancing toward the Americans.

To succeed against the steamrolling American offensive, von Kluge needed good luck and bad weather; he got neither. Operation Luettich was slowed by determined resistance outside the town of Mortain on Hill 317, about seven miles from Avranches. And the counteroffensive was stopped dead by rocket-firing RAF Typhoon aircraft, which roamed at will through the clear skies over Normandy. "With uncanny precision, the rocket-shells of the Typhoons smashed into their targets," lamented one German writer. Forty-eight hours after starting their attack, the panzer units were forced to withdraw to their own lines.

Despite the unexpected pocket of resistance and the good weather, von Kluge's attack nearly succeeded. The diary entry of First Army for August 7 reports, "The boche is attacking ... The air went after the enemy armor with a vengeance ... The general [Lt. Gen. Courtney

was made to contact the Western Allies through the American embassy in Lisbon, Portugal. The message was that members of the German general staff agreed to surrender unconditionally to the West if the British, French, and Americans would agree to occupy Germany and prevent the Soviets from entering German soil. No evidence exists that von Kluge had anything to do with this proposal, but there is sworn testimony that von Kluge went to the front to meet with senior American officers in August 1944, only a month after the abortive attempt to assassinate Hitler that had been carried out by a cadre of senior German officers.

This testimony was given in October 1945 by von Kluge's son-in-law, Dr. Udo Esch of the German Army Medical Corps. Dr. Esch said that he saw his father-in-law almost daily that summer, and was convinced that von Kluge was an opponent of the Nazi regime. He also testified that von Kluge knew in advance about the assassination attempt against Hitler on July 20, 1944, and that he mentioned that it would take place the day before it actually happened. Von Kluge reportedly asked Dr. Esch to prepare ampules of cyanide for him in case the assassination attempt failed.

When the plot did fail—Hitler was only injured by the bomb blast at his East Prussia headquarters—von Kluge attempted to surrender to the Western Allies. Dr. Esch testified, "My father-in-law considered surrendering the Western Front to the Allies on his own authority, hoping to overthrow the [N]azi regime with their assistance." Von Kluge went to the front, as he had planned, "but was unable to get in touch with the Allied commanders."

Hitler had no evidence of this planned meeting, but he did not need any evidence to replace von Kluge. Model was made commander of Army Group B, and von Kluge was ordered back to Germany. Von Kluge had a feeling of what would happen to him if he went back, and he never reached Germany. After writing a letter to Hitler in which he argued for an end to the war, he set out for the German border with an escort. On August 18, near Verdun, they made a stop for lunch. Von Kluge had no intention of being turned over to the Gestapo. He bit into one of the cyanide ampules that his son-in-law had given him. A moment later he was dead. □

National Archives

Hodges, First Army commander] is not too worried over the situation, although admittedly there is the strongest kind of pressure."

The 30th Division bore the brunt of the attack. Its commander, Maj. Gen. Leland Hobbs, said that the Germans were so close to his positions that his men could have driven the enemy off the hill if they had onion on their breath. The 2nd SS Panzer Division advanced to within a mile of Hobbs's command post and looked as though it would overrun the 30th Division and push through to Avranches.

Just after 3 PM on August 7, German tanks were within 200 yards of one of the regional command posts. Second Battalion's aid station was captured on August 8. An SS officer under a white flag demanded that another American position surrender—a demand that was firmly refused. At a junction where five roads converged, an American private named Robert Vollmer knocked out two armored cars, a motorcycle, and a fuel truck with a bazooka. Another private, who somehow managed to find a bottle of whiskey and become "hopelessly drunk," tried to man a bazooka and a machine gun at the same time.

General Eisenhower wrote that if Operation Luettich had succeeded, the "results achieved would have undoubtedly been publicly characterized as a lost battle." On the night of August 12, the 30th Division was relieved by elements of the 35th Division. The fresh troops were welcomed with enthusiasm, as well as relief. "What a sight they were, coming off the hill," remarked a lieutenant attached to an antitank unit. Photographers and war correspondents came along with the relieving troops and lost no time in interviewing and photographing the defenders of Mortain. Twenty-four wrecked German vehicles were counted in the vicinity.

With Operation Luettich running out of momentum at Mortain, the Canadian First Army attacked from the vicinity of Caen, pushing south toward Falaise. About 600 tanks struck von Kluge's right flank and penetrated three miles into German territory. Generals Montgomery and Bradley, along with Eisenhower, could see that the German position was extremely vulnerable. With the Canadians continuing to move southward, Bradley's and Patton's forces had the chance to outflank the entire German Seventh Army, moving east and then circling northward toward Falaise to join with the Canadian First. If that happened, all the German forces in Normandy would be trapped.

To prevent the Germans from escaping the trap that was closing on them, it was decided to implement a deception. The Germans were induced to believe that American units at Mortain and Avranches were being withdrawn to Brittany. Double agents reported to their German contacts that a major American offensive would be launched against the ports of Brest, Lorient, St. Malo, and St. Nazaire. It was also reported that Patton was sending units from Third Army against the Breton ports. According to the double agents, the front at Avranches was being decreased to strengthen the attack against Brittany.

This was actually just the opposite of what the Americans were planning to do. The capture of the Breton ports had been assigned to Maj. Gen. Troy Middleton's VIII Corps. General Bradley's forces kept their position on Seventh Army's left flank, while Patton's Third Army kept moving eastward. A unit specially trained in deception methods, given the misleading name of the U.S. 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, did move from Avranches to Brittany. This unit, consisting of 1,200 highly trained men, wore shoulder patches of units attached to both First and Third Armies and played recordings of tanks and trucks to sound like entire columns of armored and infantry divisions on the move. While Bradley, Patton, and the Canadian First were surrounding the German Seventh Army, the enemy was being given the impression that the Americans were moving west instead of east.

On August 11, Hitler must have taken a look at a situation map of Normandy for the first time. He finally saw for himself the predicament of Seventh Army. German forces were now surrounded on three sides. Their only escape route was a gap between Falaise and Argentan. Because he realized the situation by himself, without any prompting from his generals, Hitler decided to reverse one of his orders. He gave Seventh Army his permission to withdraw from the Mortain-Avranches area.

Hitler blamed von Kluge for the failure of Operation Luettich and also turned on Luftwaffe chief Reichs Marshal Hermann Göring. "The Luftwaffe's doing nothing," he shouted at Göring. "It's no longer worthy to be an

independent service. And that's your fault. You're lazy." Hitler himself would not accept any of the responsibility for the failure.

By the time Hitler allowed Seventh Army to withdraw, it was too late for some of the German formations. American armored units were within sight of Argentan by August 14. On the following day, the Canadian First Army launched another attack toward Falaise. This time, it was joined by the British Second Army. "The Germans were now confined to a pocket 40 miles long and 13 miles wide and shaped like a giant horseshoe," with a 25-mile wide opening in the east," said historian Martin Blumenson. The British and Canadian forces and the Americans narrowed this 25-mile gap with each passing day.

Von Kluge ordered the remnants of his command still in the gap to withdraw eastward on August 16, hoping they could get through before the Allied armies joined forces and cut off their escape. The men and machines of Seventh Army were under almost constant artillery fire, as well as attacks by Allied fighter bombers. "All the next day and night," wrote Max Hastings of August 18-19, "the 90th Artillery pounded the Germans fleeing east from encirclement."

While the Allied troops referred to the Falaise pocket as "the Killing Ground," some German survivors called it "the Stalingrad of Normandy." Along every road, the remains of tanks, vehicles, and men smoldered. Some bodies were so badly burned and mangled that they no longer appeared human. "Germans charred coal-black, looking like blackened tree trunks, lay beside smoking vehicles," one Canadian soldier wrote after seeing the destruction in the Falaise pocket.

The gap at Falaise closed too slowly to prevent the escape of several thousand Germans, most of whom lived to fight again in other battles. Estimates of the number of men who slipped through the Allied ring range from 2,000 to 50,000, with German figures tending to be higher than Allied estimates. Much of the blame for this escape has been placed on the Canadian First Army's lack of aggressiveness and on General Montgomery's preoccupation with being too "tidy" in the drive southward. Montgomery wanted the advance to be orderly, which prevented some forward units from moving faster.

Even the official Canadian historian was moved to remark, "A German force far smaller than our own, taking advantage of strong ground and prepared positions, was able to slow our advance to the point where considerable German forces made their escape." A general from the Canadian Second Division admitted, "When we bumped into battle-experienced German troops, we were no match for them." Montgomery received another round of scathing criticism for not having taken control of the situation and for leaving the vital drive to the south in the hands of officers who were not up to the job. Others have criticized General Bradley for failure to close the gap in a timely manner as well.

In concentrating on the failures that had taken place at Falaise, it is easy to overlook what was accomplished. An estimated 10,000 of the enemy were killed and another 50,000 taken prisoner. Among those killed or captured were four corps commanders and 12 division commanders. Also, 200 tanks were destroyed. These were losses that the Wehrmacht could never make good. Although thousands of Germans did escape the trap, they had to leave almost all of their equipment behind, another loss the Wehrmacht could not afford. When the Falaise gap closed, the German Seventh Army ceased to exist as a fighting unit and the Battle of Normandy was over.

The Wehrmacht survivors of Falaise knew that they had lost. One group of stragglers from the 276th Infantry Division began walking eastward, having lost all contact with its unit. By following a tank for a distance, but mainly because of luck and determination, the group managed to walk right out of the pocket. At the village of Le Sap, about 25 miles due east of Falaise, they discovered that the entire population had gathered outdoors to welcome the coming Americans. The villagers had carried several tables out into the street and had filled them with all manner of food and wine for the imminent celebration.

The Germans helped themselves to everything they could lay their hands on. What they did not eat on the spot they carried away with them. Then, they took the mayor and a parish priest hostage in case any members of the resistance happened to be nearby and marched the two frightened men ahead of them at gunpoint until they were well out of town.

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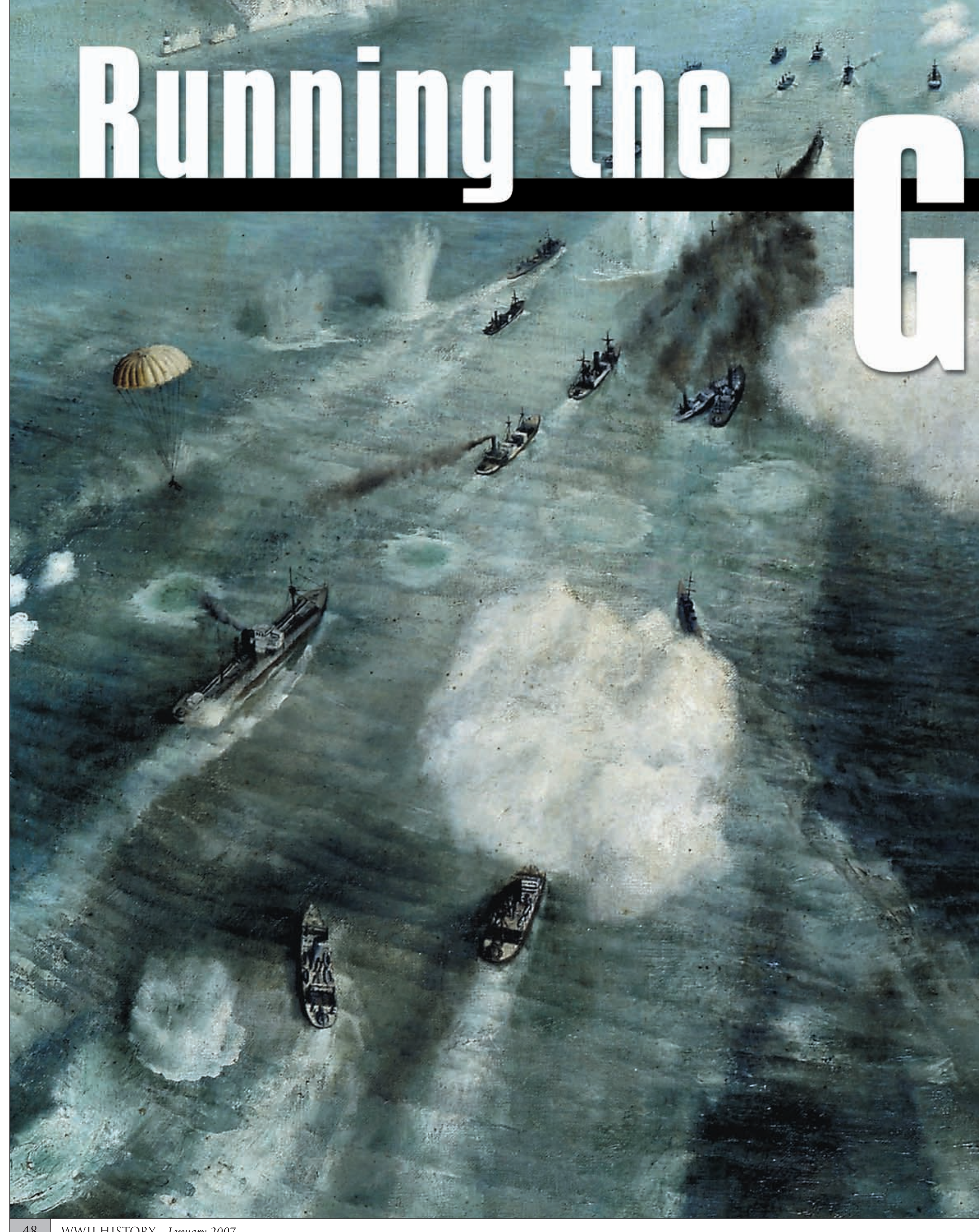
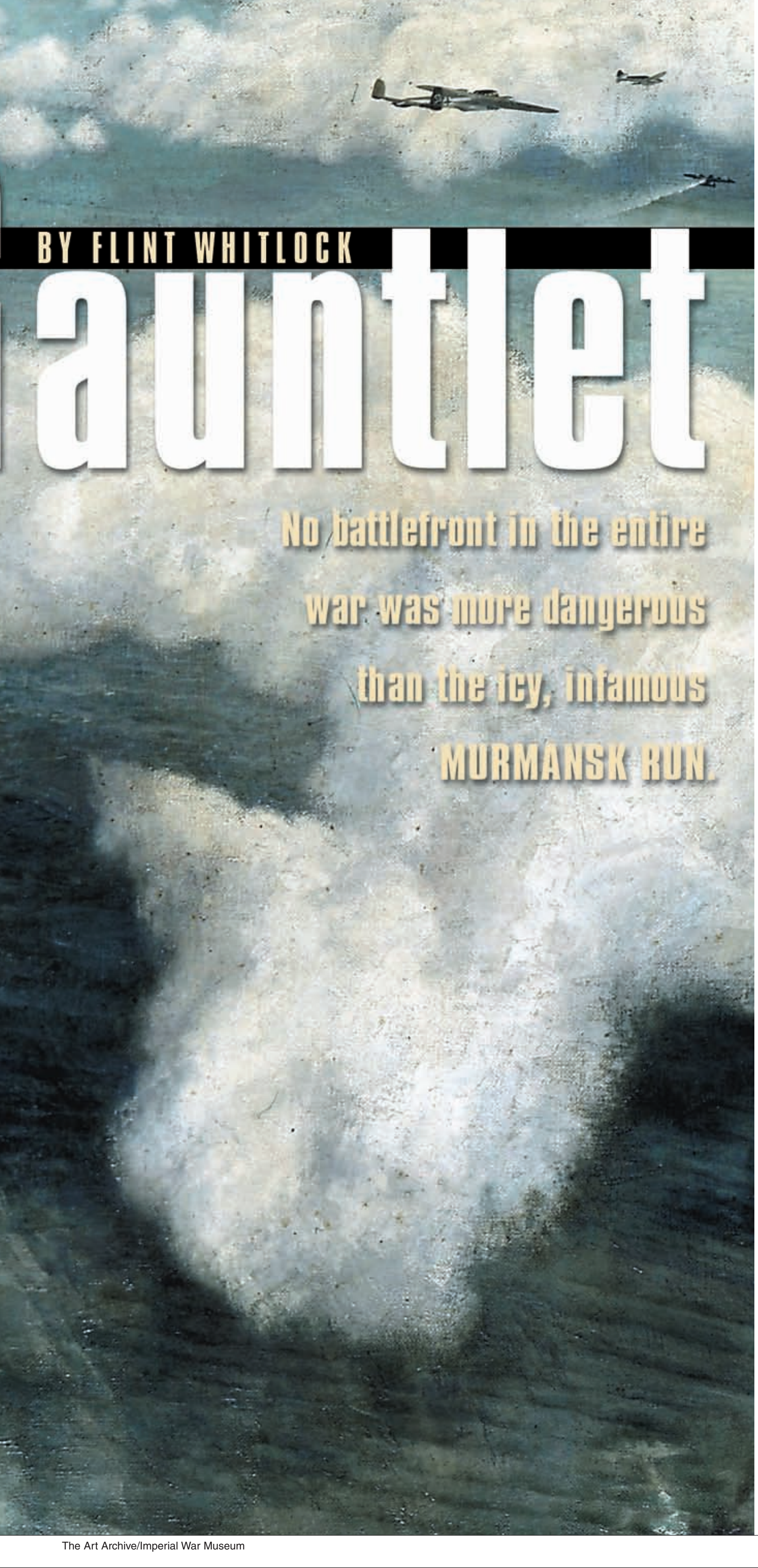
ABOVE: During its thwarted attempt to escape encirclement in the Falaise Pocket, this German convoy has been bombed and strafed by Allied fighters, leaving it a twisted mass of wreckage and dead bodies. OPPOSITE: An American tank destroyer tentatively approaches the smoldering ruins of a Normandy town as accompanying infantrymen take cover from incoming German fire.

On 25 August, the stragglers finally crossed the River Seine at Elbeuf on the last surviving ferry. They were finally beyond the reach of the American Army, at least temporarily. "After Normandy," said the corporal in charge of the group, "we had no illusions anymore. We knew that we stood with our backs to the wall." □

David A. Johnson, who contributed an article to the first issue of WWII History, *writes from his home in New Jersey.*

Running the G





The Art Archive/Imperial War Museum

IT WAS UNBELIEVABLY dull and uncomfortable duty, often interspersed with moments of sheer terror and the possibility of sudden and violent death.

This was convoy duty on the North Atlantic.

Thousands of cargo ships, manned by tens of thousands of brave British, Canadian, and American civilian merchant mariners, along with Navy and Coast Guard personnel, made the hazardous voyages carrying invaluable supplies to America's chief Allies—Great Britain and the Soviet Union—months before, and years after, the United States was propelled into the war on December 7, 1941.

The voyages across the North Atlantic and from Iceland to the Russian ports of Murmansk, Archangel, and Kola Inlet involved more hazards than in any other kind of naval duty. Severe weather was commonplace. Ice fields could be encountered at any time of year. Floating mines were a constant menace. German submarines, surface craft, and warplanes could strike at will from nearby bases in German-occupied Norway. And, prior to the spring of 1943, when an effective Allied antisubmarine offensive got underway, ships and men making the so-called "Murmansk Run" had about one chance in three of returning.

This was no glamorous sea campaign, with full-sail, tall-masted men-of-war firing broadside after broadside into their enemy's rigging. It was a cold, dirty, dangerous business in which seamen might be blown into a flaming sea of burning oil and left to die of wounds, burns, or hypothermia.

Once the convoys reached their destinations, there was no guarantee of safe harbor, either, for the Germans often attacked while the cargo ships were in port, unloading. Then there was the return trip.

The history of the convoy operations, which went on nearly continuously from the autumn of 1939 until May 1945, is one of intense suffering, great loss, unparalleled bravery, and uncompromising devotion to duty. The epic saga is one of the most remarkable chapters of World War II—one that has for too long been overshadowed by other events.

The necessity of making the treacherous convoy runs began just days after Britain and France declared war on Germany following the Third Reich's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. At that time, Admiral Karl Dönitz, chief of Germany's submarine force, instituted a program designed to starve Britain into submission by cutting her shipping routes to North America with his U-boats. At the start of the war, Germany had 46 U-boats; by the end, she would have 863 in commission.

Canada, which had become an independent democratic monarchy in 1931, firmly aligned herself with Britain when the Ottawa Parliament declared war on Germany on September 10, 1939. With only a tiny navy, Canada began a crash building program of warships and merchant vessels, and the Royal Canadian Navy soon found itself escorting ships carrying war goods across the North Atlantic to Britain.

The purpose of the convoys was to keep a lifeline of desperately needed war matériel flowing to Great Britain and, later, the Soviet Union. Great Britain was not self-sustaining. As her planes were downed, her ships sunk, her armies decimated, and her stocks of food, weapons, and ammunition depleted, Britain turned to her colonies and former colonies, especially Canada, for help.

Clustering freighters into convoys, as was done during World War I, helped somewhat to fight off the unseen enemy, but then Dönitz countered by grouping his submarines into wolf packs of three or more boats that overcame the transports' defenses. In 1940 alone, U-boats accounted for the sinking of 375 ships in the North Atlantic. In 1939, Britain's imports totaled 55 million tons; in 1941, the total was down to 30 million. Britain was losing three times as many ships as her shipyards could build and was on her way to losing the war unless something drastic was done—and quickly.

With the United States lay Britain's last, best hope, but sentiment in America was decidedly antiwar. The U.S. was also still feeling the effects of the Great Depression, which had begun in October 1929. During the Depression years of the 1930s, America's fleet of merchant ships had fallen into disrepair. Crews were laid off. Fractious martime unions were battling with each other and with the ship owners.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had once been assistant secretary of the Navy, was obsessed about the country being prepared in the event the U.S. was drawn into another war.

Fortunately, on June 29, 1936, Congress had the foresight to pass the Merchant Marine Act, which created the U.S. Maritime Commission to "further the development and maintenance of an adequate and well-balanced American merchant marine, to promote the commerce of the United States, and to aid in the national defense."

Merchant seamen in 1936, however, were in short supply. Before the outbreak of World War II, only 55,000 experienced Merchant Mariners were working for American shipping companies. If the United States became embroiled in the conflict, Roosevelt knew many thousands more would be needed.

Specialized cargo ships—hundreds or thousands of them—would also be required. But from where would they come? Many of America's shipyards and steel mills had shut down during the Depression, and skilled shipfitters were a vanishing breed. Before World War II, fewer than 100,000 persons were in the national shipyard labor force.

The U.S. Maritime Commission's long-range plans were to build 50 ships annually for 10 years, but in 1939 as war clouds darkened Roosevelt doubled this goal to 100 per year. Still, this number would prove woefully insufficient.

The United States Merchant Marine has a proud history that goes back to the very founding of the republic. When the original 13 colonies declared their independence from Great Britain, the Continental Navy had only 31 ships. The Navy issued "Letters of Marque" to armed, privately owned merchant vessels and commissions for privateers, which were outfitted as warships to attack Britain's merchant ships. A total of nearly 1,700 privateers, manned by merchant seamen, would see duty in the War of Independence. Hundreds of merchant ships also plied the waters of the East Coast, delivering supplies, armaments, and troops where needed.

During the next national conflict, the War of 1812, which began when the British Navy kidnapped American merchant sailors and pressed them into service aboard the king's ships, merchant mariners also played significant roles. The U.S. Navy was comprised then of only 23 ships, the privateers 517. In terms of shipboard guns, the Navy possessed 556, the privateers nearly 2,900.

And so it was through the years. During every conflict that required the use of ships, the Merchant Marine was there, risking lives, suffering casualties, transporting men and matériel, and accomplishing the assigned mission despite its quasi-military status.

With the gathering storm in the late 1930s, men to man the merchant ships were not the only thing needed. An all-out program to build a fleet of cargo ships, "a bridge of ships" as Roosevelt called it, was clearly required. In August 1940, the president increased the U.S. Maritime Commission's quota of new ships to 200 annually. But what kind of ship design would work best, and who would build them? America's still-operating shipyards had plenty of U.S. Navy contracts for all manner of warships to keep them busy. There simply was no extra manufacturing capacity available to build the necessary cargo ships.

Necessity is often the mother of invention, and so, in September 1940, a British Merchant Shipbuilding Mission team came to the United States hoping to fill an order for 60 new freighters. The plans they carried were of an "*Ocean*-class" freighter whose design was virtually unchanged over the past half century. Big and bulky, with plenty of cargo-carrying capacity, it had a simple, 135-ton, coal-burning, reciprocating steam engine—antiquated but reliable.

Unfortunately for the British, American shipyards, awash in orders for warships, were not about to halt construction of destroyers and cruisers to build the dumpy, old-fashioned

Naval History Photograph

Making the dangerous passage across the North Atlantic to the Soviet port of Murmansk, the armed merchant ship SS *Coulmore* weathers heavy seas on May 20, 1943.

Steaming eastward in a tight convoy, Canadian merchantmen and escorting warships remain on high alert. Attacks from German U-boats, surface vessels, or aircraft were a constant threat.

National Archives of Canada

freighters. Besides, due to the high construction costs and a surplus of old freighters, America's shipyards had built only two ocean-going, dry cargo ships between 1922 and 1937. Basic knowledge was lacking.

Navy Vice Admiral Emory S. Land, chairman of the Maritime Commission, initially agreed to assist the British delegation in finding a builder, but he did not like their design of the proposed cargo ship. He disassociated the U.S. Maritime Commission from the project but made arrangements for the British to deal directly with private shipyards.

Soon the British paired up with Todd Shipyards, a New York ship repair company. Todd Shipyards put together a consortium of six companies headed by a builder named Henry J. Kaiser—a man with plenty of gusto but no experience in mass-producing ships (his companies and partners did, however, have experience in building such projects as the Grand Coulee Dam, the piers for the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, and a third set of locks for the Panama Canal. Kaiser formed a company named Todd-California Shipbuilding and established two new yards, one at Richmond, California, on San Francisco Bay, and another in South Portland, Maine, in partnership with the Bath Iron Works. In December 1940, the building of the facilities that would build the ships commenced.

On January 3, 1941, President Roosevelt announced a $350 million shipbuilding program, and Land changed his opinion of the British design when he realized that the Germans were sinking British cargo ships faster than the losses could be replaced. He decided to adopt the British design for American cargo ships and officially designated it the "EC2"—E for Emergency, C for Cargo, 2 for large capacity. An oil-burning engine was substituted for the coal-burning one.

After Land showed the president the plans, Roosevelt laughed and said, "Admiral, I think this ship will do us very well. She'll carry a good load. She isn't much to look at, though, is she? A real ugly duckling."

