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COVER: Troopers from the 101st Airborne Division aboard their transport plane wait for the word to "Stand up and hook up," on June 5, 1944. See story page 12. Photo: National Archives

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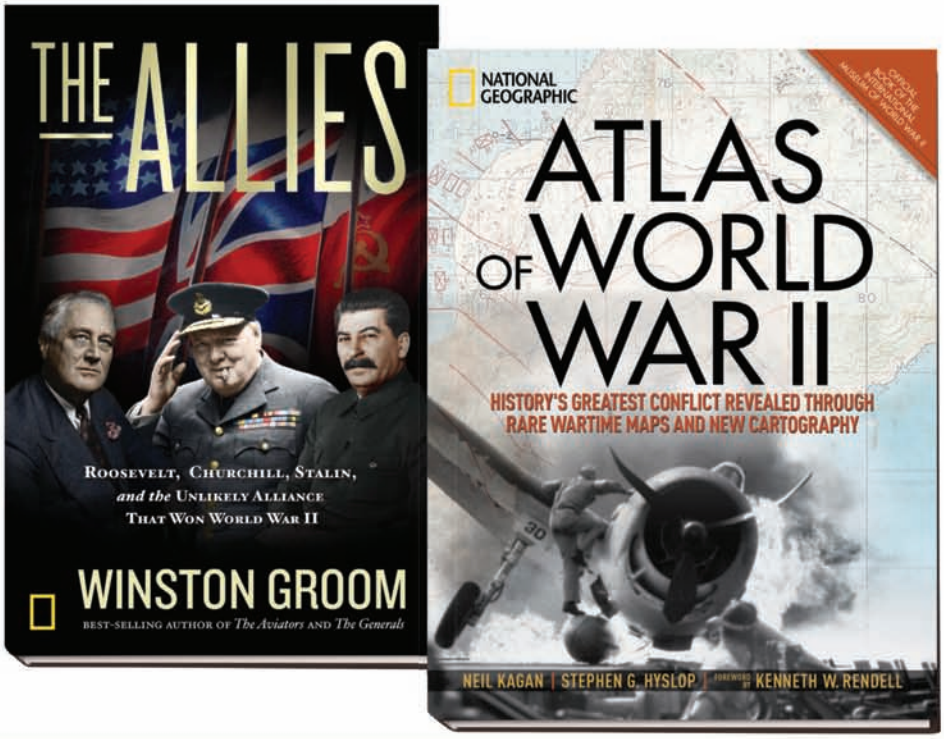

THE ALLIES

Best-selling author Winston Groom tells the complex story of how Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin aligned to win World War II and changed the course of history.

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Learning history from the history makers.

It has often been said that kids today have no interest in, or knowledge of, history. While there may be some truth in that, it is not a universal truth. Recently, the *Denver Post* (my hometown newspaper) ran a story by Bryn Phinney headlined "Vets provide teens a 'living history lesson.'"

In it, the author writes, "Freedom might have had new resonance on July 4 for a group of Denver teenagers who recently heard firsthand about the sacrifices of others to help provide freedom for all."

Students from Denver South High School had met with several U.S. World War II veterans who now reside in the Clermont Park retirement center. One of the veterans the students met was Nicholas Westendorf who, at 105 years old, is Colorado's oldest living World War II veteran.

He had two roles in the war: first, training recruits at Chicago's Glenview Naval Air Station and then as a P-47 aircraft mechanic in the Pacific. He regaled the students with stories, not of combat, but of what went on behind the scenes to keep American forces rolling toward victory.

"We had to fix and get every plane back out in perfect condition," Westendorf said. "One of our planes got shot up badly, but we had it ready to go again by the next day. We never lost a single one."

A few months later, said Westendorf, "a guy came around on a jeep while I was on night duty and told me that the war's over, they dropped the bomb. We didn't really understand what 'the bomb' meant at that time." He added, "I didn't mind doing my part, my duty, but I was glad to go home."

After the seniors visited the high school, 60 students wrote thank-you notes to the veterans. One said, "What you did for the country and the world as a whole cannot be overlooked. Without the lessons learned and the things that were accomplished ... the world would be a very different place. Where we are today is thanks to you."

Another wrote, "I am honored that you ... told us your stories because what you endured should not be forgotten and [World War II] should be a time that all people know about."

It's heartening to know that there are many young people out there (such as these Denver South High School students) who recognize the immense contributions of "the Greatest Generation" who unselfishly gave of themselves to bring about peace—and the end of the most destructive war in history.

Bryn Phinney

World War II veterans meet with students at Denver South High School.

Maybe there is hope for the future after all.