In early 1941, the U.S. Maritime Commission put in an order for 260 cargomen. Land called the yet-to-be-built armada of cargo vessels the "Liberty Fleet," and the name, "Liberty ship," rather than "ugly duckling," caught on. The first Liberty ship, the SS *Patrick Henry*, was launched on September 27, 1941. In just three years, the U.S. would build the equivalent of more than half of the world's prewar merchant shipping while, during the same time period, turning out the greatest armada of fighting ships in history.

The order was placed not a moment too soon, for the war was coming ever closer to the United States. On November 17, 1941, Congress authorized the use of Navy guns and gunners on American merchant ships. Less than a month later, the United States was at war.

Then, on February 7, 1942, Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 9054, establishing the War Shipping Administration (WSA). This order, according to the language, assured "the most effective utilization of shipping of the United States for the successful prosecution of the war." The role of the WSA was to purchase and operate the civilian shipping needed to supply America and its Allies around the globe with men and materiél.

Such a program was badly needed, for the lessons of the Great War were still uppermost in

National Archives

Scanning the skies above the North Atlantic, the crew of a shipboard machine gun stands at the ready. Often, a lone reconnaissance plane appeared initially, but was quickly followed by dive-bombers and torpedo planes.

the minds of Roosevelt, Land, and Admiral Russell R. Waesche, Commandant of the Coast Guard. Germany's U-boats and surface raiders had decimated the merchant vessels that had carried war goods across the Atlantic. To preclude this from happening again, the U.S. put all American cargo ship companies, such as the Isthmian Lines, under government contract and speeded up the Liberty ship program. While the experienced shipyards concentrated on constructing the complex and sophisticated warships, newly organized shipyards popped up and began quickly putting together, from sets of standardized plans, a huge fleet of Liberty ships.

Liberties were built in 18 emergency shipyards along the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf Coasts, including the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond, California; the J.A. Jones Construction Co. in Brunswick, Georgia; Todd-Houston Shipbuilding in Houston, Texas; and New England Shipbuilding Company in Portland, Maine.

The Liberty ships soon became the workhorses of the Merchant Marine fleet, but, like anything rushed into production, they left much to be desired. Liberty ships were big and slow and not always built to ensure maximum seaworthiness, especially when subjected to enemy bombs and torpedoes. Nor were the "square-hulled" vessels graceful, as ships often are. The freighters were not designed for looks or luxury but for utility.

As unskilled shipbuilders became more and more skilled and mass-production techniques of prefabrication and preassembly became more standardized, the average length of time to build a Liberty ship dropped from 108 days in 1942 to less than 50 days in 1943. Most of the 250,000 pieces that made up a Liberty ship were prefabricated, preshaped, and preassembled into approximately one hundred sections that could be assembled on the shipyard ways.

Liberty ships were relatively fast and easy for an unskilled crew to build. A Liberty ship required 3,425 tons of hull steel, 2,727 tons of plate, and 700 tons of shapes, which included 50,000 castings. Sixty-one percent of the Liberty ship was prefabricated. Rather than being built with the slow, traditional rivet method, Liberty ships were mostly welded together—a process that saved time but sacrificed strength. Average time to construct one Liberty ship was about two months, although the record for the fastest Liberty ship built was set by the Kaiser shipyard in Richmond. From keel laying to launching, the SS *Robert E. Peary* was finished in 4 days, 15 hours, and 30 minutes and sailed three days later. The ships cost approximately $2 million per copy.

Cargo capacity of a single Liberty ship was equal to that of 300 railroad freight cars. One Liberty ship could carry 2,840 jeeps, or 440 light tanks, or 230 million rounds of rifle ammunition, or 3,440,000 C-rations. With a length of 441.5 feet and a beam, or width, of almost 57 feet, the Liberty ships had five holds and could haul 10,900 deadweight tons (the weight of cargo) or 9,140 net tons (the amount of space available for cargo, fuel, passengers, and crew. Each ship had built-in booms and cranes to load and unload cargo. Propulsion was provided by two oil-fired boilers and a triple expansion steam engine that generated 2,500 horsepower. Cruising speed was 11 knots (approximately 12-13 miles per hour).

Each ship typically had a crew of 41 racially mixed civilian merchant sailors and a complement of Navy personnel known as the Armed Guard responsible for operating the guns and communications equipment. Weaponry consisted of two 3-inch naval guns and eight 20mm cannon. The 3-inchers, placed at the bow and stern of the ship, could be used against U-boat or aircraft attacks, while the 20mm guns were located in shielded tubs along the sides of the ship. Barrels with chemicals to provide smoke screens were located at the ship's stern.

By war's end, more than 2,700 Liberty ships would be produced. But the war would not wait for them.

To man the ships once they slid down the ways, Vice Admiral Land and Admiral Russell R. Waesche worked together to create a training program for merchant mariners. During the whole of the war, the schools of the War Shipping Administration, operated by the Coast Guard, would graduate nearly 32,000 officers and more than 230,000 seamen.

Once the U.S. was involved in the war, men too old or too young (in May 1944, the minimum age for a Merchant Mariner was lowered to 16) for the draft, or not accepted into the armed forces due to some disqualifying physical problem, found the Merchant Marine a suitable alternative to prove their patriotism. Besides, the pay was good. For example, in 1943 the average annual income for a U.S. Navy Seaman First Class was $1,886, while an Ordinary Seaman in the Merchant Marine made $1,897 per year. A Navy Petty Officer Second Class earned $2,308, as compared to a Merchant Marine Able Seaman, who made $2,132.

Some in the active duty military, however, resented the Merchant Mariners, calling them draft dodgers and mistakenly believing the civilians took home considerably more money. Such was not the case, and the men on the merchant ships faced no fewer hazards than the bluecoats serving aboard destroyers, cruisers, or aircraft carriers.

Although officially neutral, the United States in early 1941, under newly reelected President Roosevelt, was edging closer to involvement in the European crisis. Roosevelt knew that if Russia fell, Britain would likely be next, and then all of Europe would be dominated by the swastika. In response to the gloomy scenario, in March 1941, nine months before Pearl Harbor, the U.S. inaugurated the "Lend-Lease" pro-

gram, which gave Britain, Russia, China, and other Allied nations vast amounts of war matériel with which to resist the Germans and Japanese. In the summer of 1940, Roosevelt had already sent a shipment of tanks, bombers, rifles, machine guns, and artillery pieces to Britain as a show of support—and in contravention of neutrality rules.

Lend-Lease grew out of Roosevelt's friendship with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The prime minister told the president of Britain's shaky economic situation and her inability to pay for and transport badly needed war materials. In a speech that likened Britain's situation to a person who lends his next door neighbor a hose to extinguish a fire at his house, Roosevelt convinced the American people that it was in their best interests to support such a program.

American factories quickly geared up to produce the tanks, planes, bullets, bombs, shells, artillery pieces, canned food, and other items so desperately required by Hitler's foes. Making these goods was one thing; getting them to the far-flung battlefronts was quite another. With airplanes insufficient to carry the heavy loads for such long distances, the only alternative was the sea, a 2,500-mile-long watery highway between the northeast coast of North American and Britain, even farther to Russia.

Through the use of spies and intercepted radio messages, the German Navy often was aware of what ships were leaving, when they were leaving, what they were carrying, and what routes they were going to use, and would station their U-boats about 15 miles apart along the expected shipping lanes. The first U-boat in a wolf pack to spot a convoy would signal the rest of the pack to assemble for the attacks, almost always carried out at night.

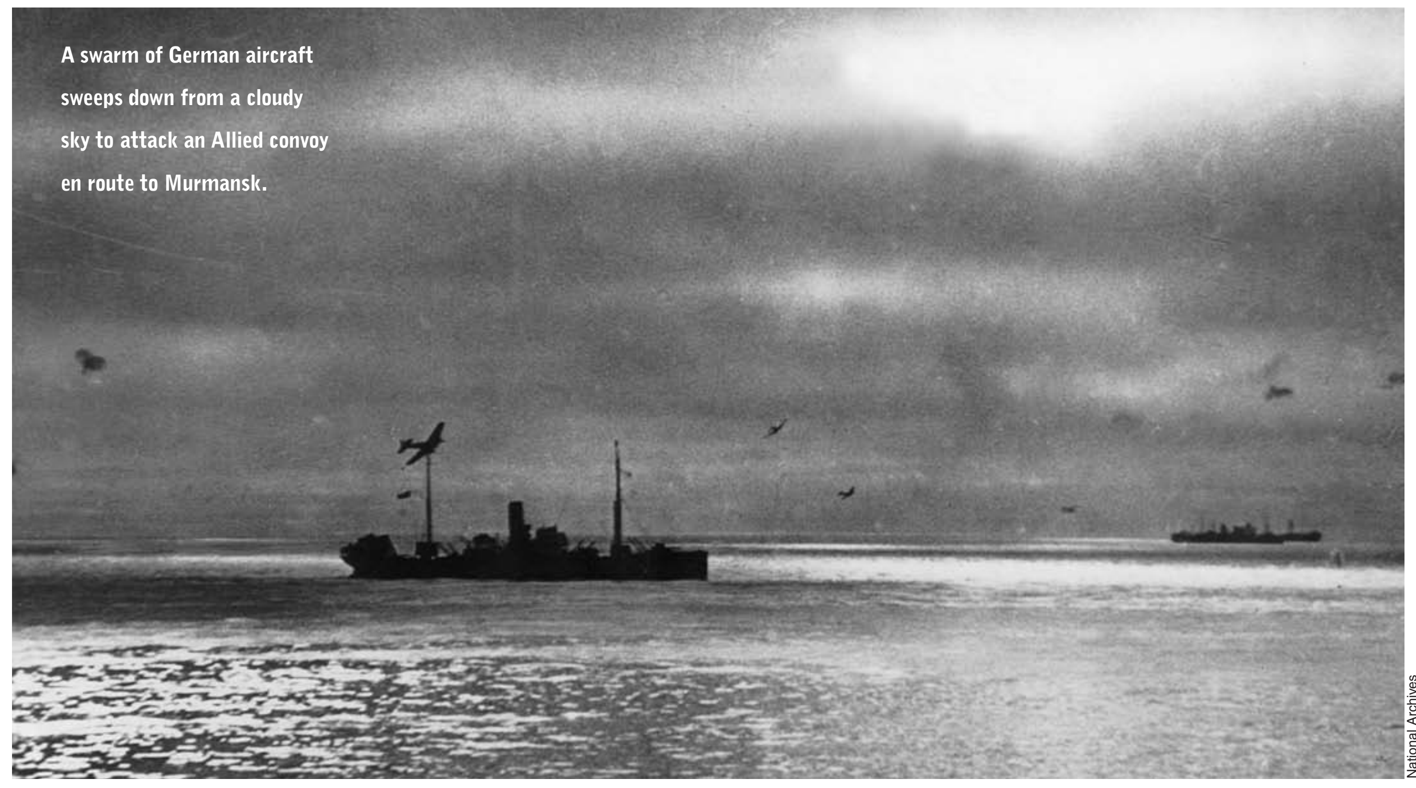
The Germans had quickly figured out that there was an "air gap" in the middle of the North Atlantic—beyond the range of Allied aircraft and dirigibles—that took ships several days to cross. The United States did have 112 long-range aircraft, which could have covered the air gap, but all were assigned to the Pacific. As a result, the German U-boat crews and commanders turned the gap into a happy hunting ground and began sending precious cargo and crewmen beneath the waves.

The stretch of ocean between Canada's eastern provinces and Ireland was a favorite killing ground for U-boats, but the waters north of Norway were also especially dangerous. On June 8, 1940, the British aircraft carriers HMS *Glorious* and HMS *Ark Royal* and two destroyers were attacked while escorting a convoy of troopships evacuating British and Allied troops (along with the King of Norway) near Andenes Point, Lofoten Islands, Norway. In the furious sea battle that followed, *Glorious* was sunk by the German battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, with a loss of over 1,500 lives. Only 39 men survived.

On October 28, 1940, a 38-ship convoy, designated HX84, departed Nova Scotia bound for England. Eight days later, halfway between Newfoundland and Ireland, the German pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* spotted the convoy and, like a wolf encountering a flock of sheep, the German warship moved in for the kill. Like a protective sheepdog, the HMS *Jervis Bay*, an armed merchant cruiser—basically a passenger liner outfitted with guns—escorting the convoy, set out to hold off the bigger ship while the rest of the convoy escaped. The *Scheer* ripped the *Jervis Bay* to shreds, sending her aflame beneath the waves, then went after the cargomen. Undeterred by the tanker HMS *San Demitrios*'s 6-inch deck guns, the *Scheer*'s 11-inch guns blasted away, setting the ship and her 11,200 tons of oil ablaze. The tanker nearly met the same fate as the *Jervis Bay*; by some miracle, the surviving crewmen were able to nurse the stricken vessel to safe port in Ireland.

This early struggle on the high seas was a precursor of things to come, for not only were Canada and the United States providing aid to Britain, but soon they would be doing the same for the Soviet Union, their ally in the fight against Fascism.

By the autumn of 1941, Adolf Hitler saw himself as the master of Europe. His Third Reich had absorbed Austria and Czechoslovakia, and his armies had blitzed Poland, France, the Low Countries, Greece, Norway and Denmark. Spain and Italy were in Fascist hands,



A swarm of German aircraft sweeps down from a cloudy sky to attack an Allied convoy en route to Murmansk.

National Archives

National Archives

A seaman negotiates the slick deck of a merchant vessel coated with thick ice. If his ship were torpedoed, a sailor's chance of survival in the icy waters near the Arctic Circle was slim.

and Sweden and Switzerland had declared themselves neutral. Only Great Britain stood defiant, but Hitler was confident that the island nation would soon fall; the giant Soviet Union, whom Hitler regarded as his most formidable enemy, had been taken out of the game with his clever nonaggression pact, signed on August 23, 1939. Perhaps, having lulled Russia into a false sense of security, he could catch Josef Stalin by surprise. He did.

Now it was time to strike a massive blow that would finish off the Soviet Union, thus giving Germany nearly total control of the European continent. Hitler was sure that the neutral United States, full of antiwar sentiment, would stand on the sidelines, wring its impotent hands, make a few feeble protests, but do nothing to materially aid Russia, whose Communist form of government was anathema to most Americans.

The time was ripe. On June 22, 1941, Hitler, after postponing his planned invasion of Britain, launched Operation Barbarossa, a 3,200,000-man invasion of the Soviet Union. At first, the massive operation went smoothly, driving like a well-honed blade deeply into the heart of Mother Russia, inflicting huge casualties on the Bolshevik enemy and shoving Soviet defensive lines back to Stalingrad, Leningrad, and to the suburbs of Moscow. The situation looked desperate—and Stalin begged the United States for support.

It was a cry for aid that could not be ignored.

As author David Fairbank White writes in *Bitter Ocean*, "With no second front in the west to reinforce the Russians, struggling to push back Hitler's assault, the Allies realized the critical importance of opening up a supply run to stoke and support Moscow's defense. The Murmansk Run was as important to Russia's survival and the final expulsion of the Nazis as any other Allied support. But the North Russia run was hell on ice."

Despite his own nation's precarious plight, Winston Churchill declared, "We shall give whatever help we can to Russia and the Russian people," thereby opening the Arctic supply route to Russia.

While the Royal Navy began combat operations in July 1941 against German-occupied Norwegian ports, Britain was also preparing to send goods from Canada to the Soviets. The first of these convoys was code-named "Dervish" and consisted of seven merchant ships escorted by the carrier *Victorious* plus the cruisers *Devonshire* and *Suffolk*. On August 21, 1941, the convoy left Hvalfjord, Iceland, and arrived safely in the Russian port of Archangel 10 days later.

Surprised at the lack of German response, the British laid plans for more convoys. On September 29, the next outbound convoy, named PQ-1 (the convoy designation letters "PQ" for outbound trips and "QP" for return trips were chosen because the planning officer for the first convoy was Commander P.Q. Edwards), left Hvalfjord with 10 freighters escorted by the cruiser *Suffolk* and two destroyers. The convoy arrived safely in Archangel on October 11.

After an October meeting in Moscow, Britain and the United States promised to supply the Soviets with 400 planes, 500 tanks, 200 universal carriers, 22,000 tons of rubber, 41,000 tons of aluminum, 3,860 tons of machine tools, and large quantities of other strategic material per month, mostly by way of the Arctic route. The actual totals would fall short of the goals, but at least it was a start.

In October, PQ-2, bound for Archangel, got through without a loss. In November, Convoys PQ-3, PQ-4, and PQ-5 also made successful runs. By the end of December 1941, the Germans finally realized that the Allies were slipping goods into Russia through the back door and were determined to shut down the supply route. Dönitz, at the end of December, ordered the three-boat wolf pack "Ulan" to begin intercepting convoys.

About the same time, the British conducted two commando raids against German installa-

tions in Norway. These raids convinced Hitler that the Allies were planning to invade Norway, and he beefed up his naval, ground, and air forces there to meet the threat. Hitler noted, "The German fleet must… use all its forces for the defense of Norway. It would be expedient to transfer all battleships and pocket battleships there for this purpose…. Every ship which is not stationed in Norway is in the wrong place."

As a result, the door slammed on the convoys at the beginning of 1942. Convoys PQ-7A, with two ships, and PQ-7B, with nine, were heading to Russia when the commander of *U-134* spotted convoy PQ-7A and moved in for the attack, sinking the 5,135-ton steamer *Waziristan,* the first merchantman sunk on the Arctic Route. On January 17, the British destroyer HMS *Matabele*, escorting the eight-ship convoy PQ-8, was sunk off Murmansk by *U-454,* and only two men out of the crew of 200 survived; none of the merchantmen were lost.

In light of the increased submarine threat, PQs 9 and 10, with a total of 10 freighters, were combined and sailed on February 1 escorted by a cruiser and two destroyers. Along on the trip was a British rear admiral who was to meet with the Russians in Murmansk in an effort to persuade them to provide ships for convoy escort duty. He failed in his mission.

As part of Hitler's ordered redeployment, on February 12 the 31,100-ton battlecruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*, which had been plundering convoys in the Atlantic, plus the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen*, left their base at Brest, France, and sailed toward Norway through the English Channel, dodging English resistance. Both battlecruisers, however, struck mines and limped into a friendly port for repair; the *Prinz Eugen*, joined by the pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* and three destroyers, made it to Norway. The British, relying on the top-secret Ultra intercepts of German communications, soon learned the Germans' destination and alerted four submarines stationed off Trondheim. On February 23, one of these boats seriously damaged *Prinz Eugen*.

February 1942 was a lucky month for the convoys, for PQ-9, PQ-10, and PQ-11 all arrived at their Russian destinations safely. March was not quite as lucky. On March 1, the 16-ship PQ-12 set out from Reykjavik for Murmansk. The greatly feared German battleship *Tirpitz*, the sister ship of the *Bismarck*, was anchored at the Norwegian port of Aas Fjord, 15 miles from Trondheim, when it was joined by the *Scheer*. Worried about the growing strength of the German surface fleet, the Admiralty gave PQ-12 an unusually strong covering force, the battleships *Duke of York* and *King George V*, the battlecruiser *Renown*, and the carrier *Victorious*. Churchill had declared that the *Tirpitz* was "the most important naval vessel in the situation today" and believed that her destruction would "profoundly affect the course of the war."

On March 5, German reconnaissance planes located Convoy PQ-12 and, the next day, with Hitler's permission, *Tirpitz* and three destroyers left Aas Fjord, along with four U-boats on station in the area, to intercept PQ-12. A British submarine spotted the German flotilla and relayed the information back to London. Fortunately for the Germans, a storm hit the area and the *Tirpitz*, having been unable to locate PQ-12, headed back to her base. She was rediscovered off the Lofoten Islands and attacked by aircraft from the *Victorious*, but somehow escaped undamaged; PQ-12 arrived unscathed at Murmansk on March 12. The days of easy passage for the convoys, however, were over.

In late March, another severe storm raked the Barents Sea, scattering Convoy PQ-13 and its escorts and giving the Germans an opportunity to attack. On the 29th, three German destroyers north of Murmansk encountered the escort and, in the furious action that followed, a German destroyer was sunk and the British cruiser *Trinidad* was struck and damaged by one of her own malfunctioning torpedoes. Five of the 19 ships in PQ-13 were lost.

In April 1942, the 24-ship convoy PQ-14 sailed from Iceland but only seven ships reached their destination. One was sunk by a U-boat while 16 others turned back due to the weather; return convoy QP-10 lost four of its 16 ships to enemy attack at around the same time. Near the end of the month, convoy PQ-15 sailed for Murmansk under the protection of units of the Home Fleet, including the battleships *King George V* and the American USS *Washington.*

PQ-15 was a convoy riddled with errors and tragedy. On May 1, *King George V* rammed one of her escorting destroyers, *Punjabi*, and was then damaged by the latter's depth charges as *Punjabi* sank with heavy loss of life. The next day, the minesweeper *Seagull* and Norwegian destroyer *St. Albans* mistakenly sank the accompanying Polish submarine *Jastrzab*. Then the Germans attacked and three of the merchantmen were lost to torpedo aircraft. Destroyers sank the escorting warship, the British cruiser HMS *Edinburgh*. The remaining 22 ships reached Murmansk on May 5, shaken but safe.

That month, a vexed Stalin sent a long list of war supplies to Churchill with a note: "I am fully aware of the difficulties involved and of the sacrifices made by Great Britain in the matter [of the Russian convoys]. I feel, however, incumbent upon me to approach you with the request to take all possible measures in order to ensure the arrival of the above-mentioned materials in the USSR."

"We hate leaving PQ-17 behind.... The ships are now going around in circles, turning this way and that, like so many frightened chicks. Some can hardly go at all."

Such a message prompted the prime minister to step up efforts to aid the Soviets. Churchill declared the effort would be worthwhile even if only half the merchantmen got through. Simultaneously, the Germans, worried that too many convoys were reaching their destinations, ramped up their efforts to halt the flow of goods.

On May 26, in the Barents Sea north of Norway, Convoy PQ-16 was traveling to Murmansk with 35 ships. Suddenly, some 260 Luftwaffe aircraft, including Heinkel He-111 bombers armed with torpedoes, came swarming down from the sky while U-boats, their periscopes brushing aside floating chunks of arctic ice, joined in the attack. In a running battle that lasted six days and nights, the convoy and its escorts desperately fought off the enemy raiders but lost 11 ships in the process. Twelve freighters made it to Murmansk and the remaining eight to Archangel. As terrible as the PQ-16's losses were, the next convoy would suffer an even worse fate.

In late June 1942, the 37-ship convoy PQ-17, the largest and most valuable convoy to date, formed at Hvalfjord, Iceland, and began to make its run to Murmansk and Archangel. Crammed into the holds of the cargomen were tanks, trucks, aircraft, boxes of ammunition, and other vital supplies destined for the hard-pressed Red Army. The Germans were determined that PQ-17 would not pass and instituted Operation Rösselsprung that would add surface ships—the *Tirpitz*, *Scheer*, and *Hipper*—to the intercepting force.

On July 1, two U-boats attempted to attack

the convoy but were chased off by British and American escorts; eight more U-boats began stalking PQ-17, waiting for the right moment to strike. That evening, Norway-based German aircraft swooped down on the ships but were driven away by a fierce storm of antiaircraft fire.

On July 4, with PQ-17 over 400 miles from the nearest Soviet landfall, the battle was again joined. The Luftwaffe pounced on the convoy, which somehow managed to maintain formation and discipline. Then submarines struck, and the brand new Liberty Ship USS *Christopher Newport*, crippled by aerial torpedoes, was sunk by the *U-457*.

Focke-Wulf 200 Condor long-range bombers torpedoed four more ships, sinking two. Next, 25 He-111 torpedo bombers pounded the Liberty ship *William Hooper,* which was abandoned by her crew without orders. In London, fearful that the three German battleships might arrive and sink the entire convoy, First Sea Lord Sir Dudley Pound ordered his armed escorts to withdraw. At 9:23 PM, he also ordered PQ-17 to disperse, without escort. A few minutes later, Pound told the convoy "to scatter" and to proceed to their destinations individually. This order would doom PQ-17.

The naval escort of four cruisers and six destroyers did as ordered, left the freighters, and headed south. The merchant ship captains watched in horrified astonishment as their escorts departed—the military equivalent of a man walking his date home through a dangerous neighborhood, only to abandon her when approached by muggers and rapists. The force was now on its own.

"We hate leaving PQ-17 behind," wrote the film star Lieutenant Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., who was aboard the cruiser USS *Wichita*. "It looks so helpless now since the order to disperse has been circulated. The ships are now going around in circles, turning this way and that, like so many frightened chicks. Some can hardly go at all."

A Soviet tanker sailing with the convoy, the *Azerbaijan*, was hit and set on fire but managed to maintain power and continue on. At 10:15 PM on the 4th, the convoy was hit again. But PQ-17 could not slip away into the darkness, because there was none at this time of year, and at this latitude, daylight lasts 24 hours day.

With no protection, Convoy PQ-17 was a sitting duck. The Luftwaffe caused the most damage, with the U-boats assisting. *Tirpitz* and the other German dreadnaughts left their Norwegian anchorage to join in the action, but it was determined they were not needed and they reversed course.

The German victory was nearly complete. Of the 37 PQ-17 ships that had sailed from Iceland, two had turned back earlier, eight were sunk by aerial bombs and torpedoes, nine were sunk by U-boats, and a further seven were sunk by U-boats after having been left dead in the water by air attack—a total of 24 ships lost. Going down with the dying freighters was a large portion of the $700 million worth of equipment—430 tanks, 210 crated aircraft, 3,350 vehicles, and 99,316 tons of general stores—along with 153 merchant seamen. Of the debacle, Churchill said, "PQ-17 was one of the most melancholy episodes of the war."

Two weeks later, the German Army in Russia launched a successful summer offensive; could the Soviets have held out had those supplies, now lying at the bottom of the Barents Sea, reached them? One will never know. The abandonment of Convoy PQ-17 by its escorts was a disgrace that haunts the Royal Navy to this day.

In September, the Germans set their sights on the next convoy, PQ-18. Thirty-nine merchantmen, three minesweepers, one oiler, and one rescue ship sailed from Loch Ewe on September 2, 1942, under the protection of a huge escort fleet that numbered 57 warships and nine submarines. During a week-long battle, the Germans lost six U-boats and 41 aircraft. All but 13 of the escorted vessels got through to Kola Inlet.

Accurate figures are hard to come by but, by any analysis, 1942 was the U-boats' most successful year. One source says that 1,664 Allied ships were sunk, 1,097 of them in the North Atlantic. Losses to German assets were minimal. Although Liberty ships were sliding down the ways in shipyards around the country at a rate of three per day, it still was not enough. In

National Archives

1942, the Allies launched 11 million tons of new ships, eight million built in the United States, but had lost 12 million tons to the enemy. In November alone, the Allies lost more than 800,000 tons of shipping, more than half of which was in the North Atlantic.

The Murmansk Run was halted temporarily as shipping was urgently needed to support Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa, in November 1942.

During the winter lull of 1942-43, the Germans took the opportunity to repair and refit many of their warships. The *Tirpitz* was at Trondheim, undergoing overhaul. The pocket battleship *Lützow* had arrived from the Baltic in Altenfjord on December 18 to relieve the *Scheer*, which had returned to Germany for refit in early November. That left the *Hipper* and the cruiser *Köln* as the only large warships in Norwegian waters. *Scharnhorst*, *Prinz Eugen*, and five destroyers were scheduled to transfer from the Baltic to Norway in January.

After nearly a three-month winter hiatus, the Allied convoys resumed in December 1942 with the convoy designation numbers changed from PQ and QP to JW (outbound) and RA (return), and the sequencing began with JW-51A. Convoy JW-51B left Loch Ewe on December 22 while JW-51A arrived in Murmansk on Christmas Day 1942 without loss. Convoy JW-51B—14 American and British ships loaded with 2,046 vehicles, 202 tanks, 87 fighters, 33 bombers, 11,500 tons of fuel, 12,650 tons of aviation fuel, and over 54,000 tons of general cargo—would become famous as "the convoy that sank a navy."

On the 28th, a huge storm hit the region, and JW-51B became scattered, only to find itself within 200 miles of the German base at Altenfjord.

On that same day, Hitler, never a great supporter of his navy, was haranguing his admirals: "Our own navy is but a copy of the British—and a poor copy at that. The warships are not in operational readiness. They are lying idle in the fjords, utterly useless, like so much old iron."

Part of the problem was of Hitler's own making; he specifically forbade his large ships from attacking convoys, telling his admirals they were to be kept in reserve and used only to repel the expected Allied invasion of Norway. Once he learned of the approach of Convoy JW-51B, however, he countermanded his order and permitted the use of the battle fleet to sink it. *Hipper* and *Lützow*, however, were not to be used in a sea engagement, lest they be lost. Instead, six destroyers and a fleet of U-boats were to sail from Altenfjord on December 30 to intercept

U.S. Naval Institute

ABOVE: While the German battleship *Tirpitz* rides at anchor in the relative safety of a Norwegian fjord, the pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* and the cruiser *Admiral Hipper* steam toward the open sea on July 5, 1942. **OPPOSITE:** Victims of a German air attack, two Allied merchant ships billow smoke while sailors aboard other vessels look on in October 1942. Despite fearful losses, convoys continued to deliver vital supplies to the Soviet Union.

JW-51B. *Hipper* and *Lützow* would stand just beyond range of British guns and out of harm's way. The *Hipper* did lob a few shells at a British destroyer, HMS *Onslow*, causing heavy casualties, and sank the destroyer HMS *Achates*. Both the *Hipper* and *Lützow* could have inflicted greater damage on the convoy, but both commanders were too afraid of disobeying the Führer's order.

The British cruisers *Jamaica* and *Sheffield* took the *Hipper* under fire, with one six-inch shell from *Sheffield* and two from *Jamaica* striking the German warship, which quickly withdrew. A German destroyer was sunk by the *Sheffield* in the action, which became known as the Battle of the Barents Sea. *Hipper* and *Lützow* retreated back to Altenfjord with their five remaining destroyer escorts while JW-51B sailed on to its destination. When given the news, Hitler flew into one of his typical rages and made the snap decision that the German fleet should be scrapped. Admiral Erich Raeder, commander of the Kriegsmarine, tendered his resignation and was replaced by Admiral Karl Dönitz.

The year 1943 was a watershed year that finally saw the momentum of war swing over to the Allied side. February 1943 saw the Red Army utterly destroy the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad, and the gods of war began to smile on the Allies.

In combination with improved antisubmarine warfare techniques, including new, sub-killer weapons such as the Mark 24 acoustic aerial torpedo and the 24-barrel ship-launched mortar known as the "hedgehog," the Allies were slowly gaining the upper hand.

In 1943, the United States became fully engaged in the land war against the Germans. Following the invasion of North Africa, the U.S. Army gained confidence on the ground and helped the British end the Axis threat there in May. This victory was followed by the successful invasion and expulsion of enemy forces from Sicily in July, soon to be eclipsed by the amphibious assault on Italy proper.

Early war plans had also called for 1943 to be the year when a cross-Channel invasion of France from England to relieve German pressure on the Soviet Union would be launched but, with so many ships tied up to support the Mediterranean Theater and the massive build-up men and equipment in England, the invasion was pushed back to 1944.

After running one convoy each in January and February, the shipments to Russia through the Barents Sea were temporarily suspended.

National Archives of Canada

Their merchant ship sunk by enemy fire, survivors of the harrowing ordeal are plucked from their lifeboat by crewmen of a Canadian rescue vessel.

The suspension was to allow the pivotal Battle of the North Atlantic to take place from March 12-17, 1943. Convoys HX229 and SC122—88 merchant ships and 15 escorts—were bound for Europe from New York, via Halifax, Nova Scotia, on parallel courses. Lying in wait for them were 42 U-boats. During the running battle that lasted five days and nights, the Germans fired 90 torpedoes and sank 22 merchantmen totaling 141,000 tons. Only one U-boat was lost and three damaged. German officials called it the "greatest convoy battle of all time."

The Allies agreed. "The Germans never came so near to disrupting communication between the New World and the Old as in the first twenty days of March 1943," soberly admitted the British Admiralty. During the first three weeks of March, the Allies had lost 97 merchant ships and escorts, for a total of 500,000 tons.

This was a situation that could not continue; the Murmansk Run was suspended until September in order for the menace in the North Atlantic to be dealt with. Roosevelt ordered Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, commander in chief, United States Fleet and chief of Naval Operations, to transfer 60 Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers from the Pacific to the North Atlantic to halt the depredations by the U-boats. The antisubmarine offensive proved successful; in May, 18 of 49 U-boats operating in the North Atlantic were sunk and, on May 22, Admiral Dönitz halted submarine operations in the area.

In September 1943, the British Admiralty decided to stop worrying about the *Tirpitz* and do something about her. An earlier secret mission to blow up the battleship in October 1942 failed when an attack by small human torpedoes was aborted at the last minute. A new mission, using midget subs, was mounted. On September 20, the submarines X-6 and X-10 slipped into Kaafjord, at the far end of Altenfjord, and set off charges beneath *Tirpitz*'s hull. Although the midgets sank and some of their crewmembers were killed, the battleship was heavily damaged and put out of commission.

American shipyards in 1943 were hitting their stride and delivered 20 million tons of new merchant ships. In late 1943 and early 1944, American shipbuilders switched from constructing Liberty ships to building "Victory" ships.

Learning lessons from the shortcomings of the Liberty ships, the Victory ship designers set the frames inside the hull 36 inches apart as compared to the 30 inches of spacing in the Liberty ships. Such a change made the Victory ships' hulls more flexible and less likely to split apart, as had happened with numerous Liberty ships under attack or when the steel turned brittle in sub-zero conditions. The first Victory ship to be completed and launched was the SS *United Victory*, which slid down the ways of a Portland, Oregon, shipyard on January 12, 1944.

The Victory ships were slightly bigger and faster than the Liberties, powered by steam turbines that cranked out between 5,500 to 8,500 horsepower. Their cruising speed was 15-17 knots (approximately 18.5 miles per hour). Each one was 455 feet in length and had a beam of 62 feet. Like the Liberty ships, each had five cargo holds. Each could carry 10,850 deadweight tons, or 4,555 net tons. Typically, a Victory ship had a crew of 62 civilian merchant sailors and 28 naval personnel.

The shipyards' output was tremendous: a total of 414 Victory cargo ships and 117 Victory attack transports would be built during the last 18 months of the war.

With the German Navy feeling the pinch of the Allies' concentrated counteroffensive, convoy after convoy made the Murmansk Run in the fall and winter of 1943 without losing a single ship to enemy action.

On December 26, during the Battle of the North Cape, perhaps the northernmost battle ever fought, the battlecruiser *Scharnhorst*, after attempting to attack Convoy JW-55B, was hit by British warships and sunk.

In 1944, the Germans renewed their attempt to cut off the flow of goods to Russia, but it was a feeble attempt. U-boats were being sunk by the dozen. Only five merchant ships were lost in Jan-

uary and none in February, March, or April.

In March, the Admiralty decided to have another go at *Tirpitz*, which was nearly finished with her repairs. A Fleet Air Arm attack, supported by battleships, was mounted, and the *Tirpitz* took 14 bomb hits but did not sink. The damage, however, was enough to keep her out of action for another three months. Subsequent aerial attacks against her were dismal failures, but on November 12, 1944, RAF heavy bombers finally succeeded in sinking her, lying at anchor in a fjord near Tromso. Over 1,000 of her crew were trapped inside her capsized hull and lost.

In May, U-boats sank one ship out of 45 in return convoy RA-59, but three U-boats paid the price. In June, the long-awaited Allied invasion of Normandy took place, sounding the death knell for the Third Reich. Still, the shrinking number of U-boats carried on, sinking a handful of cargomen and escort ships in August and October 1944, and February and March 1945.

The final battle of the convoys took place on April 29, 1945. Convoy JW-66 (22 ships) had arrived safely at the Kola Inlet while the return convoy, RA-66, was attacked by 14 U-boats lying in wait outside the inlet. In the action, the British frigate *Goodall* took a torpedo and went down with heavy loss of life—the last major warship of the Royal and Dominion Navies lost in the war against Germany. Two U-boats were sunk. RA-66 arrived safely in the Firth of Clyde, Scotland, on May 8, 1945. By then, Hitler was dead, Nazi Germany was no more, and the war in Europe was at last over.

The legacy of the U.S. Merchant Marine in World War II is one mixed with pride and sorrow. Worldwide, approximately 8,300 Merchant Marines died at sea. Another 12,000 were wounded, of whom at least 1,100 died from their wounds; 663 men and women were taken prisoner. One in 26 Mariners serving aboard merchant ships in World War II died in the line of duty—a greater percentage of war-related deaths than all other U.S. services.

The records of the Arming Merchant Ships Section of the Fleet Maintenance Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations show that some 347 merchant ships were dispatched to North Russia from August 1941 through April 1945. Most of the losses were sustained between January 5, 1942, and March 14, 1943. In this period 143 ships departed for North Russia and 111 arrived. These figures illustrate that about one out of every three ships was lost. According to the records of the War Shipping Administration, after this early period of heavy losses, only 10 ships out of more than 200 were lost on the North Russia run for the remainder of the war.

The Royal Navy also suffered. The cost included one escort carrier severely damaged, two cruisers, six destroyers, and numerous other escorts sunk in the frigid and often stormy waters of the Arctic. Thirty thousand British merchant seamen, about 25 percent of those in the British Merchant Marine, died in the North Atlantic. Yet, their sacrifice and devotion to duty meant that millions of tons of vital cargo were delivered to the Soviets, enabling them to fight off the German invaders. All played an important role in the eventual Allied victory and must not be forgotten.

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On the German side, the losses in submarine crews were staggering. Some 28,000 enlisted U-boat crewmen died out of a total of 40,000, and more than 713 U-boats were sunk. The Germans also lost *Scharnhorst* and, indirectly, *Tirpitz*, among other ships and aircraft.

The Liberty ships and their cousins, the Victory ships—and all those who built them—also must never be forgotten. Between 1939 and 1945, the U.S. Maritime Commission ordered 5,777 ships of all types totaling 56.3 million deadweight tons, or almost five times the size of the nation's entire 1939 fleet—the greatest construction of ships ever undertaken in history. Had it not been for these ships and their courageous crews, it is probable that the war would have lasted many months, if not years, longer, and perhaps had a different outcome.

Between 1941 and 1945, a total of 41 convoys made the Murmansk Run carrying an estimated $18 billion in cargo from the United States, Great Britain, and Canada. Among the millions of tons of supplies were an estimated 12,206 aircraft, 12,755 tanks, 51,503 jeeps, 300,000 trucks, 1,181 locomotives, 11,155 flatcars, 135,638 rifles and machine guns, 473 million shells, 2.67 million tons of fuel, and 15 million pairs of boots.

The last Liberty ship was built in June 1945, and almost all of them are now gone. Most were broken up for scrap, some were cut up and reassembled into barges for the coastal trade, and a few were deliberately sunk in shallow waters to serve as artificial reefs for fish habitats.

Only two are known to survive intact. The *Jeremiah O'Brien* is docked at Pier 45, Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco, where it serves as the National Liberty Ship Memorial. In 1994, it sailed to and from Normandy to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Operation Overlord. Several times each year, volunteers fire up one of the original boilers and cruise around the bay.

The only other remaining Liberty ship is on the East Coast, the *John W. Brown*, moored in Baltimore Harbor and operated as a museum.

In 1944, the GI Bill gave members of the Armed Forces who served at least 90 days anywhere between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, major benefits such as educational assistance, home loans, and job preferences. As he signed the historic bill, President Roosevelt said, "I trust Congress will soon provide similar opportunities to members of the Merchant Marine who have risked their lives time and time again during war for the welfare of their country."

Unfortunately, the Merchant Marine was not accorded such opportunities for many decades. Opposition by some in the military, and pressure from groups such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars who still believed the myth that the Merchant Mariners were overpaid for their wartime services stood in the way. As of 2006, the VFW still refuses to recognize Merchant Mariners as veterans of World War II, even though the U.S. government does; in 1985, those who served in the Merchant Marine were given official U.S. Coast Guard discharges and granted veteran's status.

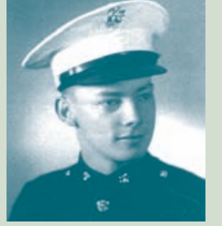
Each year, on or around May 22, National Maritime Day, the Maritime Administration sponsors a Merchant Marine Memorial Service, which honors American seafarers who lost their lives in service to their country.

President Roosevelt paid homage to the unflagging efforts of Merchant Mariners when he said, "[Mariners] have delivered the goods when and where needed in every theater of operations and across every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult and dangerous job ever undertaken. As time goes on, there will be greater public understanding of our merchant fleet's record during this war." □

Denver-based Flint Whitlock is a frequent contributor to WWII History. *He has authored four books and dozens of articles on World War II and is working on a history of American submariners.*

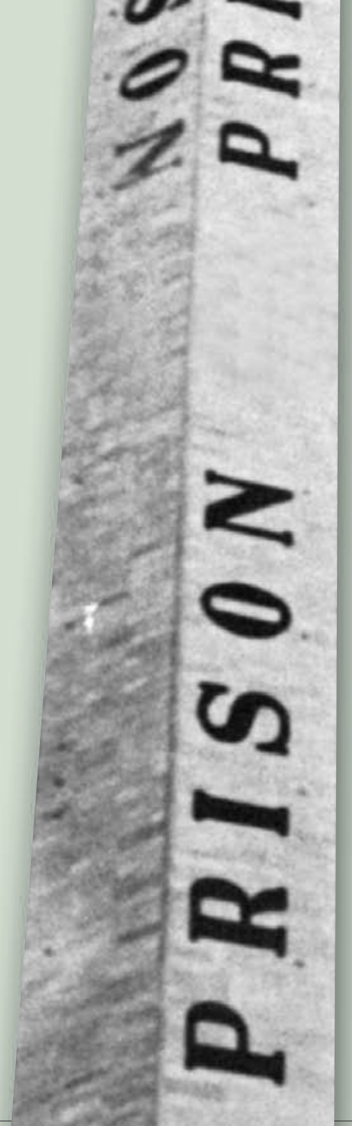
American and Filipino troops raise their hands in surrender after emerging from Malinta Tunnel on the island of Corregidor. The victorious Japanese captured thousands of prisoners during the largest mass capitulation of U.S. military personnel in the nation's history. **OPPOSITE:** The roof of one of the buildings at Bilibid prison is painted to prevent Allied bombers from attacking it.

FROM SHANGHAI TO CORREGIDOR


Author's Collection

A veteran of the Fourth Marines remembers an eventful tour of duty.

BY ERIC NIDEROST



National Archives

DONALD L. VERSAW JOINED THE U.S. MARINE CORPS ON ARMISTICE Day, November 11, 1939. After basic training and a stint in the Marine Corps Operating Base Band in San Diego, he was sent overseas to join the Fourth Marines Band in Shanghai. Versaw arrived in China in the summer of 1940, when Japan's aggressive moves in Asia had already brought it on a collision course with the United States.

The Fourth Marines had been stationed in China since 1927, guarding American lives and property at a time when China was experiencing social and political turmoil. Their mission was something of an anomaly at the time—a regiment of leathernecks not serving aboard U.S. naval vessels or guarding U.S. embassies, but patrolling one of the great cities of the world, a place that was a legend in its own time.

The Marines' mission became more delicate after the Japanese Army took over greater Shanghai in 1937. The Fourth Marines helped defend the International Settlement, an enclave that was largely run by Anglo-American interests. The Japanese, much to their frustration, had to leave the Settlement alone … at least until Pearl Harbor.

The Marines handled the situation with a combination of strength, diplomacy, and tact. The Japanese were constantly testing, probing, searching for weaknesses in a deadly game of political and military cat and mouse. Several confrontations occurred between Marines and Japanese soldiers, little reported at the time, which could have led to war as early as 1937. The Fourth Marines did a magnificent job, but the unit was withdrawn in November 1941. Their position was untenable; if the Japanese had invaded the Settlement, the roughly 800 Marines could have done little against 300,000 Japanese troops.

The Fourth Marines were pulled out of Shanghai and reached the Philippines just days before the war began. After Pearl Harbor, Versaw and other bandsmen traded musical instruments for rifles. He became a member of E Company, Second Battalion, Fourth Regiment. The Fourth was eventually transferred to the island of Corregidor in Manila Bay.

National Archives

ABOVE: During the uneasy days of the 1930s, a U.S. Marine Corps band marches through the streets of Shanghai. The most cosmopolitan of Chinese cities, Shanghai was home to a large enclave of European and American expatriates. RIGHT: A smiling Don Versaw is pictured during a veterans' reunion.

Author's Collection

Versaw and his fellow Marines endured the terrible siege of Corregidor only to suffer an even crueler fate when the island fortress surrendered in May 1942. Then, Versaw began a harrowing 40-month ordeal as a prisoner of the Japanese, both in the Philippines and in Japan. In July 1944, he was transferred to Japan aboard one of the infamous "hell ships." Thereafter, he became a forced laborer in the Nittetsu-Futase Tonko Kaisha (coal mine company) on the island of Kyushu, suffering the cruelties and privations that were so common for those unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of the Japanese.

After repatriation, Versaw served in Korea as a member of a photo unit with the 1st Marine Division. After his retirement from the Corps, he worked in the aerospace industry on the NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Apollo and Saturn programs. Today, he lives in Southern California and is active in several POW organizations.

WWII: *First, a little background. When were you born, and where?*

DV: I was born on June 23, 1921, at home in Bloomington, Nebraska. Father had very little of his own land. Mostly he worked land belonging to others who were unable to do farm work. He used a team of horses on a share basis. The most common crops were corn, wheat, and oats. On his own ground he raised sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, and sometimes melons and squash.

I think the effects of the Depression were probably universal and affected people in all walks of life in varying degrees, depending on the circumstances. People who did farm work benefited more than people who lived in cities, because in cities there was little opportunity to grow things to feed their families. The Depression era also coincided with a drought, which was devastating.

WWII: *Why did you join the U.S. Marine Corps?*

DV: I joined the Marine Corps hoping to become a Marine musician, acquire experience, and save money in order to go back to college. I was quite small and youthful in appearance, boyish, really, and had little chance competing with the many older jobless men in the workplace.

WWII: *You already played an instrument in school?*

DV: I had been a better than average music student since the eighth grade and learned to play an alto horn belonging to the school. My sister purchased a bass Mellophone, a French Army issue and relic of World War I. I played it during my last two years in high school and one year in college.

WWII: *How were recruits chosen for band duty?*

DV: Those selected to serve as musicians in the Marines had to bring their skills with them. It was one of the few occupational specialties that required prior acceptable ability at the outset. The usual way that Marines were chosen for band duty was by auditions.

WWII: *The old pre-World War II Marine Corps had an almost legendary quality that resonates even today. What was the old Corps really like?*

DV: Likely there was not much difference between prewar Marines and those afterward as the 'legend' would have it. It was a smaller Marine Corps that was managed at the top by a few World War I veterans but run by old staff non-coms who often delegated their authority to second-term corporals and sergeants. The level of education was generally below the high school level. Drug abuse was not a problem, but alcohol and tobacco were. It was a time of great mutual respect among the troops. Stealing one's sweetheart or shack mistress happened sometimes, particularly on foreign assignments. Sunburn and venereal disease were court-martial offenses.

WWII: *When did you sail for Shanghai?*

DV: I was ordered to Shanghai at the end of May 1940, and went aboard the USS *Chaumont*, one of two Navy transports in San Diego. The ship called at all ports where Navy and Marine units were deployed—San Pedro, Mare Island, Fort Mason, Pearl Harbor, Wake Island, Guam, Midway Island, Manila, and finally Shanghai sometime during the month of August. It was truly the original slow boat to China.

WWII: *In the 1930s and 1940s Shanghai was something of a legend in its own time, vice ridden and corrupt, yet also China's most modern, progressive city. What were your impressions?*

DV: In terms of population, Shanghai seemed to burst at its seams the whole time I was there. Of course, refugees from the fighting in Japan's war with China were the major cause. The International Settlement was a haven for refugees from all over the world, including Russians [White Czarist Russians] and more recently those from the war in Western Europe [Jews]. The city was neat and managed as well as could be under the circumstances. I felt comfortable in this amazing city where I could met

all my needs with even less than the $21 a month we were given.

Shanghai was the most desirable duty station because of the exchange rate of U.S.-Chinese money. This increased the purchasing power of the lowest paid ranks to a much higher level. Goods and services in the local market were less costly and more available. There were roller rinks, tennis and handball courts, and great places to eat like Sunya's and Jimmy's Kitchen. [The latter was run by an American ex-serviceman.]

WWII: *What was your life like as a bandsman?*
DV: The band was quartered in Billet Williams on Ferry Road where the PX (post exchange) was located and the headquarters company offices. There were no messing facilities at that location, so we either walked or hired rickshaws to eat at the headquarters mess hall. Rehearsals were held every weekday morning. If parades or practice parades were scheduled, we went into formation and marched through the city streets to the parks.

WWII: *Shanghai's International Settlement was by then the "lonely island," surrounded by Japanese-occupied territory. There were several incidents involving Marines and Japanese. The foreign military contingents, largely British and American, went on alert on one occasion in July 1940, due to the tensions. What do you remember about this tense time?*
DV: My arrival in August 1940 was after the alert, but precautionary barricades and procedures were still being followed. As a bandsman, I made no patrols, but the MP company and the battalions made security runs and inspections. I didn't see the action myself, but there was an incident with "Chesty" Puller some time before that was still the talk of the regiment. Japanese soldiers were attacking the sampans tied up on our [International Settlement] side of Soochow [Suzhou] Creek. They were busy abusing the Chinese living on the boats and chopping holes in the hulls. Chesty took a dim view of this and ran them off with a Marine squad. It was said he almost started World War II doing that!

WWII: *Shanghai was also seething with spies and agents of both the Japanese and Chaing Kai-shek's Nationalist government. Acts of terror were common, including bombings, kidnappings, and murder. Did you see any of this?*
DV: The presence of terrorists was always apparent. The new car agency adjacent to the Fourth Marines Club was bombed soon after I came on station. We sometimes encountered dead and mutilated bodies when going to morning mess. Once there was a cardboard box on the street containing two severed human heads. There was still an expression of fear on their faces.

National Archives

ABOVE: In 1932, a detachment of well-armed Marines from the cruiser USS *Houston* stands watch in front of a sandbagged blockhouse at the Ichang Ros Bridge in Shanghai.
BELOW: American artillerymen fire a round from one of their big guns on Corregidor.

National Archives

WWII: *The Fourth Marines were finally withdrawn in late November 1941, only a few days before the outbreak of war. Unfortunately, at least in retrospect, the regiment sailed to the Philippines, not the United States.*

National Archives

ABOVE: On Corregidor, a U.S. Marine sergeant explains how to load and fire a machine gun as attentive Filipino soldiers listen. RIGHT: Food and medicine are dropped by parachute at Bilibid prison in the Philippines in February 1945.

How did you feel about the redeployment?
DV: As the SS *President Harrison* raised anchor and moved down the Whangpoo [today the Huangpu River] in late afternoon, it was such a dramatic sight—taking a last look at that dramatic waterfront skyline. Rain clouds lingered in the west in such an array as to create shafts of light shining down upon the magnificent old city. It was a dramatic and moving experience I'll never forget.

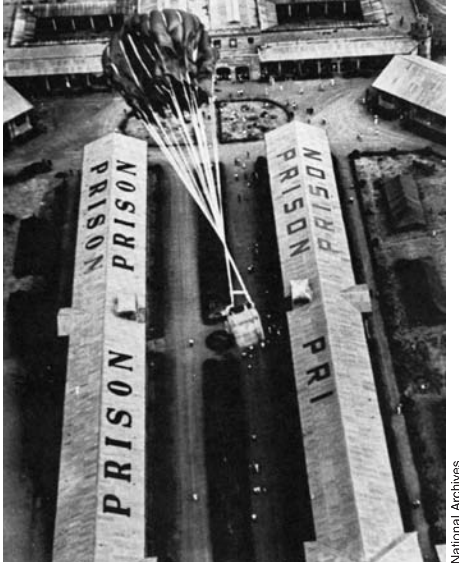
WWII: *The Fourth Marines arrived safely in the Philippines, but shortly thereafter Pearl Harbor was attacked and the U.S. was at war. At the time, the Fourth Regiment was stationed at Olongapo, on the island of Luzon. What was this posting like?*
DV: Olongapo was an old, well-established naval station —lots of palm trees and expanses of green grass along well-maintained roads and streets. The base was attacked by a flight of Japanese bombers. Most of the bombs fell on the barrio [native quarter], and the Marines suffered our first casualties. A few days later, while [I was] standing guard at the old coaling docks, a flight of Japanese planes followed our PBY aircraft returning from patrol and attacked them sitting on the water. They caught me literally with my pants down. It was more frightening than embarrassing, and the experience left me feeling that going to the head [toilet] would be the most likely time for the enemy to strike!

WWII: *Eventually, the Fourth Regiment was transferred to Corregidor, the island fortress in Manila Bay.*
DV: At first I thought it was a real break for us to be sent to Corregidor. I heard it was armed to the teeth and protected by a great minefield. The day after I arrived, December 29, 1941, the island suffered the first of many air raids. I took shelter in a ditch on the side of a dirt road. From my location I couldn't see the enemy planes. Bombs began to fall, and small planes began to strafe the built-up areas above me.

The attack continued seemingly forever. After the "all clear" was sounded, I got up, and when I looked back I noted the ground was wet, outlined in sweat from my shaken body. When I went back to the barracks, my stuff was just about where I had left it, but it was all covered in cement and plaster dust. There were great holes in the ceiling of the so-called "bomb proof" million dollar barracks!

WWII: *As the siege dragged on, conditions deteriorated, didn't they?*
DV: Rations were cut in half sometime during the month of January 1942, and it went downhill after that. Near my position was the field kitchen for H and E Companies on the South Shore Road. Sergeant Harmon cooked cereal such as oats, corn, or wheat and served it with a squirt or two of canned milk. To give hungry men only a taste of something seemed to me a cruel tease. Yes, we did get a slab of horse or mule meat once or twice. It was very coarse and tough and tasted wild, but it was meat. By the end of April, the rations were so small they barely made our mess kits wet.

WWII: *Corregidor was forced to surrender in May 1942, ending organized American resistance in the Philippines. After surrender, the garrison stayed on the island for a time before being transferred to camps on Luzon. On the way to the POW camps, American soldiers and Marines were paraded through Manila to advertise the Japanese triumph to the Filipinos. What do you remember of that experience?*



National Archives

DV: The March of Shame it was called, from Paranaque Beach to Bilibid prison. I was there and made the march. Compared to the Bataan Death March, however, it was Mardi Gras. Oh, we were a motley looking mess. The purpose of it [the march] was to lower the prestige of the white man in the Philippines. I don't think it worked very well. Filipino groups along the line of march came out to serve water from tubs with the best tea cups. They also distributed rolls, cookies, and rice with bits of fish and shrimp wrapped in banana leaves. The Japanese guards tried to discourage them and ran them off the street in a few places.

WWII: *Much of your time in the Philippines was spent at Clark Field, where Japanese bru-*

tality was common. What happened there?

DV: I witnessed the punishment of the senior American POW, an Army captain by the name of Fleming. We all had to remain out in the blazing sun without canteens or water bottles for hours, but the worst part was to see our POW commander beaten while being tied to a post. Occasionally, a prisoner was beaten at the gates if he was discovered trying to bring in "contraband" like extra food.

The effects of malnutrition were evident at Clark, as they were in other camps, in the late weeks of 1942. First, it was the pellagra, perhaps aggravated by so much exposure to sunlight but also due to lack of B vitamins. That was followed by dry beri-beri, which we called sore and aching feet. We also had a sudden outbreak of eye ulcers. Had it not been for the distribution of International Red Cross packages, it would have been a greater disaster for us.

WWII: *After about two years as a prisoner in the Philippines, you were transferred to Japan via one of those infamous hell ships with hundreds of men stuffed into cargo holds with little food or water for days on end. What do you recall about this experience?*

DV: The 17-day voyage to Japan from Manila, in July 1944, was indeed the worst experience of captivity. The ship was the *Nissyo Maru*, a rusty-red, mottled transport. I scrambled down the ladder into the hold only to find that it was already crammed full, as far as I could see, with half-naked, sweating men in ragged beige-colored tatters. Nearly 700 men had already entered the hold before me. Behind were another 800 men to come.

As the newcomers jammed into the hold, those who had already been there 40 minutes, 30 minutes, 20 minutes began to drop. They were fainting. By midday, with a tropical sun, it was like being in a giant steam iron. There were no latrines—just a tub that filled sometimes to overflowing. There was a mess around the tub that was beyond description. There were 1,600 prisoners aboard. Finally, we were divided into roughly two groups. The larger group was confined into the forward hold. The *Nissyo Maru* arrived at the port of Moji, Kyushu, on August 3, 1944.

WWII: *You were then put to work as a slave laborer in the Nittetsu-Futase Tonko Kaisha (coal mine company) on the Japanese home island of Kyushu. How difficult were the circumstances?*

DV: I was first sent to work in a mine that was very deep underground. I believe I had the night shift. I wore a cap with a fiber board receptacle for the miner's lamp. My clothes consisted of a pair of very thin cotton shorts and a shirt with no buttons, just ties. I was issued one pair of rice straw sandals, but they didn't last the first night. After that, I went barefoot until B-29s [Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers] dropped clothing to us immediately after the war. I also carried my issue "*ebu*" [short-handled hoe] and "*kakita*" [basket with half-open side.] During the winter, personal hygiene became a problem. Our tatami mats became infested with fleas and our clothes with lice. These conditions persisted until insecticide powder was dropped to us at the end of hostilities.

WWII: *Was there any attempt by the POWs to sabotage mine operations?*

DV: That was something that each prisoner or small groups of prisoners dealt with when possible. When possible everyone did little things that helped curtail the enemy's war effort. But to do something on a significant scale might well mean there would be less food and less heat and increased privation. Yet, some cars that were supposed to contain only coal went out of the mines with a great deal of rock underneath. No matter how small the effort, it left us with a feeling we were still in there trying to help our country.

WWII: *After liberation, you continued to serve in the Marine Corps, then later had a successful career in the aerospace industry. But in recent years there has been controversy over how the current Japanese government has done little or nothing to acknowledge Japanese war crimes and atrocities of the past. What is your perspective on that issue?*

National Archives

ABOVE: During the arduous march from the Bataan Peninsula to Cabanatuan prison, American prisoners are allowed a brief respite from the dust and heat. A Japanese soldier, with fixed bayonet, watches the captives, many of whom would die along the way.

DV: American POWs got nothing back except back pay and ration money. Moreover, they were denied rights to sue Japanese companies for compensation—companies that used them for slave labor. I don't understand how our rights were bargained away by diplomats. I fault our own American government for that. The current Japanese government should exercise the compassion they are famous for and apologize for the excesses of the past. It would not hurt them to do that. □

Eric Niderost is a frequent contributor to WWII History. *He is a college professor in Hayward, California.*

BY PAT MCTAGGART

DISASTER AT BRODY

The German Army found itself facing a massive challenge in the spring of 1944—the possibility of a war on three fronts. In 1943, the Allied invasion of Italy diverted several sorely needed divisions from the Eastern Front, and the inevitable invasion of the continent by Allied forces in Great Britain tied down German divisions spread from the south of France to Norway.

On the Eastern Front, things were going from bad to worse. In the north, the siege of Leningrad was finally lifted when a massive Soviet offensive struck Heeresgruppe Nord (Army Group North) on January 14. During the offensive, three Red Army fronts slashed through German positions from Leningrad to Velikiye Luki, rupturing the main line in several places.

German forces, plagued by sub-zero temperatures and deep snow, struggled toward the west as Russian armored and mechanized units surged forward in the hope of surrounding and destroying them. It was a close thing for the Germans, but a new line of resistance was finally established, anchored in the middle by Lake Peipus.

In some places, the offensive had pushed German forces back more than 150 miles. Casualties had been enormous on both sides, and several German divisions had lost most of their heavy equipment. Soviet equipment losses were also high, but they were soon replaced from the now fully organized Russian industrial centers. Replacements for the dead and wounded also arrived throughout the spring to fill the gaps left by the heavy fighting.

The German front in southern Russia also suffered a series of hammer blows during the winter and into the spring of 1944. In December 1943 and January 1944, the 1st and 2nd Ukrainian Fronts attacked Field Marshal Eric von Manstein's Heeresgruppe Süd (Army Group South) from their strong bridgeheads on the German side of the Dniepr River.

Blizzard conditions hampered German counterattacks as the Russians continued to drive on the Dniester and Bug Rivers. General Eberhard Raus's 1st Panzer Army found itself cut off by the rapid Soviet advance, but it fought a brilliant rear-guard action behind the Russian lines. Supplied by airlifts, Raus conducted a fighting withdrawal and eventually made it safely out of the Red Army's grasp.

Caught

Hot on the trail of retreating German soldiers who have moments earlier abandoned the cover of a disabled Panther tank, Red Army troops advance on the run during their successful offensive in the summer of 1944.

akg-images

in the pincers of a massive Soviet offensive, German Army Group Center was virtually destroyed.

Farther south, Field Marshal Ewald von Kleist's Heeresgruppe A (Army Group A) was forced to retreat in the face of an attack from the 3rd and 4th Ukrainian Fronts. As the Germans pulled back, elements of the 6th Army and 8th Army were surrounded and destroyed. Von Kleist was forced to abandon the important Black Sea port of Odessa on April 10, while his 17th Army, which had been trapped in the Crimea since late December, was destroyed in early May.

By the time the Soviet offensive ran out of steam, most of the Ukraine had been reclaimed and the Red Army had made inroads into Germany's ally, Romania. The new front now stretched from Odessa, north to about 50 miles south of Brest-Litovsk.

As the result of the Soviet attacks in the north and the south, Field Marshal Ernst Busch's Heeresgruppe Mitte (Army Group Center) now formed a vast bulge that encompassed most of Poland and part of western Belorussia. German commanders inside the bulge watched nervously as their comrades to the north and south were relentlessly pushed back by the Russian offensives. They knew that it was only a matter of time before it was their turn.

The onset of the muddy season gave the Germans a much needed respite from the pounding they had taken. While the Russian Front commanders occupied themselves with reforming and reinforcing their combat-weary divisions, the Oberkommando des Wehrmacht (OKW—the German High Command of the Armed Forces) scrambled to find replacements for the men that had been lost. Several new divisions, many not yet fully trained or equipped, were also sent to the front to meet the expected resumption of Red Army assaults once the ground was firm enough.

One of those newly formed divisions was the 14th SS Freiwilligen Division "Galizien" (14th SS Volunteer Division "Galicia"). Galicia, basically the western half of the Ukraine, had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire prior to the end of World War I. From 1917 to 1920, the Ukraine was an independent state, but it was caught in the crossfire of the Russo-Polish War, which ended its brief life.

At the end of hostilities, the western Ukraine fell under Polish control, while the Soviet Union swallowed up the eastern half of the country. The fiercely independent Ukrainians fought a shadow war against both countries, but with their homeland already torn in half, there was little they could do against the military might of either nation.

With the onset of World War II, Galicia was once again plagued by invasion—this time from the Soviet Union. The reign of terror that followed lasted almost two years, and it cost the lives of thousands of Ukrainian nationalists, with thousands more being deported to Soviet labor camps.

The advent of Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, brought the Ukraine a new conqueror. In many instances, German units were greeted as liberators with the traditional bread and salt as they passed through Ukrainian villages and towns.

Luckily for the Ukrainians, the man responsible for governing Galicia, SS Brigadeführer (brigadier general) Otto Wächter, was more enlightened than most of the German administrators in the East. He handled the Ukrainians under his control carefully, seeking cooperation from the population instead of using the heavy-handed methods practiced by his peers. For the most part, Galicia remained one of the most peaceful of the occupied Eastern territories during the early years of the war.

After the debacle at Stalingrad, even the most racially driven Nazis began to realize that something had to be done to replace the hundreds of thousands of German troops that had been lost during the previous 18 months. Wächter seized the opportunity by suggesting to Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler that Ukrainians could be used to fill the ranks of the Waffen SS. After some thought, Himmler agreed that the already existing Galician Police Regiment could be used as the nucleus for a combat division.

Between 70,000 and 100,000 men stepped forward to volunteer for the new division. Those who were not chosen for the 14,000-man unit, but were still physically acceptable, were incorporated into five new regiments of police. In the summer of 1943, the unit underwent training in the General Government (what was now left of Poland). April 1944 found the unit at Neuhammer, Silesia, for more training.

Many of the Ukrainian officers in the division had served in the Austro-Hungarian Army during World War I. The native noncommissioned officers of the division were a somewhat undistinguished group, and the enlisted men, although enthusiastic, had little or no military training at all. German officers and NCOs formed the cadre of the division, but many of them were substandard soldiers that were considered expendable by the units that had supplied them. In the opinion of many of the officers that observed the division at the training grounds, the 14th showed promise, but it would take several more months to bring it up to the standard necessary to meet the Red Army in combat.

The commander of the 14th SS Division "Galizien" was SS Brigadeführer Fritz Freitag, a man who was disliked by many of his contemporaries. Described as an abrasive opportunist, Freitag was born in Allenstein, East Prussia, in April 1894. He was a volunteer in World War I and joined the East Prussian Security Police following the conflict.

National Archives

ABOVE: A German soldier scans the horizon from a defensive position on the outskirts of a Soviet city. He holds a Soviet-made submachine gun. **OPPOSITE TOP:** A German soldier peers anxiously over his shoulder in a crowded trench on the Eastern Front. Thousands of German troops were caught in a Red Army vise near Brody and killed or captured. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Field Marshal Walter Model (left), commander of German Army Group North Ukraine, confers with General Arthur Hauffe, commander of the XIII Army Corps, near Brody in 1944.

On September 1, 1940, Freitag joined the SS. In 1941, he was on the staff of the 1st SS Brigade, and he later served with the SS Cavalry Division, the 2nd SS Motorized Infantry Brigade, and the SS Police Division, where he was the acting division commander. After attending a division commander's course, he took over the reins of the "Galizien" Division in April 1944.

While the division continued to train, the war in the East began to intensify once again. Field Marshal Busch was becoming increasingly concerned about the position of his Heeresgruppe Mitte. Logically, the Heeresgruppe should have been pulled back to straighten its lines, which would also provide a reserve of divisions that could be used to parry any Soviet breakthrough that might occur when, as everyone presumed they would, the Russians began their summer offensive.

Logic, however, was not in Hitler's vocabulary in 1944. He demanded that every foot of conquered soil be held, no matter what the cost. Looking at large maps of the Eastern Front, he totally disregarded the realities of the military situation. A Soviet attack must surely come, but where and when would the offensive begin? In the north, a knockout blow would bring the Baltic States under Russian control and would almost certainly cause the Finns to sue for peace. The south offered rich possibilities with the Romanian and Hungarian oilfields as the prize. In the center, Heeresgruppe Mitte also offered a tempting target with its overstretched lines.

In Moscow, the question was not where to strike, but when to strike. The bulge containing Heeresgruppe Mitte was just too tempting to pass up. Since mid-April, Stavka (the Soviet High Command) had been planning a massive pincer attack designed to crush the Heeresgruppe. The plan would be skillful, both in its conception and in its execution.

German intelligence, eyes on the northern and southern fronts, declared that the area north of the Pripyat Marshes would remain quiet. Therefore, while Berlin hastened to gather meager reserves to meet the expected offensives on either side of Heeresgruppe Mitte, Busch was basically left to make do with what he had.

While the Germans looked elsewhere for signs of an impending attack, the Russians were conducting a masterfully disguised buildup opposite Busch's Heeresgruppe. The Red Army had always been superb at camouflage and deception, but the Soviet Front commanders that would lead the attack outdid themselves in preparing for the assault.

The Russians also had a second plan ready depending upon the initial results of the attack against Heeresgruppe Mitte, and an offensive was also scheduled against Field Marshal Walter Model's Heeresgruppe Nord Ukraine. It seems that Hitler did his level best to confound historians by constantly renaming Heeresgruppen (army groups). After Hitler dismissed von Manstein in late March, he divided Heeresgruppe Süd into Heeresgruppen Nord Ukraine and Süd Ukraine in April.

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Model was one of Hitler's favorite generals. He could get away with things, including unauthorized withdrawals, that would have ended most Wehrmacht generals' careers. His Heeresgruppe consisted of the 1st and 4th Panzer Armies and the 1st Hungarian Army.

Heeresgruppe Nord Ukraine occupied a defensive line running from Kovel in the north through the southern Pripyat Marshes and the eastern bank of the Bug River to the Romanian border in the south. A secondary defensive line, the Prinz Eugen position, lay about 10-15 miles behind the main line positions.

Ever on the move, Model visited his various corps commanders, giving advice as well as taking suggestions about what could be done to strengthen the German line. After reading German intelligence estimates concerning the areas where Russian attacks could be expected in the coming summer, Model asked Hitler to transfer the LVI Panzer Corps from Heeresgruppe Mitte to Heeresgruppe Nord Ukraine.

Appealing to Hitler's distaste for defensive warfare, Model proposed using the corps for a preemptive strike against the Soviet forces opposing him. Although Model's attack would never be carried out because of swift-moving events elsewhere, the LVI Panzer Corps was passed from Busch's to Model's control. With it went 15 percent of Heeresgruppe Mitte's divisions, 33 percent of its heavy artillery, 50 percent of its tank destroyers, and 23 percent of its self-propelled assault guns. It was a move that would cost Busch dearly.

Meanwhile, events in the West had taken an ugly turn for the Wehrmacht. On June 6, Allied forces poured ashore on the Normandy coast. All eyes shifted toward the savage battle in the Normandy hedgerows that would decide the fate of Western Europe. Pushed to the limit, German commanders in the West begged for reinforcements and supplies, which were being blasted into oblivion because of the enormous Allied air superiority.

As the Allies expanded their bridgehead on the European continent, the Soviets struck in the East. Stavka chose June 22, the third anniversary of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, to begin the assault against Heeresgruppe Mitte.

After a devastating barrage, the Red Army struck with overwhelming strength. German divisions literally disintegrated in the human and steel storm that blew from the East. Within a week, Busch's front had crumbled, and tens of thousands of German troops were fleeing for their lives.

German commanders on either side of Heeresgruppe Mitte listened nervously to reports of the rout. If something was not done to stop the Soviet steamroller, their own flanks would be untenable. Knowing Hitler's penchant for standing fast, the German generals not yet under attack knew that they would face the impossible dilemma of disobeying Hitler's no-retreat order or sacrificing their men for no sound military purpose.

Keeping an eye on the north, Model kept up his tours of the front. One of the corps under his command was General Arthur Hauffe's XIII Army Corps, which was part of the 1st Panzer Army. Born in 1891, Hauffe served in the Kaiser's Army in World War I and continued his service in postwar Germany's 100,000-man Reichswehr. During the interwar period, Hauffe assumed several staff positions, and in the first two years of World War II he was chief

of the general staff of the XXV Army Corps and the XXXVIII Panzer Corps.

Following a one-and-a-half-year posting as the chief of staff to the German military mission to Romania, Hauffe took command of the 46th Infantry Division in February 1943. Five months later, he replaced General Friedrich Siebert as commander of the XIII Army Corps.

Hauffe's corps defended a stretch of the front about 60 miles east of L'vov. The terrain was fairly flat—good tank country—and the German divisions in the sector would have to rely on man-made defenses and obstacles to stop any Soviet attack.

One of the few significant landmarks in the area was the Ukrainian town of Brody. A rail net, one of the few in the sector, connected the town with L'vov, and several roads and trails also merged there. If a Russian attack were to occur, the town would certainly be one of the Red Army's main objectives.

Searching for more units to bolster the lines on either side of Heeresgruppe Mitte, orders were sent in late June for the Galizien Division to suspend its training in Silesia and prepare for departure to the Eastern Front. Train after train funneled the division eastward toward an uncertain future. As advance elements of the division arrived in the Ukraine, Army Major Wolf-Dietrich Heike, the division's chief of staff, learned that the Galizien was to deploy in secondary positions behind the main line occupied by Hauffe's XIII Army Corps near Brody.

Heike had hoped that the Galizien's baptism of fire would come slowly with the division defending a relatively quiet sector so that the troops could gain some basic combat experience. A quick look at the map told Heike that his was a forlorn hope. The XIII Army Corps was a plum waiting to be picked, and the Galizien's positions could do little to stop a Soviet offensive once it started in that sector.

Major Heike's arrival at Hauffe's headquarters came as a surprise to the corps commander. Hauffe had never heard of the Galizien Division, and Heeresgruppe Nord Ukraine had obviously failed to inform his headquarters that the division was on its way. Heike showed Hauffe his orders and told the general that his division had been assigned to the sector around Brody. After discussing the situation in the corps sector with Hauffe's chief of staff, Heike set out to the division assembly point.

Trains carrying the division began arriving in the assigned sector during the next few days. What was supposed to be a defensive line consisted of a few trenches and gun pits with no overhead cover. Heike put the men to work immediately. New trenches needed to be dug, and key positions had to be fortified. It would take time to make the line defensible, but time was something the Galizien did not have.

Across the lines of Heeresgruppe Nord Ukraine, General Konstantin Rokossovsky's 1st Belorussian and General Ivan S. Konev's 1st Ukrainian Fronts prepared for battle. The news from the commanders fighting against Heeresgruppe Mitte was good, and the two Soviet generals were anxious to join the fray. Konev, facing the 1st Panzer Army and part of the neighboring 4th Panzer, had a powerful force under his command. His Front included three tank armies (1st Guards, 3rd Guards, and the 4th), two cavalry-mechanized groups under Lt. Gen. V. K. Baranov and Lt. Gen. S.V. Sokolov, and seven infantry armies (1st Guards, 3rd Guards, 5th Guards, 13th, 18th, 38th, and 60th). There were also several independent tank, artillery, and mechanized units incorporated into the 1st Ukrainian Front to give it an added punch.

While Konev and Rokossovsky waited impatiently for the order to attack, the battle in Heeresgruppe Mitte's sector caused Hitler to become slightly more flexible with some of Model's suggestions concerning Heeresgruppe Nord Ukraine's position. In late June, the Führer agreed that Kovel and Brody would no longer be designated "fortified places" (a designation that was a literal death sentence to any units charged with defending them).

In the midst of Model's attempts to give his Heereesgruppe a better position from which to meet a Soviet attack, he was recalled to Berlin and transferred to the Western Front to try and stabilize the situation there. His replacement was Generaloberst (colonel general) Josef Harpe, a competent officer with a background in armor. Harpe was able to implement several of the redeployments that Model had started, but he did not have the influence with Hitler to continue past that point.

Hitler allowed the 4th Panzer Army to abandon Kovel altogether in early July and to move its line westward about 15 miles, which straightened the front. A week later, he allowed the 4th Panzer Army to shorten its line around Torchin.

Watching the Germans disengage was too much for Konev. Although the attack against Heeresgruppe Nord Ukraine was scheduled to begin on July 14, the fiery Soviet general jumped the gun by one day, hoping to catch the Germans flat footed as they moved their divisions back to their new positions.

Konev was born in 1897 and served in the Czar's Army during the brutal battles on the Russian Front in World War I. In 1918, he joined the Communist Party and the Red Army, serving as a political commissar during the Russian Civil War. The interwar years gave Konev a chance to further his military education and advance in rank. He was a divisional commander and was acting commander of the Trans-Caucasian Military District at the time of the German invasion.

In the first crucial year of the war, Konev commanded the Kalinin Front, defending the vital

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The mainstay of the Red Army's field artillery, 76mm cannon of the 2nd Belorussian Front thunder against German positions. With a range of more than 12,000 yards, shells from these guns could often hit areas well behind the German lines.

approaches to Murmansk. When the Soviets regained the initiative in 1943, Konev proved himself as a skillful and resourceful commander on the offensive. His reputation for conducting successful operations came close to that of the master himself—Marshal Georgi Zhukov.

The July 13 attack surprised German and Russian commanders alike. The Soviet generals had everything coordinated for a July 14 assault, and timetables had to be thrown out the window as orders came for the early attack.

Konev struck the retreating right flank of the 4th Panzer Army. Because of the premature attack, his main strike force, General V.N. Gordov's 36th Army, got off to a rather sluggish start. The disengaging German divisions had mostly occupied their assigned secondary front line positions, and Gordov's men ran into a wall of fire as they approached the enemy.

The objective for Gordov was the town of Rava Russkaya, about 50 miles to the west. As the Soviets hit the secondary German line, Gordov's divisions slowed to a crawl. The Red Air Force, also upset by the pushed up attack, was slow to take to the air but finally joined the battle by midday.

Although most of the German divisions held fast, one of the units on the 4th Panzer Army's right flank began to break. General Walter Nehring, a former commander of the Afrika Korps, was in temporary command of the Panzer Army. He ordered one of his panzer units forward to bolster the crumbling division, but the Red Air Force intervened, making the movement a slow and dangerous affair.

Ever the opportunist, Konev threw General N.P. Pukhov's 13th Army into the battle once weak points were found in the German line. A savage battle ensued around the town of Gorokhov, causing heavy losses on both sides. By the end of the day, the town was in Soviet hands, and Pukhov's divisions were moving to help Gordov's men batter the Prinz Eugen position.

In the XIII Army Corps sector, the opening barrage of Konev's assault was heard by everyone from Hauffe down to the lowest ranking enlisted man. The commanding general went over his maps and checked the latest intelligence reports again and again. Hauffe had no illusions about what was facing him, and his chief of staff, Oberst (Colonel) Curt von Hammerstein, agreed that the situation looked extremely bleak.

The XIII Army Corps left flank was held by General Johannes Nedtwig's 454th Sicherheit (Security) Division. Next came General Gerhard Lindemann's 361st Infantry Division. Korps Abteilung C (an ad hoc formation made up of the remnants of the 183rd, 217th, and 361st Infantry Divisions) was on Lindemann's right. The unit was commanded by General Wolfgang Lange, and it had the strength of a weak infantry division. General Otto Lasch's 349th Infantry Division, another weak unit, held the right flank. The final unit under Hauffe's command, the Galizien Division, occupied the secondary line about eight miles west of Brody.

A blistering Soviet barrage on July 14 sounded the death knell for Hauffe's army corps. Forward positions were obliterated as the shells hit home, and the Red Air Force, with virtually no opposition, roamed the battlefield at will. With the successes of the previous day still having their effect on the Germans, Konev did not hesitate to commit his second-echelon forces for a general attack.

Colonel General P.S. Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army was ordered to support Pushkov's continuing attack in the north. The Soviet attack was slowed by elements of the 16th and 17th Panzer Divisions, which were fighting fiercely to stem the assault, but other formations were able to make better headway. A two-pronged attack was now underway, threatening to destabilize the entire front of the 1st Panzer Army.

In Hauffe's sector, Konev struck the Germans at their weakest points, the divisional boundaries. Lasch's 349th was hit at its juncture with the neighboring 357th Infantry Division. Another Russian attack sliced through the 96th Infantry Division in an adjacent sector. Konev poured more units through the gap, extending the penetration to about 10 miles behind the German lines.

At the junction of the 454th Sicherheit Division and the 361st, another attack resulted in a break that severed communications between the two divisions. Both units threw their almost nonexistent reserve into the gap and managed to stop the Russians from advancing farther after heavy fighting. The situation was extremely fluid along Hauffe's entire front as the Soviets searched for further weak points in the German defenses.

Undertaking particularly hazardous duty, Red Army soldiers go door to door to dislodge German snipers from a village on the Russian steppe in September 1944.

National Archives

At the headquarters of the Galizien Division, orders were received to go to full alert. There was only one problem—neither Brigadeführer Freitag nor Major Heike was at the headquarters. Both men had been at the 454th headquarters when the Soviet attack hit, and they were delayed until midmorning before they could return to their own division. When they finally arrived, they found orders waiting that directed the division to form up immediately and head southwest to seal a hole in the line and also to engage Soviet units that had broken through.

The lead regiment of the division soon met groups of retreating German infantry, some in total disarray. This did nothing to calm the nervousness already felt by many in the untested unit. Discipline prevailed, however, and the Ukrainians kept fixed on their goal.

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ABOVE: Burning houses as they retreat, German soldiers give ground in the face of the Soviet juggernaut unleashed in the summer of 1944.The destruction and loss of life on the Eastern Front reached staggering proportions. BELOW: Dead German gunners lie sprawled beside their wrecked antitank weapons after heavy Soviet armor has swept them aside.

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A chance meeting with a Red Army tank unit gave the Galizien its first taste of battle. Using satchel charges and bundles of grenades, elements of the lead regiment were able to drive back the Soviets, who left several smoldering tank hulks on the field. Its business finished, Freitag ordered the regiment and the division to continue their march toward its objective.

The real baptism of fire for the entire division took place on the afternoon of July 14 when the Galizien hit the flank of a Soviet assault unit that had found a weak point in the Prinz Eugen position. Freitag's 30th Waffen Grenadier Regiment was first into battle. It initially made progress, but the appearance of the Red Air Force caused the regiment to retreat with substantial casualties.

Although the Russians had paused to regroup after stopping the attack, neither side had gained a decisive advantage. With the arrival of Freitag's 29th and 31st Waffen Grenadier Regiments, a stalemate developed. As night fell, both the Ukrainians and the Russians settled in to await the next day.

For the most part, Hauffe's army corps and the rest of the German forces facing Konev had managed to prevent a general breakthrough that would have resulted in disaster for the entire panzer army. German forces were holding on, but they were vastly outgunned and outmanned. The Red Air Force and Red Army artillery had caused huge casualties among the Germans, and some of the previously understrength battalions were now down to company size. With no relief in sight, Hauffe and the other corps commanders waited with great trepidation for Konev's next move.

On July 15, Konev ordered further probing attacks along the length of the 1st and 4th Panzer Armies' fronts, hoping to find more weak spots. Soviet units that had already broken through were roaming behind the German lines, forcing German commanders to squander their reserves in attempts to intercept and destroy the marauding enemy.

A limited counterattack stopped the Soviet 38th Army and actually forced it to retreat a small distance. In the 60th Army's sector, however, Red Army engineers, supported by tanks and infantry, managed to make a small break in the German line.

Throughout the 15th, Freitag's Galizien Division was in constant contact with the Russians it had met the previous day. Both sides were fighting furiously, and casualties mounted as the Ukrainians and Russians engaged in hand-to-hand combat. The chaotic fighting caused units to lose communications with each other, and the Ukrainians, afraid that they would become isolated, gradually began to pull back in small groups.

As more and more men began retreating, company and battalion officers did their best to keep the retreat from becoming a rout. The Soviets sensed victory, but the Galizien was finally able to form a cohesive line a few miles from the main battle area. Calmed by their officers, the Ukrainians were able to blunt the enemy attack, which, if successful, could have spelled disaster for the division.

Konev studied his maps carefully into the early morning hours of the 16th. The breaches in the German line were small, and it would take valuable time for the Red Army infantry to widen the gaps. Moving decisively, Konev sent word to Colonel General M.E. Katukov's 1st Guards Tank Army to move through the gaps in the 4th Panzer Army's lines without infantry support. The move caused those units of the panzer army that had still been holding out in front of the Prinz Eugen position to start a fighting retreat toward that line.

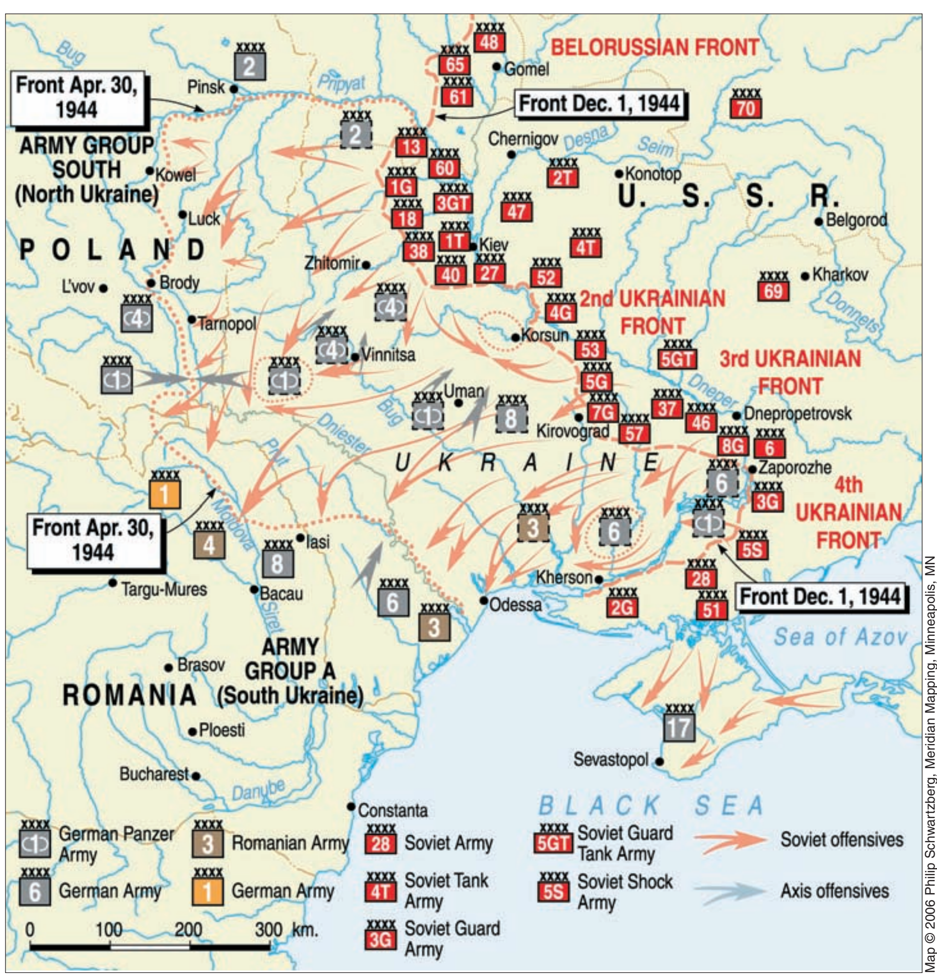
In the 1st Panzer Army's sector the front held more or less firm. The action to the north caused Raus to issue orders for a withdrawal to begin the following day. During the 16th, the front line divisions were taxed to the limit, fending off Russians attacks and, at the same time, preparing to move to new positions.

The German withdrawal started well enough, but a fighting retreat is a plodding affair. With Katukov's 1st Guards Tank Army now making good progress against the 4th Panzer Army, Konev unleashed Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army, which had been pulled out of the line after supporting the infantry attacks on the 14th. Like Katukov's units, Rybalko's tanks and mechanized infantry slipped through the still narrow gaps in the 1st Panzer Army line. The two Guards Tank armies now formed the prongs of a massive pincer, inexorably moving toward each other.

By now, the Prinz Eugen line was no longer an option for the Germans. Both the 4th and 1st Panzer Armies were literally fighting for their lives. Konev's tank armies had outflanked the German position, and infantry units were pouring through the gaps that were opened by the two cavalry-mechanized groups that had just been committed to the attack.

Red Air Force fighters and ground attack aircraft limited the effectiveness of the armored units left to the German commanders, but when the panzers were able to face Soviet tanks, they managed to put up a spirited defense. A Kampfgruppe (Combat Group) of the 8th Panzer Division managed to destroy several Russian tanks in the XIII Army Corps' sector, but the Soviets always seemed to have more replacements to continue the push forward.

Konev countered the German armor by releasing Colonel General D.D. Leliushenko's 4th Tank Army. The fresh units rushed forward to meet their opponents, but local counterattacks by German armored and infantry forces in neighboring sectors caused Leliushenko to order several battalions to rush to the aid of the 60th Army, which was suffering the brunt of the enemy action.



heavy fighting.

As the dismal reports kept coming into Hauffe's headquarters, a sense of despair gripped his staff officers. There was little that they could do as the situation maps showed the Russian armored thrusts spreading like the tendrils of some horrific monster, and some were already burning documents in anticipation of what was to come.

At Freitag's headquarters, the Galizien received word that there were no forces available to repel Red Army units that had broken through northwest of Brody. The SS general looked at his chief of staff as Heike read the report. Both men knew that the information spelled disaster not only for them, but for the entire army corps. With nothing to stop the northern Soviet breakthrough units, encirclement was a certainty.

Late on the 17th, the fate of the XIII Army Corps was finally sealed when the northern and southern Soviet armored pincers met about 30 miles west of L'vov on the bank of the Bug River. Hauffe ordered his army divisions to fall back, and elements of the 361st moved into a new line on the western flank of the Galizien. Other units were ordered toward the southwest, where it was hoped that a breakout attempt could be launched.

The following day, Model allowed the entire 4th Panzer Army, desperately fighting to the north of Hauffe, to begin a general withdrawal to the Bug River. Heeresgruppe Mitte had now been reduced to a shambles, making the 4th Panzer Army's left flank untenable. The panzer army itself was in terrible shape. On the 18th it reported that it only had 20 serviceable tanks and 154 self-propelled guns.

With the 4th Panzer Army retreating, and seeing the success of his armored spearheads in the south, Konev saw the opportunity to annihilate Hauffe's army corps. The German divisions were already being compressed into a pocket around Brody, so Konev issued orders for more infantry units to move to the area as quickly as possible to complete the encirclement and to finish the job of destroying the corps.

Hauffe was not about to wait for the infantry ring to close any tighter. The Soviet armored units had indeed linked up on the previous day, but there were still gaps in the enemy lines. Contacting General Hermann Balck, commander of the neighboring XLVIII Panzer Corps,

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In the Galizien sector the situation continued to be confused. The division, especially the 30th Regiment, had been badly mauled during its brief life at the front. While the 30th regrouped, the other two regiments of the division manned positions that effectively blocked further Soviet advances in the Sasiw and Taseniw valleys.

Although German blocking positions slowed Konev's forces in some areas, they could do nothing to change the overall position of the XIII Army Corps. The Soviet armored pincers were just too strong, and the following infantry was gradually able to overwhelm German strongpoints bypassed by the tanks. Nedtwig's 444th Sicherheit Division was slowly disintegrating, and Korps Abteilung C was down to battalions instead of regiments because of the

The recently liberated city of Manila suffered an acute water shortage until Allied units captured the vital Ipo Dam.

All photos National Archives

With a spillway for the Wawa Dam before them, three American infantrymen manning a .50-caliber machine gun provide cover for an advance patrol.

LEFT: An American soldier of the 43rd Infantry Division unleashes a deadly stream from his flamethrower during efforts to silence a Japanese pillbox.

IN FEBRUARY 1945, General Douglas MacArthur was poised to begin one of the great battles of his career. In front of him was Manila—capital of the Philippines, principal city of the island of Luzon, and, since the previous month's invasion of the island at Lingayen Gulf, the chief goal of the Sixth Army. For nearly a month, he had poked, prodded, and pushed his methodical subordinates to drive toward the capital as rapidly as possible. ■ MacArthur's opposite number, General Tomoyuki Yamashita, was willing to let MacArthur have his prize. There was not enough food for the local population, the buildings were flammable, and the surrounding flat terrain made it difficult to defend—especially since the battle for the island of Leyte. That effort, which he had strongly advised against, had cost him tens of thousands of his best troops along with the prospect of air and naval support for the defense of Luzon. ■ So, Yamashita had ensconced his men firmly into mountain redoubts guarding strategic locations on Luzon, thereby forcing the Americans to come to him. If he could not stop them from taking the island, he could at least make them pay for it. At best, a spirited enough defense might make the United States think twice about invading the Japanese homeland. At the very least, it would reduce the number of Americans available for that invasion. Unfortunately, naval leaders in Manila ignored Yamashita and refused to surrender—a decision that would lead to one of the most horrific and tragic battles of the war. ■ MacArthur knew that he would have to secure more than the city itself. It was imperative to seize its sources of water, which lay in the Sierra Madre mountains to the east. His men had taken the Novaliches Reservoir, 10 miles northeast of Manila, on February 5. But this was fed via aqueduct from Ipo ("EE-po") Dam, which straddled the Angat River a further 15 miles northeast. Ten miles south of this was Wawa Dam, near the village of Montalban. With these dams in the hands of the Japanese, the situation would be precarious; the reservoir could not suffice for long without water from the mountains.

A CAMPAIGN

FOR WATER

BY DAVID LASHWAY

Taking the dams would not be easy. When General Yamashita had retreated to Baguio in northeastern Luzon, he had organized his forces into three primary groups. The Shobu Group, which he commanded himself, was the largest, consisting of 152,000 troops in the mountains north and east of Lingayen Gulf, where he could block the passes to the fertile Cagayan Valley, a source of food for his troops. A second command, the 30,000-man Kembu Group, was assigned to the Clark Field/Fort Stotsenburg complex and the surrounding Zambales Mountains/Subic Bay area. And then there was the Shimbu (martial spirit) Group, consisting of 80,000 men scattered throughout southern Luzon at Manila, Laguna de Bay, the Bicol Peninsula, and the Ipo and Wawa Dams.

The core of Shimbu Group ended up in this latter area after its commander, Lt. Gen. Shizuo Yokoyama, withdrew what forces he could from Manila. His troops were a mixed lot, having been hastily assembled from various areas and units, but formed a nucleus around the 8th and 105th Divisions, which had moved north from Batangas and the Bicol Peninsula.

The westernmost defenses of the 30-mile front began in high terrain two miles north of Ipo Dam, extended south-southeast to Mount Oro, and then to Mount Pacawagan near Wawa Dam, and continued to a point west of Antipolo. From there, the defenses turned southeast to the Morong River Valley and ultimately to Laguna de Bay. The 9,000-man Kawashima Force was in the north, protecting Ipo Dam; the 12,000-man Kobayashi Force was in the central sector near Montalban and Wawa Dam; and the 9,000-man Noguchi Force held the south, concentrating near Antipolo and extending south to Pililla on Laguna de Bay. Five thousand of Yokoyama's best troops were in reserve near the center of the line.

The Shimbu Group was well supplied, except for the Noguchi Force, much of which had been hurriedly withdrawn from the Bicol Peninsula. For food, Yokoyama would rely on the agricultural areas in the Bosoboso Valley and near Laguna de Bey and Lamon Bay. However, intensive agriculture had ceased in these areas early in the Japanese occupation, so any loss of their meager output would be disastrous.

Facing the Shimbu Group was the U.S. XIV Corps, headed by Lt. Gen. Oscar Griswold. The XIV Corps had been one of the U.S. Sixth Army's three prongs in the Luzon invasion. At Lingayen Gulf, while I Corps fought advance elements of the Shobu group on the left, XIV Corps advanced down the Central Plain toward Manila, taking a detour to seize Clark Air Field and battle the remainder of the Kembu Group. It was replaced in that campaign by XI Corps, which had landed at Subic Bay and advanced eastward along the top of the Bataan Peninsula.

Now, while XIV Corps was beginning a devastating battle in Manila, Griswold had to start planning an offensive against the Shimbu Group's mountain defenses. With insufficient manpower to attack the entire line at once, he would target the southern end first—the Noguchi and Kobayashi forces. Not only was Wawa Dam closer than Ipo Dam, but these forces, some of which were less than 15 miles from Manila, had artillery that was much too close for comfort. Furthermore, a southern campaign would cut off these groups from any reinforcements that might try to come up from farther south.

Map © 2006 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

American forces landing at Lingayen Gulf and on the western coast of Luzon confronted battle-hardened Japanese troops under General Tomoyuki Yamashita in the mountains outside Manila.

This was just what Yokoyama expected, so he had most of his reserves stationed in the Bosoboso Valley to meet this threat. This would have been a surprise to the Sixth Army commander, General Walter Krueger, who thought that the rough terrain and poor roads prevented the enemy from keeping a centrally located reserve that could support either or both of the southern and the northern positions. This was true enough for Ipo Dam, which was connected to Wawa Dam by only a narrow trail, but not true for the southern forces, which could be supplied via a new road. Furthermore, U.S. intelligence underestimated the size of the enemy. It was believed that only 12,000 to 13,000 troops were in the southern area, and 6,000 to 7,000 near Ipo Dam—in other words, about 20,000 troops instead of the actual 35,000 in this area.

Perhaps it was just as well for Krueger's peace of mind that he did not know this, for he was about to begin the campaign with a severe manpower shortage. MacArthur may have wanted the dams, but they were not at the top of his priority list. He also wanted to open a shorter sea route from Leyte, seize and develop ports all along the coast of Luzon, and begin operations in the central and southern Philippines. This last item was a detour that had been given no prior authorization by Washington, but that did not stop MacArthur.

Against this ambitious agenda, fighting the Shimbu Line in formidable terrain portended tying up scarce resources in a long campaign. It would be better to contain and reduce the enemy forces there, he wrote Krueger. So, on February 7, only two days after the orders had gone out to seize the dams, MacArthur diverted the Luzon-bound 41st Infantry Division to the southern Philippines. He then started plucking other battalions and regiments from Krueger's quiver, including the entire 40th Infantry Division. When it was all over, Krueger found that, instead of having 11 divisions and four regimental combat teams (RCTs), he had lost the equivalent of three divisions, and temporarily the 37th, which was being assigned to garrison duties in Manila.

Reluctantly, Krueger took the 6th Infantry Division (less the 1st RCT) from I Corps, knowing that this would weaken the campaign against the Shobu Group to the north, and gave it to Griswold's XIV Corps.

Griswold decided to charge the 6th with the task of capturing both dams. But, in accordance with the "south first" strategy, he would use the 112th RCT (attached to the 6th) to keep an eye on the Ipo Dam sector, while an advance against Wawa Dam and the southern Shimbu Line would jump off on a 13-mile front along the Marikina River and proceed east. Beginning from a point near Montalban, where the river, running west from Wawa Dam, turned south, the 6th would advance in the direction of the dam. On its right, the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division would seize

Antipolo and create a line that stretched southwest to Tagig, thereby securing the confluence of the Marikina and Pasig Rivers near the shore of Laguna de Bey.

On February 20, the 2nd's 7th Cavalry Regiment marched over the concealing ridge on the west bank of the Marikina River, crossed it, and seized Taytay the following day, while the 8th Cavalry Regiment occupied Tagig. Two days later, on the left, the 6th Division had a similarly easy time taking Montalban and crossing the two-mile-wide valley unmolested by Japanese artillery.

As the line proceeded to advance in the days ahead, however, the free pass came to an end. The American troops quickly encountered the difficulties that would face them throughout the campaign against the southern Shimbu Line. The initial, lower hills tended to be open, grass-covered slopes that allowed little opportunity for concealment beyond the bamboo- and brush-covered draws, and the barren summits were open to Japanese artillery and mortar attacks. But the going got even rougher as the Americans advanced eastward into higher, more desicated terrain, with hills of 1,200–1,400 feet, and topping 2,000 feet farther east. They were characterized by heavy woods, numerous streams, deep gorges, and sheer cliffs.

It was in this first chain of hills—Mounts Oro, Pacawagan, Mataba, and Yabang—that the Japanese had placed their initial defenses. They had managed to stock these positions with a wide variety of weapons, from rifles, mortars, machine guns, and grenades to antiaircraft artillery, antitank guns, 105mm howitzers, and 155mm guns. Some of the high-velocity guns had been captured from the Americans in Manila or at Clark Field three years earlier.

The Japanese also made use of 200mm and 447mm rockets. The former was propelled using frames of six parallel members about five feet long with three rockets fired simultaneously between the members. The rocket had seven propellant charges, and the shells were loaded with picric acid. They had a range of four to five miles. Although the Americans considered these rockets inaccurate, the concussions were powerful enough to cause numerous casualties in the 6th Division's 20th Infantry.

Weapons were generally deployed from a network of mutually supporting caves on both forward and reverse slopes. The sophistication of these defenses indicated that preparation had begun long before the invasion. Closely spaced to provide interlocking fire, such caves typically had a 10-foot shaft at the foot of which was a tunnel leading to a compartment. Four or five lateral tunnels led from the compartment, though one was discovered with 32 entrances. Each entrance was protected by sandbag or log bunkers, machine guns, and natural camouflage. Artillery would pop off a few rounds at the Americans and then withdraw into the caves for protection. A typical cave might hold 25 men.

TOP LEFT: Major General Leonard F. Wing, commander of the U.S. 43rd Division, confers with General Walter C. Krueger, commander of the Sixth Army. TOP RIGHT: Major General Edwin Patrick commanded the U.S. 6th Infantry Division. ABOVE: A Japanese fuel dump, hit by U.S. naval gunfire prior to the landings on Leyte by the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division, goes up in flames.

The Americans had encountered such defenses since the New Guinea and Solomon Islands campaigns and were evolving their tactics to counter them. A distinguishing characteristic of the Shimbu campaign was the Americans' heavy reliance on incendiary weapons. According to U.S. Army historians Brooks Kleber and Dale Birdsell in *The Chemical Warfare Service: Chemicals in Combat*, infantry commanders in previous campaigns had regarded the smokescreens provided by white phosphorous (WP) mortar shells as being superfluous in thick jungle cover. But the peaks of the Sierra Madre provided the Japanese with excellent observation points, so the ability of WP to conceal Allied activity became suddenly appreciated.

These shells also proved their effectiveness at inflicting casualties and burning away camouflage. This, combined with a shortage of high explosive (HE) shells, caused the ratio of WP to HE to rise from 20/80 to 40/60. As an example, some of the heaviest 4.2-inch mortar fire in the Pacific War would occur in the vicinity of Mount Mataba on April 6, when soldiers from the 82nd Chemical Mortar Battalion put up a 6,000-yard smokescreen. They maintained the screen for eight hours, at a rate of 16 rounds a minute for the first hour and 10 per minute thereafter, until they ran out of ammunition.

The other incendiary weapon characteristic of this campaign was a recent invention, the napalm bomb. This was an improvement over earlier gasoline bombs in that the soap-based napalm acted as a thickening agent that allowed the gasoline to burn long enough to transfer heat and fire to the target. A 165-pound bomb dropped from a plane would burn an oval of about 100 by 300 feet, denying camouflage to the enemy.

According to prisoners, the Japanese feared these "fire bomb" attacks more than anything else. They would sometimes leave even deep caves to emerge into the open, even though this left them vulnerable to the fragmentation bombing that followed. But soldiers had little chance whenever the technique of "skip-bombing" proved successful. If a plane got low enough, it could cause the bomb to skip along the ground like a stone tossed across water. This could be tremendously destructive if it bounced into a cave entrance; even if not killed directly by the bomb, many troops died due to the instant deoxygenation of the air.

The Japanese could intercept pilot messages sent in the clear, but they were unable to decipher any codes; nor were they able to jam radio frequencies. They were also unsuccessful in confusing attacking aircraft by firing smoke into American lines. However, the smoke from the napalm bombs would rise more than a half mile, so American pilots would have to make an upwind approach to maintain visibility.

Still, aircraft hits were not enough to do the job. Typically, the soldiers still had to go in themselves and seal the caves. Immediately after a bombing or shelling, they would toss in WP grenades or use flamethrowers or bazookas at the entrances, and then ignite several hundred pounds of TNT. When the last entrance was sealed, the Japanese would suffocate.

These flamethrower teams were supported by artillery and direct fire from tanks and tank destroyers. In a ground role, 40mm and 90mm antiaircraft guns and 105mm howitzers were

heavily used, both for reducing caves and reinforcing the field artillery (which the Japanese later claimed was employed too predictably to be fully effective). In this mountainous terrain, the American antiaircraft gunners learned to fire their shells in a straight line rather than allow the usual loft.

In one 48-hour period, the 2nd Cavalry Brigade took 137 caves and blew up 446 outlets. However, by March 4, they were still miles short of Antipolo, while the 6th Division was having a tough slog in its campaign against Mounts Pacawagan and Mataba. Both units had suffered heavy losses and received no replacements. Griswold felt that he had no choice but to shorten his lines, concentrating on the Noguchi Force and the southern part of the Kobayashi Force, hoping to eventually outflank both by taking the Bosoboso Valley and thus severing the Shimbu supply lines. He still did not know about Yokoyama's reserve troops in that valley or about the new road that would facilitate their movement.

Griswold did know that he was about to lose the 2nd Brigade and its parent division, the 1st Cavalry, to reassignment in southern Luzon. To replace it, Krueger could have chosen the 38th Division, which had seen little combat since finishing a tough campaign at Bataan's ZigZag Pass on February 15, but, on March 7, he decided to go with the 43rd, a more experienced division, even though it had spent the last 10 days helping the 40th fight the Kembu Group and would get little rest. Its 169th RCT would remain on the Kembu front, while its 103rd Infantry would move to the Shimbu Line immediately, ahead of the rest of the division.

With the arrival of the 103rd, Griswold decided not to wait for the rest of the 43rd. For two days, he launched a series of bombing attacks, with particular attention given to an area near Antipolo. On March 8, with little in the way of reserves, he sent the 6th Division and the 1st Cavalry (now reinforced by its 1st Cavalry Brigade, brought in from Manila) in an attack against Antipolo. The latter division encountered heavy resistance that included mortar, artillery, and rocket fire, and suffered heavy losses but pressed ahead and secured the high ground north and south of the town. The 103rd replaced the 2nd Brigade on March 11 and entered Antipolo unopposed the following day. Attached mechanized forces then made a 25-mile dash to the rear of strong Japanese positions near Teresa, thereby preventing the Japanese from fighting a delaying action back to prepared positions east of the Morong River Valley.

Meanwhile, the 6th Division, pressing against the hills overlooking the Marikina River Valley east of Montalban, also faced heavy opposition. Well supplied with artillery, Japanese defenders repeatedly made intense nighttime attacks that would reverse American advances made during the day.

This resistance managed to hold the 6th Division's left wing to only minor gains, but its 1st Infantry, on the right and facing less opposition, did break through to seize a strategic ridge rising to Mount Baytangan. Then, against more stubborn resistance, it penetrated deeply between the Kobayashi and Noguchi Forces to cut supply trails and seize an observation post.

This was too much for General Yokoyama. He ordered the Noguchi Force back to second-line defenses and drew up complicated plans for a counterattack on March 12, primarily against the 6th Division's salient. However, his three-pronged, seven-battalion assault plan was far too ambitious given the quality and deployment of his men and materiél, the rugged terrain, and the poor communications.

Unknown to Yokoyama, the 6th was planning its own offensive that day. Air and artillery bombardment disrupted the already poor Japanese transportation and communications so effectively that, when the Japanese attacked, the 6th was not even aware of it. It merely took note of persistent night infiltrations by small groups of Japanese from March 11-15.

Meanwhile, the 6th's attack was proceeding well, although they did lose their commander, Maj. Gen. Edwin Patrick, to a hidden machine-gunner. The 43rd Division had taken over for the 1st Cavalry just in time to exploit the withdrawal of the Noguchi Force, a process that left the latter's southern flank largely exposed. So, in spite of its difficulties, XIV Corps had made substantial progress, having driven a wedge between the Noguchi and Kobayashi Forces and having gone far toward turning the Shimbu Group left. The Americans had lost 295 killed against more than 3,300 for the Japanese.

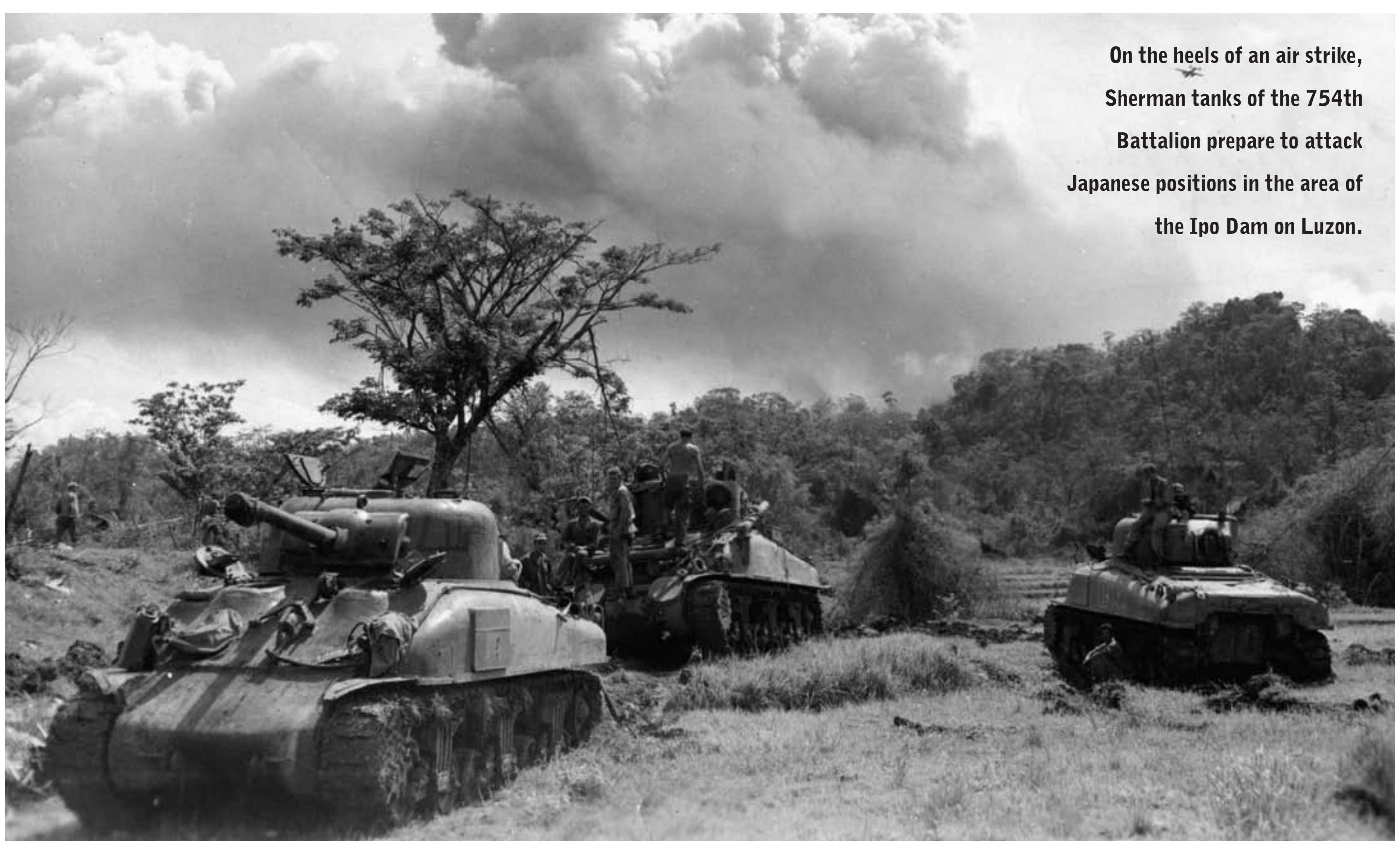
The XIV Corps now had new assignments to the south. On March 15, responsibility for the Shimbu operation passed to XI Corps, under Lt. Gen. Charles Hall. He sent the 43rd Division forward in a two-pronged attack. Its right column found little resistance, and by March 22 reached Pililla, about 12 miles southeast of Antipolo. But, at this point, Yokoyama was more concerned about the left flank of the Kobayashi Force, which he ordered held at all costs. So, the bulk of the 43rd, pressing up the Morong River Valley toward Mounts Quitago, Tanauan, and Yabang, and the right wing of the 6th, advancing toward the Mt. Baytangan/Purro/Lamita line southeast of Wawa Dam, found the going a lot rougher. A network of well-camouflaged caves had to be disposed of one by one. When a strongpoint could not be reduced, troops had to be detached, which reduced the strength of the main attacking force and considerably slowed the advance.

On March 17, when the 6th's 1st Infantry was driven back by heavy Japanese 150mm mortar fire and sweeping automatic weapons fire, they adjusted their tactics and proceeded by a series of patrol actions, followed by consolidation and mop-up. Although safer, this further slowed the advance. By March 22, the 43rd had only gotten as far as Mounts Quitago and Tanauan, while the 1st Infantry was still trying to take Mount Baytangan. The 6th's 20th Infantry, on the left, had similarly bogged down before less well organized but diffuse resistance in its drive toward Mount Mataba, and a diversionary attack by the 63rd resulted in heavy U.S. casualties.

This slow progress was costing the Americans 55–60 casualties in each regiment daily—an attrition rate that was about to bring the advance to a halt. "For days the only real gain was time," says an XI Corps history. "Time to push roads up through the hills, to resupply and evacuate the wounded, roads to allow tanks and M-7s to be brought up over the hills for direct support of the Infantry."

At this critical point, Yokoyama decided that the situation on his left was hopeless, and he began withdrawing his troops in that area further into the mountains. Over the next few days, surprised American forces advanced quickly. On March 24, the 43rd seized Mount Yabang and, on the 27th, the 6th took Mount Baytangan. In the days ahead, the Americans

"THE AGGRESSIVENESS AND ACCURACY OF ENEMY ARTILLERY IN THIS AREA WAS EXTRAORDINARY. ANY UNUSUAL ACTIVITY BY OUR INFANTRY, OR OTHER ELEMENTS, BROUGHT IMMEDIATE SHELLING."



On the heels of an air strike, Sherman tanks of the 754th Battalion prepare to attack Japanese positions in the area of the Ipo Dam on Luzon.

would continue to press forward in the general direction of Wawa Dam from the south and east while, farther south, cutting off Japanese supply routes from the Bicol Peninsula. While fierce fighting lay ahead in isolated strongpoints, the southern flank of the Shimbu Line had finally been turned and most of the Noguchi Force destroyed.

The gains had not come easily. As Army historian Robert Ross Smith states in *Triumph in the Philippines*, the campaign by XIV and XI Corps could have achieved the results more quickly had they been at full strength, instead of "holding out scant reserves and expecting normal results from generally understrength units." Furthermore, he credits Yokoyama for holding out so long, given "the heterogeneous nature of [his] forces, the preponderance of second-class, ill-trained troops, the inadequate strength of the Noguchi Force for the mission assigned it, poor communications, and the gradual deterioration of control all across the group's southern front." He cites Yokoyama's well-conceived defenses, advantages of terrain, and, not least of all, "the willingness of the Japanese soldier to fight and die in place no matter how hopeless his situation."

Changes were in order. Since striking north from Mount Baytangan on March 28, the exhausted, understrength 6th Division had made only negligible progress. On April 3, General Hall shortened its front, which released the bulk of its relatively fresh 63rd Infantry for use in a new attack against Mount Mataba. It also allowed him to focus on his northern flank, which heretofore had only been lightly screened by patrols of the 112th Cavalry RCT. The 112th had been charged with probing enemy defenses in the Ipo Dam area; now, with intelligence reports indicating increased enemy activity, Hall wanted to conduct a reconnaissance in force toward the dam. He paired the 112th with the 43rd's 169th RCT (newly retrieved from combat against the Kembu Group) to form a task force for this purpose and dubbed it "Baldy Force" in honor of its follicle-challenged commander, Brig. Gen. Julian Cunningham.

The most direct approach to Ipo Dam was along Metropolitan Road, a two-lane road that led through steep palisades at Bigti and then four and a half miles east to the dam. The limestone palisades posed a particular problem, since they were honeycombed with Japanese-occupied caves. But an attack on either flank would have to advance over terrain characterized by jumbles of rock and brush outcroppings that provided ideal sites for enemy caves and camouflage. A reconnaissance was necessary, but on the ground, since Japanese antiaircraft defenses limited use of liaison planes.

On April 7, the reconnaissance advanced, with the 169th coming from the southwest and the 112th from the west. The 112th, testing the defenses astride Metropolitan Road, encountered much stiffer resistance and was stopped by intense mortar and artillery fire on the 10th some 7,000 yards west of the dam. The Japanese counterattacked continuously for 24 hours. The 43rd Division history relates, "The aggressiveness and accuracy of enemy artillery in this area was extraordinary. Any unusual activity by our infantry, or other elements, brought immediate shelling." An intelligence report surmised the presence of "at least 2 Bns of artillery," including 120mm antiaircraft guns and even a 170mm naval gun. The reconnaissance was called off on April 11, having established that, while the road to the dam presented a stiff challenge, the southwest approaches were but lightly defended.

This knowledge would be useful when the time came, but, as far as Krueger was concerned, that time was not quite at hand. He recognized that XI Corps would require more than its present strength for further attacks against the dams and so began planning to shorten its lines by transferring its southernmost assignments to XIV Corps. In the meantime, the hill-by-hill advance toward Wawa Dam continued. The 43rd drove north from Bosoboso to attack forces on Mount Mapatad, and the 6th secured

Mount Mataba on April 17, putting it in a position to attack Mount Pacawagan, just two miles from the dam, from the south as well as the west.

On April 18, Krueger reassigned the southern Infanta/Santa Maria/Famy/Siniloan zone to XIV Corps. There had been indications that enemy remnants had been escaping from those areas to Infanta and thence to the Shimbu Line; XIV Corps would need to seize Infanta to cut them off.

This must have been welcome news to the hard-pressed General Hall. But then, the following day, Krueger received a radio message from MacArthur that revealed that the Japanese were not the only ones with communication problems.

MacArthur indicated that the water shortage was now becoming acute, "cutting daily consumption in Manila to one half and depriving south side of river of any city water except what is carried in tanks. In summary CMA water shortage is bringing back danger of epidemic of enteric disease from which city was apparently escaping. Outbreak of real magnitude might well prove great military disaster. This situation will be remedied as soon as the reservoir in the Montalban area is secured. What is your estimate as the time when this will be accomplished?"

The phrase "reservoir in the Montalban area" stumped Krueger. The Novaliches and San Juan reservoirs had been in American hands for over two months; the water installation that was closest to Montalban was Wawa Dam. But, at some point in the campaign, Krueger had learned something that MacArthur apparently still did not know: Wawa Dam was no longer a part of the Manila water system.

Since the completion of Ipo Dam in 1938, Wawa Dam had been disconnected in order to serve local irrigation projects. Ipo Dam constituted a third of Manila's water supply. Even if Wawa Dam were reconnected, it could only supply 15 percent. Two days after receiving MacArthur's plea, Krueger radioed back, "Do you mean Ipo Dam?"

Krueger's puzzled response seems to indicate that he thought that MacArthur was aware of the situation. It is not clear how Krueger learned of Ipo's primacy, what steps he may have taken to inform MacArthur, or why he did not go out of his way to discuss with him whether a change in tactics was called for. Nor is it clear why MacArthur's staff was not aware of the situation from the beginning, considering that the Americans had been governing the Philippines in 1938.

Krueger may not have seen any percentage in pressing the issue. In January, as his men battled stiff challenges from the Shobu Group en route to Manila, MacArthur had taken him to task for an advance that he considered plodding and that Krueger thought sensible, given the manpower shortage. Now, once again, Krueger had no reserves to throw at a new priority. His men were thoroughly engaged in an effort to roll up the Shimbu Line from the south, which made good strategic sense in that it cut off reinforcements. Further, the fact that MacArthur had raided the Sixth Army after the decision to seize the dams was hardly an advertisement for urgency.

ABOVE: Smoke and flames engulf Japanese defenses in the rugged terrain near Ipo Dam following an attack by fighter bombers of the U.S. Fifth Air Force. The effectiveness of the attack allowed ground troops to advance two miles virtually without resistance. TOP: The crew of an 8-inch howitzer nicknamed "Comanche" fires at pockets of Japanese resistance near Ipo Dam.

In his 1953 account, *From Down Under to Nippon*, Krueger suggests that he was on it. He states that Hall proposed creating Baldy Force "when I discussed ... the great importance of the early capture of Ipo Dam" and that "instructions to that effect" had already been given prior to MacArthur's plea. The nature of those instructions is not mentioned. While Ipo Dam may have been looming larger in his thinking, this was, once again, insufficient for MacArthur, who returned a terse reply on April 22: "Capture of Ipo Dam would provide definitive solution for Manila water supply problem and is highly preferable as objective."

There was no practical way to achieve this except by redeploying an already active division; the reassignment of some XI Corps responsibilities to XIV Corps made this possible, but still not without a lot of musical chairs. Hall ordered the 43rd Division to move north to Ipo Dam. Baldy Force would be dissolved, with the 169th RCT rejoining the 43rd and the 112th RCT assigned to the 38th Division along the extreme south of the Corps zone, on the north shore of Laguna de Bay. As of April 30, the 38th, which had been continuing to grind down the Kembu Group, would be the new player in the area. It would replace the 43rd, along with the 6th.

The 6th had been making significant gains. After the exhausted 20th Infantry had been replaced by the 37th Division's 145th Infantry, it had eliminated most of the opposition on Mount Pacawagan by the end of the month—and, as a whole, had eliminated 3,000 Kobayashi Force soldiers in April. However, the cost had been high.

Historian Smith states, "Morale was down, men and officers alike were tired and worn, and all units were sadly understrength, especially in combat effectives. Since 22 February the 6th Division had suffered approximately 1,335 combat casualties—335 killed and 1,000 wounded—and over three times that number of men had been evacuated from the front lines either permanently or temporarily for non-combat injuries, sickness, and psychoneurotic causes."

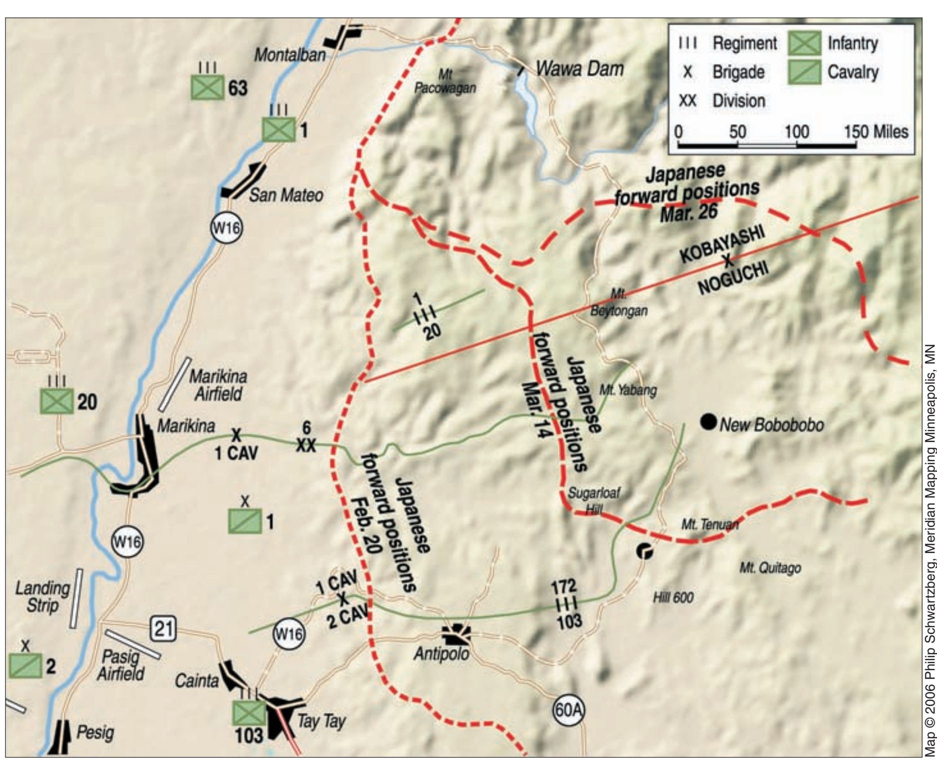
Malaria had increased for those fighting in the mountains, and an outbreak of flies that fed on rotting bodies led to a sharp increase in bacillary dysentery, which peaked by the end of April. In *Crisis in the Pacific*, historian Gerald Astor quotes infantryman Carlie Berryhill: "My regiment, the 63rd Infantry, had 112 days of continuous combat without a break. We wore our clothes sometimes for a month or longer without a change. It rained so much they never had much time to dry on your body. I remember a couple of times when I removed my socks they would just tear off in pieces."

The 6th's 20th Infantry would help garrison Manila, while the remainder would replace the 38th Division in the Zambales Mountains. Given the troop shortage, patrolling the rugged terrain for stray Japanese would have to suffice as a "rest period" for the 6th Division.

Now, Maj. Gen. Leonard Wing, the 43rd's commander, turned his attention to the attack on Ipo Dam. The Baldy Force reconnaissance had revealed the difficulty of advancing directly up the well-fortified Metropolitan Road from Bigti toward the dam. At the same time, the light resistance south of the road indicated that perhaps Yokoyama did not expect a large attack to proceed over such forbidding ground. If so, Wing decided to show him otherwise.

The main thrust of the attack would be led by the 103rd Infantry, on the division's right. It would use a ridgeline from Mount Katitinga, four miles south of the dam, as its main route of attack. To its left, the 172nd Infantry would advance east-northeast along a two-mile front before turning north to attack Osboy Ridge, which runs parallel to the road. From there, they would advance north about to cut the road and isolate enemy forces at Bigti, which would be pressed from the west by the 169th.

The Americans were greatly helped by Filipino guerrillas. From the very beginning of the Japanese occupation, numerous bands had been active throughout the Philippines. They ran the gamut from highly effective, disciplined groups to common criminals. But one of the outfits most useful to the Americans was Marking's Fil-American Yay Regiment, better known as Marking's Regiment, a group of Filipino guerrillas about 3,000 strong. This group was headed by Colonel Marcus V. Augustin, a former Manila-Antipolo bus driver who had escaped Bataan and chosen "Marking" as his guerrilla name.



The Japanese defenders grudgingly gave ground before American thrusts through rugged terrain toward the dams that held water vital to the city of Manila.

Augustin ran the organization with his common-law wife, Yay (rhymes with "high") Panlilio, a Denver-born Irish-Filipina who, as a 20-year-old, had come to the Philippines and started a family and a successful career as a journalist. She was working as a U.S. Army intelligence agent when the war broke out. Together, they led a group of followers that bedeviled the Japanese for three years, harassing small groups and transmitting information to MacArthur's headquarters.

Since the summer of 1944, when American submarines began smuggling in supplies and liaison officers, Marking's Regiment had been working directly under the U.S. Army and had been active with the 43rd Division on XI Corps's southern flank.

Unlike guerrilla bands in the Zambales Mountains, which one intelligence memo described as "not stable," Marking's Regiment had been described in another memo as a "pro-American" group. It stated that it was "comparatively well armed but supplies of ammunition, food, and equipment are extremely limited. They are familiar with the terrain where they operate and are valuable as guides and on some scouting missions. Their combat efficiency is probably low and will be best used in conjunction with U.S. troops rather than independently."

In the Ipo Dam campaign, Marking's Regiment would be under the direction of Brig. Gen. Alexander Stark, the assistant commander of the 43rd. Its role was to attack the northern flank, largely as a feint to confuse the Japanese. Because of this secondary status, there were no plans to give it significant artillery or air support.

The regiment would split into a North Force and a South Force of about 1,500 men each. Starting near Norzagaray, northwest of Ipo, the South Force would proceed up the Angat River Valley toward the dam. The North Force would make a wide envelopment toward Mount Kabuyao, north of the dam, and then attack due south.

For the month of May, the Fifth Air Force's 309th Bomb Wing, which was assigned to XI Corps, would be primarily engaged in providing close support of ground troops, and preparing for the Ipo campaign would be their first

major assignment. For three days before the attack, 238 heavy and fighter bombers carried out pattern-bombing against five main areas. A total of 250,000 gallons of napalm—the largest amount used anywhere in the Southwest Pacific area up to that time—was dropped on enemy positions defending Ipo.

There was, however, one unintended effect of these attacks. Yokoyama had ordered a battalion to move south to the Wawa area to participate in counterattacks—and Maj. Gen. Osamu Kawashima, thwarted by the bombings from quickly assembling his troops and sensing that something was brewing, took it upon himself to halt such movements. This would not be good for the 43rd Division, but at least it helped the 38th, which had begun its own offensive toward Wawa Dam.

Meanwhile, Wing moved his men forward. Among all units, surprise was vital. Smith writes that the division "moved northward in small increments between 2 and 5 May, assembling behind a line of outposts the 169th Infantry maintained. The division kept reconnaissance to a bare minimum, and units deployed along their lines of departure under cover of darkness in preparation for jumping off during the night of 6-7 May." Radio silence was maintained, except for the 169th, whose presence, of course, was already known to the Japanese.

The attack would begin at night. This was risky, especially over ground that had not been thoroughly reconnoitered. But the earlier Baldy Force probe, along with successful night attacks in the Antipolo-Montalban area, convinced the Americans that the risk was worth it to achieve surprise.

TOP: A rare sight, three Japanese prisoners captured during the fighting around the Ipo Dam sit on the ground surrounded by their American captors. CENTER: A Japanese tank, knocked out by infantrymen of the 43rd Division, smolders on a dirt road on January 17, 1945. BOTTOM: Some fanatical defenders decided to fight to the death in Manila. American soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division trudge past the bodies of several of the Japanese dead.

On the evening of May 6, the Americans launched their regularly scheduled night harassing artillery. Then, at 10 PM, with a sky harboring occasional showers but otherwise offering fair to good visibility, they attacked. As the division artillery supplemented the light moon with WP shells, the 103rd Infantry moved forward, ultimately advancing to a point less than three miles from the dam. The 172nd also attacked northeast but progressed more slowly, having to endure the roughest terrain of all due to the guides losing their way.

Still, by day's end they had come to a point near the foot of a rocky ridge two miles southeast of Bigti. North of the Angat, Marking's North Force met no organized resistance as it marched over seven miles east to Bayabas, only one and a half miles northwest of its initial objective of Mount Kabuyao. Apparently, not even Kawashima had been expecting a night attack; the only significant resistance was encountered by a company of Marking's South Force, which was repulsed by part of the Kasama Battalion at Hill 535, on the south bank of the Angat three miles north of Bigti.

At daybreak, the 169th began an eastward movement against the Japanese fortifications north and south of Bigti, while the other units continued their gains. Company-strength patrols would continually probe and withdraw, in different locations, in a successful effort to draw the enemy away from the other regiments. Dive-bombers on air alert targeted antiaircraft guns, thereby allowing the Americans to use artillery liaison planes.

Now, to the southeast, opposition weakened, and the attack continued through the night and the following days until, by late on the 11th, the 103rd was deployed in a south-southeast arc two miles from the dam. Its leftmost position was overlapped a half-mile north by the 172nd, which extended to Fork Ridge two miles east of Bigti and directly south of Osboy Ridge, which overlooked Metropolitan Road where the Kawashima Force had been putting its main defenses.

Wing eyed Osboy Ridge with interest. By maintaining their principal defenses along the approaches to Metropolitan Road, the Japanese had allowed the other American/Filipino units to make solid advances. In particular, Marking's Regiment, which was to be used as a feint, had made startling progress, advancing to Four-Corner Hill, less than two miles north of the dam. Indeed, the entire operation was turning into a double envelopment.

With the Japanese beginning to withdraw troops from the Bigti/Osboy area to meet the threat from the 103rd, Wing directed the 169th to increase the strength of its demonstrations and launch a limited attack against Osboy Ridge. At the same time, he gave artillery support to Marking's Regiment, which broke through at Four-Corner the following day.

Progress then began to slow. As they advanced closer to the dam, the Allies encountered rougher terrain, automatic weapons fire, heavy mortars, and extremely accurate artillery fire. They also encountered unseasonably early rains, which especially bogged down the heavily outfitted and mechanized Americans. Daily advances were less than a thousand yards; and the 169th made only slight progress against the well-fortified Osboy Ridge.

Even Hill 535, at the extreme northwest of Japanese positions, was still out of reach. Lieutenant Henry Lashway of the 169th's A Company described the reception his company got from its opponents when while relieving another company on Hill 525, one kilometer away: "They knew exactly when we took over the position and we didn't get settled before we were hit by considerable rifle fire. When I first got there, I started to clean my carbine and set my canteen cup and cartridge belt on the top of a rock ledge. They shot it off. One of the sergeants got a bullet hole in his cap and another a hole through the wrinkle of his shirt. At night there was lots of hand grenade throwing on both sides, but the jungle was too thick for many grenades to get through. We could tell when they were coming because they activated their grenades by tapping them on their helmets. Our grenades were activated when we

pulled the pin and released the lever. After we let them go they exploded in five seconds. There was always a "snap" five seconds before the explosion and they knew when ours were coming. It was while we were on this hill that we received a new grenade which had no "snap" and exploded three seconds after throwing. I don't know whether they received any casualties from this or not—but they must have been surprised."

Surprise was also the norm at the Japanese command level, for its ability to assess and communicate situations was growing weaker. Yokoyama still did not understand that Kawashima Force was under attack by a reinforced division. Having failed in his earlier counterattack against the 38th Division, he ordered Kawashima to send more troops to assist the Kobayashi Force in a new counterattack for May 14. Kawashima tried to persuade him otherwise, but to no avail. On the night of May 12, under the cover of attacks against the 103rd and 172nd Regiments, he moved the bulk of his Kasama Battalion south.

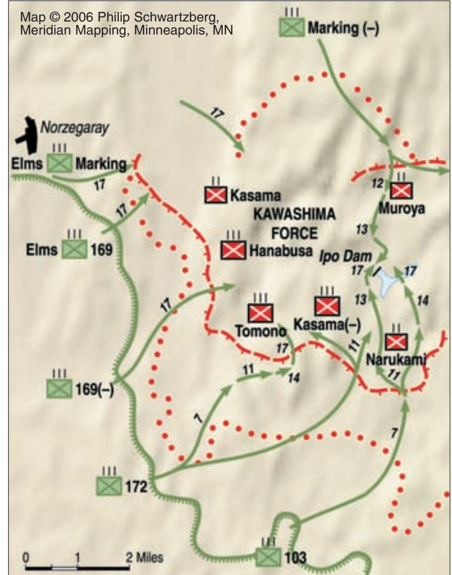
The results were predictable, as the Allies swept forward on the 13th. By the end of the day, the 103rd was only about three-quarters of a mile from the dam, and Marking's men were slightly closer on their side. Now Kawashima, without checking with his superior, ordered the Kasama Battalion back. He needn't have bothered; its namesake, Major Tetsuyuki Kasama, had learned that his southern route had been cut off and had already started back. Kasama tried and failed to regain lost positions, but did slow the American advance on May 14.

Yet, only so many holes could be plugged. While the Japanese were preoccupied south of the dam, a guerrilla patrol reached the dam on the night of May 13. Although it was too small a force to take the dam, the patrol returned with the information that it was still intact.

There was little the Americans could do at the moment. As Krueger would later write, "On 13 and 14 May it rained in torrents. The roads the engineers had built to follow up the advance of the 103d and 172d Infantry Regiments became completely impassable. Trucks carrying ammunition, rations and medical supplies were mired hub-deep. The lightly wounded dragged themselves to the rear as best they could, while the seriously wounded waited patiently in the hope that they would eventually be cared for. Artillery, tanks and mortars, which had been pushed forward close behind the advancing infantry, were immobilized. Ammunition expenditure had to be curtailed until the road could be made passable again.

"About 1,000 Filipino cargadores were employed to fill the gap, but while they did their best their efforts were but a drop in the bucket. It was a three-day march for them to reach the front lines.

"Air drops helped the supply situation somewhat, but nothing much could be done to meet the most critical need, the evacuation of the wounded. It took twenty hours to carry wounded from battalion positions to the nearest surgical echelons. On 14 May a portable surgical hospital was dragged forward by tractors and manpower until it became hopelessly mired, but it still took ten hours to transport a wounded man from the front back to this establishment."



By the spring of 1945, the situation on Luzon was hopeless for the Japanese. Subjected to relentless pounding by American air and ground forces, they were compelled to withdraw into an ever tightening perimeter.

Clearly, Metropolitan Road had to be opened. And, with the reduction of Japanese forces from the Bigti area, now was the time for the 169th to attack along the road in full force and take the pressure off the other regiments—particularly the 172nd, which was bogged down on Fork Ridge but in position to take several hills farther up the road.

Rain delayed all operations on the 15th. The following day, the five-square-mile Japanese territory was attacked by the Fifth Air Force. The P-47 Thunderbolts and P-38 Lightnings went in first, at 50 to 100 feet, dropping 50,000 gallons of napalm in the Bigti–Osboy Ridge area. These were followed by P-51 Mustangs, which strafed and bombed any Japanese trying to escape.

The following day the action was repeated with another 62,500 gallons. Positions near Hill 804, midway up the road, and northwest of that point took the brunt of the attack, which was joined by A-20 Havoc bombers. A Fifth Air Force report describes the attack: "... 200 to 250 5th AF fighters came in low, wave after wave, four to eight abreast, with air and ground controllers giving target information and regulating traffic. At first, the closely spaced fighters found that smoke from preceding waves obscured the target. The problem was overcome by directing the bombing runs downwind, with each successive wave dropping its bombs on the near side of the bursts from the wave which preceded it. The fighter bombers followed each other at 10- to 15-second intervals. A-20's then came in, showering the area with parafrags and winding up with a thorough strafing."

With this protection and that of 40- and 90mm antiaircraft guns and 4.2-inch mortars, the 169th took Bigti and used bamboo scaling ladders to seize the palisades overlooking the north side of Metropolitan Road. Opposition was light, since their foes had been withdrawn earlier to replace the Kasama Battalion during its ill-fated mission to the south. The 169th's primary obstacles were the boulders that the air strikes had blasted from the cliffs. Meanwhile, the 172nd drove the enemy off Fork Ridge while enveloping the Japanese from the east.

Now, the 103rd seized Hill 860 overlooking the dam and sent a small patrol down to its southern end to investigate. Finding little activity, it returned quickly. Shortly thereafter, Marking's Regiment, having dispatched its remaining opposition in hand-to-hand combat, sent its own patrol down on the opposite side of the Angat. It waded across the river and, at 1:30 PM, raised the American flag over the powerhouse on the south bank. Ipo Dam was taken.

The air-ground coordination had played a crucial role in this campaign, and Krueger gave due credit to the Fifth Air Force, saying that its attacks had "made possible the early capture" of the dam. What he did not know was that its commander, Lt. Gen. George Kenney, had his own strategic reasons for the final attacks, according to Kenney himself. In his 1949 memoirs, *General Kenney Reports*, he writes: "I told [Gen. Ennis] Whitehead that I wanted water in [Kenney's Manila] pool so that I could invite him down for a swim before dinner sometime and suggested that he get in touch with Krueger and offer to put a couple of hundred planeloads of Napalm on the Jap positions and burn them out. I thought if the job was done on a big scale the Nips would not have time to blow up the dam and Krueger's troops could then turn the

water on, Manila's water problem would be solved, and we could go swimming.... I never did dare to tell Krueger what impelled me to hurry up his attack on the Ipo Dam."

Notwithstanding Kenney's claims, it remains a mystery why Kawashima allowed the dam to be taken intact. Certainly, it was no gift. The gate was wired with hundreds of pounds of TNT, and, on the day of its capture, four Japanese were killed at the site of the detonating device. Furthermore, two small banzai attacks were repulsed that night.

Again, a communications problem would seem to be the most likely explanation. Either late on the 16th or early on the 17th, Kawashima had given up on the dam and ordered the withdrawal of his forces to a point three miles farther east. But the dam was not blown—and it was not the first to be left intact. In February, the Japanese had failed to destroy the Novaliches Reservoir, Balera Filters, and San Juan Reservoir, in spite of indications that they had planned to do so. Perhaps, at that time, they could have been excused for underestimating the rapidity of the U.S. advance. But there was no such excuse now. Considering that the final attack had taken place over 11 days, and that the Japanese had no hope of reinforcements, the failure to destroy Ipo Dam was a major blunder.

Now, there was just the mopping up. On May 19, the 169th and 172nd captured Osboy Ridge and opened up Metropolitan Road all the way from the dam to Novaliches Reservoir. In the days ahead, the 225th AAA Searchlight Battalion looked for stragglers by lighting up the ravines and valleys. By May 21, all organized resistance was over.

That point was fast approaching for the Japanese at Wawa Dam, as well, for they had not only been suffering directly from the attacks of the Americans but from their own tactical errors, engendered by an inability to gather intelligence and understand what the Americans were up to.

The Americans' April advances notwithstanding, Yokoyama had been so unimpressed by their effort that he thought that XI Corps had decided to move most of its troops to northern Luzon. If so, this would have meant that Yokoyama had failed in his mission to keep them pinned down in his sector. Determined to avoid this, but knowing he was too weak to retake ground, he planned for limited counteroffensives beginning May 10 that would at least sow confusion in the American lines.

Instead, the confusion was his own. He had not only failed to realize that the Americans were preparing to attack Ipo Dam, but he also had not anticipated the 38th's May 4 offensive. After the 145th Infantry (now attached to the 38th Division) finished securing the most vital parts of Mount Pacawagan, it was poised to attack east toward Wawa Dam. The 38th's 152nd Infantry was to support them by moving north along Woodpecker Ridge (so named after the sound of the Japanese 7.7mm heavy machine guns, which were present in abundance). The May 4 attack produced only mediocre results but caused the Japanese to weaken their defenses at the nearly impregnable Mount Binicayan, overlooking Wawa Dam, thereby allowing it to be seized by the 145th on May 9.

Water rushes through a spillway at Ipo Dam. Capturing the reservoir intact meant that enough water would be available to supply American troops and Filipino civilians in Manila.

The Japanese counteroffensives themselves, according to a 38th Division history, "consisted mainly of night infiltration attacks using automatic weapons and knee mortars, and several daylight counterattacks against our units. In some instances, these attacks were supported by artillery and heavy mortars, but these weapons were soon spotted and silenced by our own artillery."

However, troops were kept on edge by the nighttime infiltrations through the permeable front line; attacks could come from areas that had been previously cleared. They were always repulsed, so Yokoyama called them off on May 15. His forces at Woodpecker Ridge, however, did not get the message for nearly a week; the 152nd had to make seven attempts to take the crest before succeeding.

Improvisation and innovation were the norm as the 38th became the laboratory for a variety of new weapons. These included the 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles (also used by the 43rd), which were highly valued for targets within 2,500 yards, because of their low silhouette, accuracy of fire, and power of impact. However, supplies were not sufficient to allow widespread distribution. Less satisfactory were the 4.2-inch recoilless mortars; they were inaccurate, had little mobility, and required a large clearance zone in the rear.

Also making their debut were tanks equipped with the Chemical Warfare Service's new M5-4 flamethrower, which could discharge napalm-thickened fuel at a range of 105 to 130 yards, or about three and a half times the distance of ordinary fuel. They proved to be instrumental in clearing out wooded draws where machine gunners hid.

Ironically, the M5A1 light tanks themselves were obsolete. When the tank shortage in the U.S. portended delays in flamethrower installation, the CWS shipped its four prototype models to Luzon, where they were given to the 27th and 38th Divisions. An even greater mix of old and new were the 38th's homemade catapults that fired jellied gasoline.

Finally, with Woodpecker Ridge and the Marikina-Bosoboso River confluence under American control, and the 151st Infantry having secured the northern approaches, the attack toward Wawa Dam began on May 27. Elements of the 149th Infantry, which had replaced the 145th, advanced up the narrow gorge. Supported by medium tanks and two flamethrower tanks, it eliminated enemy gun positions as it proceeded. The tanks, however, had limited maneuverability and withdrew after night fell.

The following day, the assault was led by Charles Oliver, a Texas native one year out of high school, who was handed a bazooka with a broken sight. Protected by two scouts and the rest of his company behind him, he moved forward, fired 28 shots at enemy installations, and made 28 hits. Spying a small cave farther up, he shot and missed twice. When he reached the dam, he said that the next time he wanted a bazooka with a sight on it.

Again, a dam had been captured intact. That evening, the troops defending Wawa Dam acted on orders issued by Yokoyama the day before to all Shimbu troops. It was time to withdraw. Yokoyama had lost nearly half his force—his best-trained and best-equipped soldiers. Of the remaining 26,000 men, Smith estimates, only 13,000 were in organized units. Another 5,000 were too sick or wounded to fight, and about 8,000 had disbanded into independent groups that were trying to make their way to northern Luzon or just roaming the area, scavenging for

Along Luzon's Villa Verde Trail, soldiers of the 38th Infantry Division seal the entrance to a Japanese-held cave with high explosives. The inhabitants were trapped inside and suffocated.

food. Perhaps Yokoyama thought his men would find food in scattered locations throughout the Sierra Madre.

There was little chance of that. Japanese soldiers had found that, far from being a lush, fruit-covered paradise, the jungles of Luzon offered little in the way of sustenance. And, while Yokoyama had managed to evacuate plenty of weapons and medical supplies from Manila, the pre-harvest American conquest of the food-growing valleys in his region had severely diminished his supplies. The original ration of three pounds of rice a day was down to about six to eight ounces in the Kawashima Force and two ounces in the Noguchi Force. Soldiers were eating camote (sweet potato) leaves, roots, bark, and grass. The area's fauna soon disappeared. One soldier was captured after successfully infiltrating a Filipino chow line.

Soon, some were going to even further extremes. When a Filipino official reported that 500 people had evacuated the barrio of Hacienda Patalao "for fear of being killed or eaten up by the Japs," he was not indulging in hyperbole. POWs were speaking of acts of cannibalism, at least among their own.

This was confirmed by Shimbu Group surgeon Tadashi Moriya in his 1968 book, *No Requiem*. He spoke of "Japan guerri" who, in groups of two or three, would set upon a solitary soldier to kill and eat him. He attributed this to the fact that "the Japanese army drafted indiscriminately anybody who was physically fit for service, without investigating his character or past history. Among them were no small number of prison birds and ruffians."

For most Japanese, surrender was still not an option. As Tetsuru Ogawa, a veteran of the northern Luzon campaign, wrote in his 1972 *Terraced Hell*, the soldiers on the island "believed that the longer they held out, the more time Japan would have to prepare against enemy invasion, and hence the greater guarantee of the safety of their families. In this firm belief they fought and died."

In June, the 38th Division, joined by the 169th RCT, continued to encounter resistance as it drove farther east from Wawa Dam. The attacks were now smaller banzai attacks, typically carried out at night by groups with small arms, grenades, and knee mortars.

This was enough to keep the soldiers jittery; they learned to never leave their foxholes, for the slightest noise could, and did, invite volleys of grenades from their comrades. One night, as the 169th's Lieutenant Justin Raphael and his men hunkered down on Mount Ayaas, they spent the hours listening to the groans of a wounded Japanese soldier.

"None of us would leave our holes to help him," Raphael said. "Anything moving in the pitch black night would be shot or get a grenade thrown at him." In the morning, the soldier died. Rather than remove his potentially booby-trapped body, the soldiers endured the odor in the 100-degree temperature as maggots consumed the corpse.

The Japanese were finished as an effective fighting force. As the month wore on, the Americans' mission became one of supporting the Fil-Americans, who were assigned the lead role in tracking down the remaining stragglers—thousands of whom would share a fate similar to that of the soldier on Mount Ayaas and never be accounted for.

It had been a long campaign, but it might have been even longer without the use of new tactics—such as using antiaircraft lights against low-lying clouds to illuminate enemy lines while keeping one's own troops in shadow—and new technology such as napalm, recoilless rifles, flamethrower tanks and, toward the end, helicopters. Carrying two wounded at a time, the choppers eliminated long, arduous handcarries and would save many lives in future battles.

When faced with steep cliffs or heavy rains, however, the Americans took a page out of ancient history and devised bamboo ladders or catapults, or relied on carriers and carabao (water buffalo), whose finicky ways forced Army engineers to interrupt their road building to bulldoze mud wallows. Like so many campaigns in World War II, the battle against the Shimbu Line combined advanced technology, planning, and logistics with seat-of-the-pants improvisation.

At a time when Nazi Germany was in its death throes and a ferocious battle was raging on Okinawa, the fragmented actions against the Shimbu Line had little impact on America's consciousness. But, in regard to the Luzon campaign as a whole, Smith says, "It is doubtful that any other campaign of the war had a higher non-battle casualty rate among American forces."

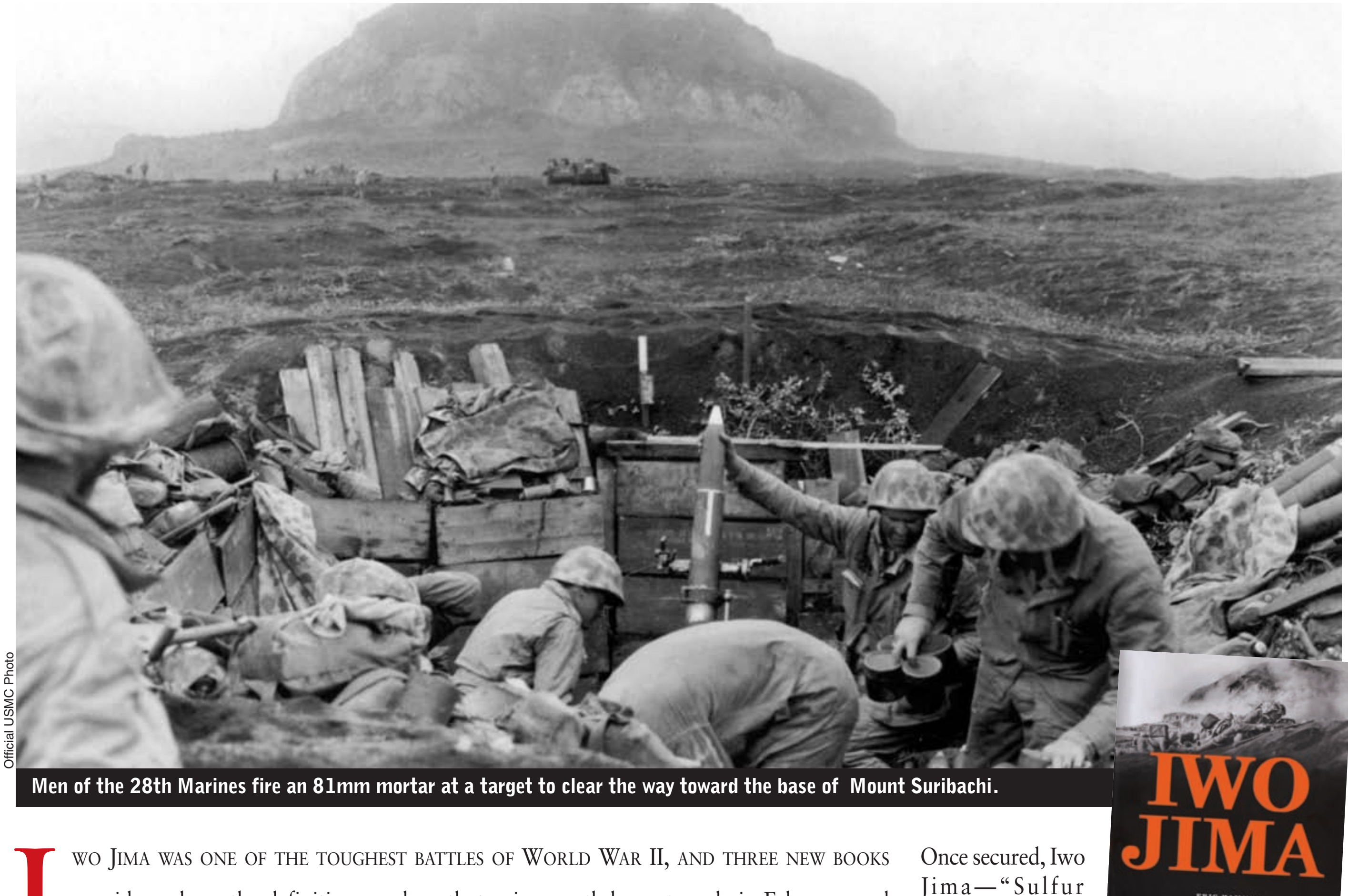
An enervating climate, a host of diseases, unbroken service of up to three years for many soldiers, and a chronic shortage of troops combined to make the battle a grim, exhausting experience. When, on July 1, control of Luzon operations was passed to the Eighth Army, there was little celebration—particularly for the men of the 43rd and 1st Cavalry Divisions, who remained with the Sixth Army to prepare for Operation Olympic, the invasion of the Japanese home island of Kyushu, planned for November 1945.

As these battle-weary men entered camp near Cabanatuan—where the veterans of Bataan had so recently been liberated—they had no idea that their fighting days were over. □

David Lashway is a proofreader who lives in Chicago. His research into the Ipo Dam campaign was inspired by the experiences of his late father, a soldier of the 169th RCT.

Three fine books document the horror and heroism of the fight for Iwo Jima.

BY MASON B. WEBB



Official USMC Photo

Men of the 28th Marines fire an 81mm mortar at a target to clear the way toward the base of Mount Suribachi.

IWO JIMA WAS ONE OF THE TOUGHEST BATTLES OF WORLD WAR II, AND THREE NEW BOOKS provide perhaps the definitive word on that epic, month-long struggle in February and March 1945.

The first (and biggest) of the three is ***Iwo Jima: Portrait of a Battle***, by Eric Hammel (Zenith Press, St. Paul, Minn., 2006, $40.00). Within its 255 oversized pages the reader will find more than 500 photographs—most likely the bulk of all the photos taken before, during, and after the battle—including a section of color photographs showing the island as it appears today.

Many of the combat pictures have never been published before, probably because so many are unblinking shots of the dead on both sides.

Hammel says, "Even in as bloody and bluntly violent war as Americans encountered in the Pacific, Iwo Jima was the ultimate expression of death and mayhem. It was in a class by itself, a meatgrinder smashed by a blunt instrument at an extremely high cost."

Indeed, Iwo Jima became the killing ground for 6,821 American Marines, nearly 900 U.S. sailors, and 20,000 Japanese; another 19,217 U.S. servicemen were wounded on the island. Only a little more than a thousand Japanese survived to be taken prisoner, an indication of the value Japan placed on holding the island. Once secured, Iwo Jima—"Sulfur Island"—became a critical air base for the Americans in their campaign to bomb Japan into submission.

The net effect of the text and photographs in Hammel's book is to give the reader a sobering sense of the sheer courage it took to defeat a fanatical enemy that had no hope of either escape or victory—a visually stunning work.

The companion book to Hammel's, if one chooses to call it that, is Hal Buell's ***Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue: Iwo Jima and the Photograph That Captured America*** (Berkley/Caliber, New York, 2006, 272 pp., photographs, index, bibliography, $28.95).

This is basically a book about Joe Rosenthal and six other combat cameramen who docu-

Battlefront is a new battalion-level strategy game for the PC from SSG and Matrix Games. The game engine owes a lot to SSG's Decisive Battles engine, and *Battlefront* has the look of a frame that a series of games will be built on.

This first game covers the battles at Saipan, Market Garden, Novorossisk, and Gazala. The game is turn-based and uses a hex grid and counters to track the combats. The game brings a lot of powerful features, the most important being a very good AI to make single-player games challenging. SSG also continues its tradition of having a play by e-mail mode, a slow, but very rewarding way to battle with friends.

Silent Heroes, also for the PC but from Paradox Interactive, is, on the other hand, a game about single solders and squads. It is a top-down 3-D game set behind the lines in World War II where the player directs their saboteurs on a variety of missions. In this case, the game engine is the one employed in *Soldiers: Heroes of World War II.* The hallmark of this engine is that almost everything on the map can be interacted with. Often this just means that it can be destroyed, but in the case of enemy vehicles and equipment, the player's soldiers will not only be able to take it, but also to repair (if necessary) and use it.

To go with its scale and 3-D graphics, *SH* is story-based. Each of the missions builds on the one before it. In addition, there are in engine cut-scenes to set the stage for the missions and show their results. There is a huge variety of historically accurate weapons and vehicles for the soldiers to use. The difficulty for players will be finding the best way to use their resources to complete each mission.

While there are many computer and video games that model the experience of being a pilot in the midst of the Battle of Britain, *The Burning Blue,* from GMT Games, is a board game that models being an RAF fighter controller or a Luftwaffe air raid planner. Played out in five- minute turns, the game recreates the experience of the men in the bunkers who deployed squadrons of fighters and bombers in an all-out battle for control of the skies over Great Britain.

Meticulously researched, *The Burning Blue* bases its scenarios on the actual German raid plans from the war.

The author's decisions on rules were influenced by interviews with veterans of the battles. For instance, the victory conditions place less weight on shooting down enemy aircraft than they do on bombs delivered on target. The author's research showed that disrupting formations actually had a greater effect on a raid's result than did planes lost. Not a simple game, or one where 48-page rule book is read once and discarded, but *The Burning Blue* does play out easily and with good verisimilitude once learned. □

mented, almost by accident, the raising of the flag on 556-foot-high Mount Suribachi. Rosenthal's iconic, Pulitzer-winning image is arguably the most famous photo taken during World War II, and the same may be said of the motion-picture film shot by Marine Sergeant Bill Genaust.

Buell, who spent more than 40 years as a photo editor for the Associated Press, goes into considerable detail about the lives (sometimes brief) of combat photographers, and Rosenthal's life in particular. Much of the narrative is provided by the photographers

themselves, talking about how their pictures came to be taken.

But the book is also much more than that. *Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue* is a grunt's-eye view of the savage fight, a full account of the battle with more than 120 photos, including shots of the flag-raising taken by other photographers, quotes from veterans, newspapers, and magazines, and official battle reports.

Buell's book includes a chapter on the myths that have grown up over the decades, including the widely held belief that Rosenthal's photo was somehow staged or faked. It also contains, as a bonus, a 20-minute-long DVD that interweaves combat footage with interviews with Marine veterans.

Both Hammel's and Buell's books contain the citations for the 17 Americans who were awarded the Medal of Honor, some posthumously, for their courageous actions at Iwo Jima. As Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander of U.S. Navy forces in the Pacific, once so succinctly put it, "Of the Marines on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue."

As long as we are on the topic of Iwo Jima and valor, there is a third book that must not be overlooked. ***Indestructible: The Unforgettable Story of a Marine Hero at the Battle of Iwo Jima*** (DaCapo, Cambridge, Mass., 2006, 212 pp., $22.95) is the autobiography of Jack H. Lucas, the youngest Medal of Honor recipient of the 20th century. And it is one of the most remarkable true stories one is ever likely to read.

Lucas, full of anger about Pearl Harbor, was too young to join the military but lied about his age and enlisted in the Marines in August 1942 at age 14. Assigned to stateside duty, he went AWOL and stowed away on a troop transport heading across the Pacific. As a member of the 5th Marine Division, he was under fire from the moment his landing craft approached Iwo Jima until he was badly wounded.

As Lucas and his three buddies were assaulting an enemy position on D+1, two live Japanese grenades landed at their feet. He writes, "All four of us were actively engaged with the enemy. No one noticed the two grenades drop into the trench in front of Crowson, the BAR man. I would have missed them myself had I not been looking downward as I struggled to un-jam my rifle. That is the moment they first caught my eye. Lying at our feet, weighing one pound, less than four inches in length, and with only four seconds of fuse, were the implements of almost certain death. How long had they been there? How much time was left? I yelled 'Grenade!' to alert my buddies and pushed my BAR man out of the way."

Instinctively, Lucas threw himself on top of the grenades and was torn to shreds and knocked unconscious when one exploded (miraculously, the other was a dud). His buddies were not hurt. Left for dead, Lucas somehow caught the attention of a medical corpsman who evacuated the youngster to a waiting hospital ship. Navy doctors, despite believing he had no chance of survival, worked to save his life; they did.

When the Navy learned of Lucas's courageous act, he was recommended for the nation's highest military decoration; he received it from President Harry S. Truman in October 1945.

But that's not the end of this story. After being discharged from the Marines, he completed his education, earned a college degree from Duke University, and then, missing the military life, enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1961, becoming an officer in the elite 82nd Airborne Division!

Recent & Recommended

Appeasement & Rearmament: Britain 1936-1939 by James P. Levy, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, Md., 2006, 189 pp., photographs, index, bibliography, $27.50, softcover.

The conventional wisdom is that Neville Chamberlain, Britain's prime minister from 1937-1940, seeking at all costs to avoid war with Germany in the late 1930s, bent over

WWII History First Annual Book of the Year Awards

The following books were nominated by the editors of *WWII History* as being the Ten Best of 2006 (in alphabetical order by title):

The All Americans in World War II: A Photographic History of the 82nd Airborne Division at War by Phil Nordyke (Zenith Press) Reviewed in November 2006 issue

Becoming Eichmann: Rethinking the Life, Crimes and Trial of a "Desk Murderer" by David Cesarani (Da Capo Press) Reviewed September 2006

Bitter Ocean: The Battle of the Atlantic, 1939-1945 by David Fairbank White (Simon & Schuster) Reviewed November 2006

The Button Box: A Daughter's Loving Memory of Mrs. George S. Patton by Ruth Ellen Patton Totten (University of Missouri Press) Reviewed May 2006

Hitler's Shadow War: The Holocaust and World War II by Donald M. McKale (Taylor Trade) Reviewed November 2006

Iwo Jima by Eric Hammel (Zenith Press) Reviewed January 2007

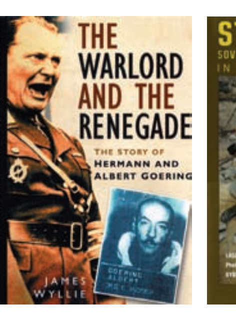
Our Fathers' War: Growing Up in the Shadow of the Greatest Generation by Tom Mathews, Jr. (Broadway Books) Reviewed March 2006

Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway by Jonathan Parshall and Anthony Tully. (Potomac Books) Reviewed May 2006

Stay Off the Skyline: The Sixth Marine Division On Okinawa by Laura Homan Lacey (Potomac Books) Reviewed July 2006

A Stranger to Myself: The Inhumanity of War — Russia, 1941-1944 by Willy Peter Reese (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) Reviewed May 2006

AND THE WINNER OF *WWII History*'s Best Book of 2006 is:
Our Fathers' War: Growing Up in the Shadow of the Greatest Generation by Tom Mathews, Jr.



backward to appease Adolf Hitler.

Who can forget the newsreel image of Chamberlain waving the piece of paper that he and Hitler and the French had signed at Munich, allowing the German dictator to take over the Sudetenland portion of Czechoslovakia, and declaring that the delegations had hammered out an agreement that meant "peace in our time"?

Politicians ever since have used the word "appeasement" as a pejorative term, meaning to meekly give in rather than to strongly confront an opponent.

James P. Levy, a professor at Hofstra University, takes a fresh look at Britain's dilemma and presents a cogent examination of Chamberlain's foreign policy and Britain's domestic condition. As the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chamberlain was painfully aware of the fact that his nation had not yet recovered—either financially or materially—from the ruinous cost of victory in the Great War. Seeking to delay for as long as possible a military confrontation with Europe's emerging superpower, Chamberlain bought time for Britain, time his nation needed to rebuild her armed forces and prepare to weather the storm he saw looming on the horizon.

As Levy writes, "In hindsight, it cannot be denied that Munich was a diplomatic fiasco. Its popularity at the time is understandable, but that does not change the fact that the Allies were pushed around and the Czechs rolled over and played dead. But was it a failure?"

"No," says Levy, and lays out his argument logically and clearly. This is an intelligent book that casts a cold light on the myriad reasons why countries avoid war while, simultaneously, preparing for it. A definite "must-read."

The Warlord and the Renegade: The Story of Hermann and Albert Goering by James Wyllie, Sutton Publishing, Thrupp, UK, 2006, 248 pp., photographs, index, bibliography, $29.95, hardcover.

The world, it seems, knows who Hermann Goering was. His brother, Albert, is less well known, a fact that will change with the publication of James Wyllie's book about the Nazi Reichsmarschal's younger sibling.

Albert hated the Nazi regime and spent nearly a decade working against it, using whatever influence he had, intervening whenever possible to rescue victims of Hitler's hatred, running escape routes, freeing people from death camps, influencing policy, promoting sabotage, and helping the resistance—sometimes right under the noses of Nazi Party bigwigs. One family Albert helped was the composer Franz Lehar, whose light operas Hitler enjoyed, and his Jewish wife, Sophie Pashkis. Because of the marriage, Lehar's career was about to come to a government-mandated halt when Albert obtained from Josef Goebbels a certificate declaring Sophie an "honorary Aryan." Wyllie also documents the many instances when Albert, at the risk of his own safety, assisted scores of concentration camp and death camp inmates to escape their fates.

Taken into custody after the war by the Americans on suspicion that anyone named Goering had to be a hardcore Nazi, Albert managed to convince his prosecutors that he had aided the Allied cause; he was eventually freed.

As Wyllie concludes, "Albert [Goering] deserves to stand alongside Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler" as one of those who stood up against tyranny.

The Warlord and the Renegade deserves to be on every history buff's bookshelf.

Stalin's War: Soviet Uniforms & Militaria 1941-45 in Colour Photographs by László Békési, Crowood Press, Ramsbury, UK, 2006, 144 pp., photographs, illustrations, $44.95, hardcover.

Stalin's War is the third volume of Békési's series on Soviet uniforms and artifacts, and a handsome volume it is! Sixty black and white period photographs are complemented by 230 recent color photos (staged using reenactors in realistic settings) by György Török.

This lavishly illustrated book, along with well-written text and captions by the preeminent expert in the field, gives a detailed look at what the typical Soviet soldier, tanker, airman, and sailor (and even female troops) carried, wore, and fought with.

Stalin's War is an invaluable reference book for collectors of Soviet gear, reenactors, and anyone interested in the uniforms, equipment, weapons, badges, documentation, and other military and personal accoutrements of the West's Russian ally.

Cracking the Luftwaffe Codes: The Secrets of Bletchley Park by Gwen Watkins, Greenhill Books, London, UK, 2006, 230 pp., pho-

THE DIRTY DOZEN Two-Disc Special Edition

There are few better World War II guy-movies than *The Dirty Dozen*. Lee Marvin stars as the grizzled Major Reisman who leads twelve convicted Army criminals in a daring raid on a German chateau just before D-Day. This 1967 movie set the benchmark for rough language and the anti-hero theme in World War II movies.

The Dirty Dozen is now available on DVD with some great special features. Two documentaries, *Armed and Deadly: The Making of the Dirty Dozen* and *The Filthy Thirteen: Real Stories from Behind the Lines*, are fantastic. The *Making of* documentary includes interviews with the stars and writers while *The Filthy Thirteen* tells the true story of the real Dirty Dozen along with the story of the Filthy Thirteen, pathfinders for the 101st Airborne Division, whose dress code inspired their name.

Also on the features disc is the less-than-memorable *The Dirty Dozen: Next Mission,* a made-for-television sequel starring Marvin again as Reisman training a new team of convicts to kill Adolf Hitler. The DVD's biggest setback, however, is the commentary by Marine Captain Dale Dye who points out every inconsistency in the film. He's the guy you wouldn't want to sit next to in a theater.

The Dirty Dozen belongs in any World War II DVD collection. If you have never seen it before, check it out and find out the answer to the question: "... but, can they fight?"

Kevin Hymel

tographs, illustrations, $34.95, hardcover.

Written by a member of the cryptographic staff at the British codebreaking center at Bletchley Park, this eminently fascinating inside story is an account of the many diverse personalities involved in the complex, highly classified operation and the invaluable service they performed for the Allies. It was not until 1974 that Bletchley Park's activities were even detailed for the public.

The author, then a sergeant in the British Women's Auxiliary Air Force, brings to life the reality of the German Air Section at BP, as the center was known, the first-ever account of this crucial department. In a highly informative and lyrical account, she details her eventful interview, her eventual appointment at the "biggest lunatic asylum in Britain," methods employed to crack the maddeningly difficult codes, the day-to-day operations at the center, and the decommissioning of her section at war's end.

Cracking the Luftwaffe Code is much more readable than Leo Marks's *Between Silk and Cyanide*, which told basically the same story, but not as well. Watkins' tale is thoroughly enjoyable from start to finish.

Eleven Days in December: Christmas at the Bulge, 1944 by Stanley Weintraub, Free Press, New York, 2006, 220 pp., photographs, maps, $25.00, hardcover.

Although weary from six months of slugging their way across Europe in 1944, the American and British armies believed that victory was in sight. The confident Allies, therefore, were unprepared for Hitler's massive, last-gasp offensive in the West.

After the secret buildup of troops, tanks, and artillery pieces beneath the towering pines of the Schnee Eifel along the German-Belgian-Luxembourg border, Hitler's forces, nearly 300,000 men strong, punched through the thin olive-drab line and threatened to split the British and American armies and drive all the way to the port city of Antwerp, inflicting such heavy casualties along the way that the Allies would be forced to sue for peace.

Weintraub, a prize-winning author and professor of history at Penn State University, has crafted a highly readable account of the near disaster that befell the Americans in the waning weeks of 1944. Masterfully weaving together the stories of generals and ordinary soldiers on both sides, Weintraub recreates the desperate days when victory was very nearly knocked from the grasp of the Allies and only sheer courage and a little bit of luck turned the tide of battle. □

top secret

Continued from page 31

Germany. With Donovan's appointment as head of COI, he would begin a decades-long feud with J. Edgar Hoover over the direction of American intelligence.

The concept of COI did not sit well with Hoover, who took an instant dislike to Donovan's new agency and made his feelings quite clear to the president. Roosevelt, not wanting to offend Hoover too deeply, allowed the FBI to continue its primary intelligence gathering responsibility in South America.

After the United States entered World War II, the British began to share sensitive intelligence with COI, including the breaking of German military and diplomatic codes, which led to the rounding up of all German double agents inside England.

Hoover distrusted the British and their secret relationship with Donovan, and the fact that they were "loaning" Popov to the United States rankled him greatly. When Hoover received Popov's Pearl Harbor questionnaire, he did a curious thing. Instead of handing it over to Bill Donovan, or more importantly, to FDR, Hoover doctored the questions, gave nothing to Donovan, and omitted the Pearl Harbor queries when he finally sent the questionnaire to the White House.

In late November 1941, under the ever watchful eye of the FBI, Popov received orders from the Abwehr, sending him to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He was contacted by the Abwehr man in Rio and was told to establish a radio link between Rio and Lisbon. Popov was to concentrate on seeking information on war production, the destinations of Allied convoys, and any news he could provide on antisubmarine warfare.

Since the FBI had been given the responsibility of running U.S. agents in Latin and South America, the Bureau knew all about Popov's adventures and kept one step ahead of him.

Popov was in Rio on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He returned to the United States one week later and handed over a second set of microdots to the FBI. A sampling of his second set of questions from the Abwehr concerned the types of powder used for ammunition and seven pages concerning U.S. atomic bomb research.

Popov was furious with the way he had been treated by the FBI and wondered why the Americans had not take his warning of Japanese interest in the Pearl Harbor defenses more seriously. In hindsight, the British were of the opinion that it was the Americans who had to verify Popov's information, despite the fact that they had vouched for his credibility throughout his stay in the United States. Popov was also disappointed when the FBI refused to allow him access to long-range radio equipment, preventing him from sending information, both real and bogus, to his many contacts in Europe.

To cut any further losses concerning Popov, the British decided he should be returned to London as soon as possible. But that would be difficult to accomplish without blowing his cover with the Germans and possibly getting him killed. Popov left New York and arrived in Lisbon, where he was met by his Abwehr controller, Ludovico von Karsthoff. Popov brought with him a gift for von Karsthoff's girlfriend, which broke the ice upon his arrival. Popov took a big chance and berated von Karsthoff for not providing him with the necessary funds he needed to set up his espionage network in the U.S. and brazenly told him that he was resigning from any further work for the Abwehr.

Popov returned to Britain in 1943 and worked for the XX Committee for the rest of the war. One of his major contributions to the Allied war effort was information he passed to Karsthoff detailing the strength and organization of the fictitious First U.S. Army Group (FUSAG). While Karsthoff doubted the integrity of the information, those who received it in Berlin did not. Their acceptance of Popov's disinformation helped to preserve the illusion of Allied intentions prior to the Normandy invasion of June 6, 1944.

Questions concerning Popov and his career as Tricycle persist to this day. One stems from his claim that the Abwehr ordered him to go to Hawaii to learn as much as he could about the military installations on the island of Oahu. Most military historians believe that there is no credible evidence that the Germans ever issued orders for any travel by Popov to Hawaii.

Another unanswered question in the Popov case is whether or not he actually met with J. Edgar Hoover at all during his time in the United States. FBI documents shed no convincing light on this matter, and people on each side have differing opinions. In his memoirs, Popov said that he "encountered J. Edgar Hoover at the FBI office in New York." After Hoover's death, the FBI stated flatly that no such face-to-face meeting had occurred.

In later years, Popov wrote his memoirs, *Spy/Counterspy*. He died in 1981 at the age of 69, leaving behind a wife and three sons. □

New Jersey resident Peter Kross is the author of The Encyclopedia of World War II Spies.

insight

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"a channel full of corpses."

The British were well aware of how quickly amphibious operations could go wrong, given the disastrous results at Gallipoli during World War I. The British leadership would eventually point out that lessons learned from such battles were largely responsible for the success of the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and the Italian mainland in the autumn of 1942 and the summer of 1943.

Although the potential rewards of a 1943 cross-Channel invasion would have indeed been high, the risks associated with failure would have been catastrophic. If the Allied invading force was defeated or driven back into the sea, it is quite unlikely that another invasion would have been launched for some time. From the British perspective, weakening the German war machine required Allied control of the air and the sea. For an invasion to succeed, Churchill believed that accumulating and consolidating Allied resources to "close and tighten the ring" around Germany along multiple fronts was a vital prerequisite. Only when Germany was sufficiently weakened and a truly prepared Allied force was mobilized could a cross-Channel invasion be launched. Churchill preferred, meanwhile, to attack the Axis on the European continent through Italy, the enemy's "soft underbelly."

Through the spring of 1943, the logistical requirements of launching a cross-Channel amphibious invasion were not fully understood because an operation of such magnitude had never before been attempted, and much of the required technology did not yet exist. The undergirding projects that made the 1944 invasion successful, including Pluto (a cross-Channel pipeline), Mulberries (artificial ports), Gooseberries (breakwaters/harbors) and Whales (floating piers), were not approved for construction until the fall of 1943.

In 1944, shortages of landing craft, another crucial resource, postponed the Overlord invasion for a month. After the war, Marshall confessed that before 1943, his conception of a landing craft was confined to a rubber boat. Ultimately, of course, Roosevelt and Churchill were able to compromise on Western strategy, and it became clear that the British and American strategies were not mutually exclusive after all.

Torch would replace Roundup, and when a large enough force was marshaled, and a decisive, successful outcome was better assured, a cross-Channel invasion of northwest France would constitute the main effort. Historians have described this compromise as the real turning point of World War II, as it represents the merging of myriad divergent interests and plans into one comprehensive Allied strategy.

Overlord was not, in its final form, an exclusively British or American strategy. It was truly an Allied strategy, coordinated and agreed upon by the British, American, and Soviet leadership. The process of compromise and the resulting preservation of the Allied coalition until victory was won remain perhaps the most enduring strategic legacies of the war.

The wisdom of President Roosevelt's decision to agree to the Torch operation was self-evident well in advance of its execution. In addition to solidifying the coalition and enhancing the public's morale, the long and divisive debates over strategy were largely resolved and, for the first time in the war, all three Allies were able to focus their operational and industrial resources in a common direction.

President Roosevelt's ability to strike a compromise with Stalin and Churchill did more than unify the alliance with a commonly accepted grand strategy. His decision to prevail over his military planners and not rush into a cross-Channel invasion established an intrinsic linkage between the European and Pacific Theaters. In delaying the 1943 Roundup invasion, additional resources and emphasis were devoted to the American effort against Japan. Roosevelt also persuaded Stalin to join the Pacific campaign once Germany was defeated. By acknowledging the importance of both theaters, it appears clear that Roosevelt recognized the interdependence of the two campaigns to a far greater extent than his military planners. Thus, he successfully shaped the nature of the war itself.

In the spring of 1943, the buildup for a cross-Channel attack, code-named Bolero, was far from completion. The majority of U.S. forces had not yet seen combat, and the British Army still had not transitioned to the kind of large-scale operations that a wholesale Allied invasion would require. One of Eisenhower's biographers, Stephen Ambrose, wrote, "In his first combat experience, Eisenhower was unsure of himself, hesitant, ... [and] liable to make snap judgments.... Nineteen months later, he had improved dramatically. So had his superiors and subordinates. The team that invaded France in June 1944 was vastly superior to the team that invaded French North Africa in November 1942."

As it was originally conceived, Operation Roundup was, at the very least, naive and overly ambitious. In focusing almost exclusively on the assault landing, little thought was given to subsequent Allied operations on the beachhead and beyond. Roundup, as the name implies, was designed as a "mopping-up" operation and assumed the German Army to be demoralized, on the run, and capable of only token resistance. In 1943, however, the Germans remained a formidable enemy, capable of quickly counterattacking in force, as they demonstrated many times later in the war. If there was a weakness to be found in the Allied strategy, it was that a comprehensive and realistic net assessment of Nazi strengths and weaknesses was never successfully completed, even prior to the Overlord invasion.

In retrospect, Operation Torch was an ideal combined training ground for both the British and Americans. Given their collective experience in working together, Torch may have been the only way either country could have effectively conducted offensive operations at such an early stage in the war. Both the Mediterranean and African campaigns successfully diverted German forces from French coastal defenses and provided the Soviets with some relief on the Eastern Front.

It is also useful to consider what would have ensued if the Allies had not conducted Torch. In his book, *Strategy and Compromise,* Samuel Eliot Morison argues, "If we hadn't taken the offensive in the Mediterranean, the Germans could have assumed the offensive in the area as Rommel was begging Hitler to do; they might have captured Malta, overrun the Middle East, perhaps dragged Turkey into the war against us, and even knocked Russia out of the war.... Russia had a soft underbelly, in the Black Sea."

Today, it is difficult to imagine how a 1943 invasion could have been mounted with any real hope for success. Although plans for an emergency Allied invasion were in place as early as 1942, the requisite skill, power, and political support did not exist for an endeavor of this magnitude until June 1944. In 1944, although Germany's armed forces were weakened by an extended Allied onslaught, Germany remained a formidable opponent. When American intransigence could have split the Allies asunder, it was President Roosevelt's ability to hammer out a compromise that ultimately preserved the coalition for the duration of the war. This, more than any other single decision, is most responsible for the success at Normandy and for the Allied victory in Europe. □

Lieutenant Colonel John Fenzel is currently serving as a military assistant on the personal staff of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Most recently, he served as the commander of the Special Forces Training Battalion at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

disaster

Continued from page 73

Hauffe suggested that his corps attempt a breakout to the south. In conjunction with the attempt, he asked Balck to strike the Soviets, driving north to try and punch a hole in the outer Russian lines. The plan seemed militarily sound, but the distance that the XIII Army Corps had to travel to meet Balck was approximately 25 miles. In addition, the area that had to be traversed was a mixed terrain of swamp and heavy woods. Hauffe's men would also have to cross the West Bug River before a linkup could be achieved.

During July 19, Hauffe worked to assemble his assault force. He picked Lasch's 349th Infantry Division and Lange's Korps Abteilung C to spearhead the breakout attempt. As those units were pulled out of the line, the already taxed forces of Hauffe's other three divisions were ordered to fill in the gaps. This meant that Freitag's division was responsible for most of the southeastern and eastern line of the pocket. Nedtwig's 454th had the northern and northeastern sector, while Lindemann's 361st, supported by corps units, defended the rest.

Although all sides of the pocket were attacked, the Soviet commanders chose to make their heaviest assaults against the Galizien Division. Red Army artillery pummeled the Ukrainian lines, while the Red Air Force blasted secondary positions. The death toll was heavy for the Ukrainians and morale began to sink, but the division continued to fight. Company and battalion commanders led counterattacks to seal breaches in the line, and most of the troops followed them to close the gaps.

A young Ukrainian officer, Lubomyr Drtynsky, described the frustration felt by the troops as they went against the Russians. "The air was full of the thunder of tank guns and the noise of engines. In Yaseniw the houses had begun to burn and more tanks were approaching. We could see the enemy forces consolidating. What could we do, attack the tanks with rifles? We needed planes and tanks. During this whole time I haven't seen a single German plane or tank."

The Russian attacks, coupled with difficulties assembling spearhead troops from the XLVIII Panzer Corps, forced the breakout attempt to be postponed until July 21. On July 20, the day that a group of German officers attempted to assassinate Hitler, the Soviets increased their heavy attacks against the Galizien.

Especially hard hit was Waffen Grenadier Regiment 31, which had already lost its commander as well as a large portion of its officers. Before the regiment could totally fall apart, its

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remnants were dispersed to other units in the division in hopes that fighting morale would return to its battered survivors. While the integration of forces was taking place, other Ukrainian units were pushed out of the village of Opaky, a strong defensive position in the line.

In the early hours of July 21, the approximately 30,000 men left in Hauffe's command began the breakout attempt. Since there were few roads in the area, the breakout forces had to literally line vehicles bumper to bumper in order to negotiate the inhospitable terrain. Things went wrong almost from the start as the Red Air Force appeared at daybreak in waves.

As Russian fighters, bombers, and ground attack aircraft flew unopposed, some at treetop level, columns of smoke and fire erupted among the assembled vehicles. Large sections of the columns waiting to escape were soon nothing more than twisted masses of men and steel. Everywhere, the wounded screamed for help as flames consumed them. Those lucky enough to escape their vehicles soon found themselves being hunted down by strafing Soviet aircraft. A captured German officer later told Soviet interrogators, "[T]he Red Air Force did us great harm…They bombed us unceasingly and wouldn't even let us raise our heads. Even the morale of old officers who fought in the 1914-18 war was affected."

Discipline in some of the forward units, especially Korps Abteilung C, began to crumble, but others began to work their way through the Russian lines. General Lindemann's 361st Infantry Division suffered heavy casualties as it battered its way into Soviet positions to make a breach through which others could pass. The men of the 454th Sicherheit Division, called forward to help, showed a similar disregard for casualties as they pushed the Soviets out of their forward lines.

Now that the breakout attempt was in full swing, the rear-guard units began to disengage with the advancing Soviets on their heels. Unaware of what had happened to the motorized columns, the retreating Germans and Ukrainians soon found themselves facing hopelessly clogged roads full of debris and bodies.

Faced with this new crisis, the Galizien Division finally started to become hopelessly unraveled. Word was passed down on the evening of July 21 that it was now every man for himself as Freitag realized that any cohesion in his command was now gone. The Galizien was now little more than a mass of desperate souls looking for a way to escape.

To their credit, some units within the Galizien, more or less intact, continued to fight the Russians effectively. Other individuals and units joined with German formations to continue the breakout effort, but many others could do little more than try to disappear into the inhospitable terrain. Leaderless and running short of ammunition, they fell easy prey to the advancing Russians.

On July 22, General Hauffe was killed. Later that day, General Lindemann was captured by the Russians, but his division continued to fight on. Throughout that fateful day, the XIII Army Corps struggled to make its way to freedom. Embedded in a group of about 800 men from the Galizien and the 361st Infantry Division, Freitag and most of his staff managed to link up with attacking forces from the XLVIII Panzer Corps. Other small groups of the Galizien made it to a breach made by a Kampfgruppe of the 8th Panzer Division.

Fierce fighting took place on all sides of the pocket throughout the 22nd, but by late evening the Russians had sealed off escape routes with an impenetrable ring of men. For the men remaining inside the pocket, there was only surrender or death.

Of the more than 35,000 men forming the XIII Army Corps on July 13, approximately 20,000 were listed as killed or captured. The Galizien Division, which had about 11,000 men at the start of the battle, had an effective strength of about 3,000 by the time it had fought its way out. Soviet writers, such as M.I. Traktuyev, claim a somewhat astonishing 20,000 enemy killed and 17,000 captured—a remarkable figure considering the prebattle strength of the army corps.

The elimination of the XIII Army Corps allowed Konev to release those units fighting in that sector for his main push on L'vov. By the end of the month, the important communications hub was in Soviet hands, and the Germans were forced to continue retreating westward.

Survivors of the Galizien Division were used to form the nucleus of a new 14th SS Ukrainian Division, and the rebuilt unit continued to fight the Soviets in Slovakia and Croatia. In late April 1945, the division designation was changed to the 1st Ukrainian Division of the Ukrainian Army. Fleeing to the West after the German capitulation, it surrendered to American and British forces on May 12. Most of the division was then moved to internment camps in Italy. With the onset of the Cold War, many of the Ukrainians were subsequently released and allowed to emigrate to the United States, Canada, Australia, and countries in Western Europe. □

Pat McTaggart is an expert on World War II on the Eastern Front. He resides in Elkader, Iowa.