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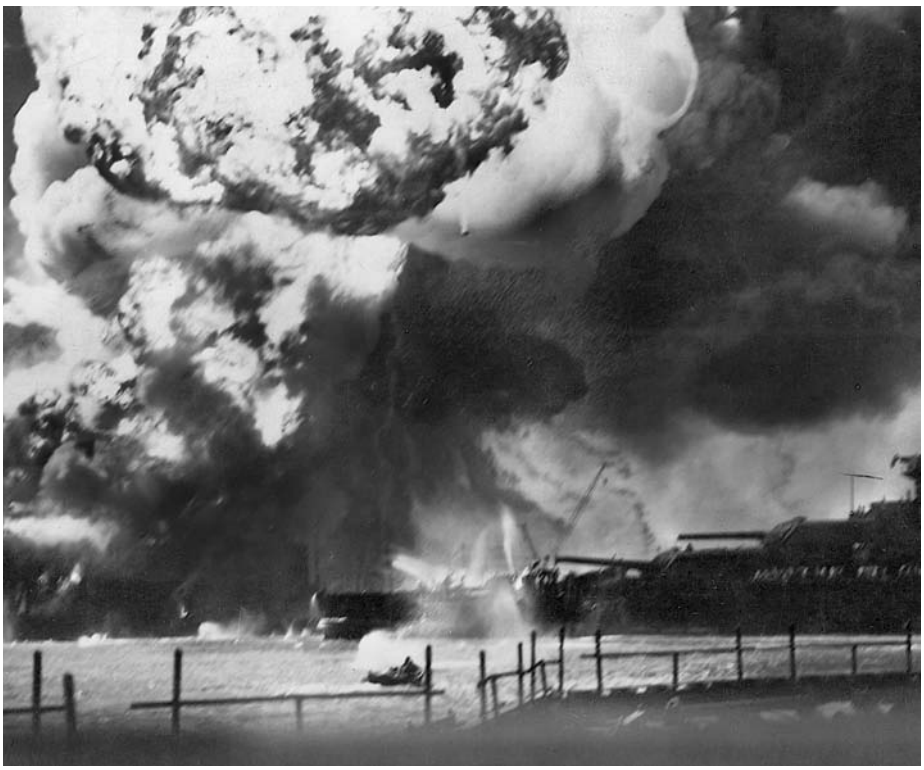
A pair of amateur filmmakers captured the fateful Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor with their 8mm movie camera.

Fort MacArthur in San Pedro, California was established by the U.S. Army in 1914 as a Coast Artillery installation to defend the harbors of Long Beach and Los Angeles. During both world wars, the facility also served as an Army training and induction center. In the 1950s missiles replaced the guns, and they protected the airspace above the Los Angeles area through the 1970s. Today, Fort MacArthur is operated by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks as a historic site and museum honoring six decades of active military history. Inside the park's Battery Osgood-Farley, a former battery for two 14-inch disappearing carriage guns, are exhibits featuring uniforms, weapons, and equipment that tell the story of a time when the site was a U.S. Army post. But one artifact in the museum's collection tells a different story—one that unfolded 4,120 miles away from San Pedro. That artifact is an unexceptional Revere Model 88 motion picture camera that did something exceptional on Sunday, December 7, 1941, when it was used to film 8mm color footage of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

At the time, the camera belonged to Technical Sergeant Harold S. Oberg and his wife Eda. The previous year, the couple departed San Francisco for the Pacific on the U.S. Army Transport *Grant*—destination: the Philippines. There, Sergeant Oberg was to report for his new duty assignment at Clark Army Airfield on Luzon. But during the voyage Eda became violently seasick—so seasick that Sergeant Oberg's commanding officer decided it would be best if she went ashore to recover when the ship made a brief port call at Pearl Harbor.

While she was recovering, Sergeant Oberg's orders were changed, and he was reassigned



to the headquarters of the 11th Bombardment Group at nearby Hickam Army Airfield. The couple was then assigned quarters on 16th Street in the post's senior enlisted housing area. Their new home was a two-story apartment in a C-shaped building that was then only a few years old.

After moving in, the couple began their new life in the tropical paradise. The island's scenery made such an impression on the Obergs that they decided to splurge and buy a handheld camera to shoot home movies. That is when they purchased the Revere Model 88 that is now a part of the collection at Fort MacArthur.

At 7:55 on the morning of December 7, the sounds of low-flying aircraft and explosions rudely interrupted what should have been a peaceful Sunday morning. Eda and

ABOVE: Eda Oberg and her husband Master Sergeant Harold S. Oberg pose for the camera a few weeks after the Pearl Harbor attack. Both Eda and Harold filmed from Hickam Army Airfield. LEFT: The battleship USS *Nevada* (right) gets underway while the nearby USS *Shaw* disappears in a huge explosion. Dozens of photographers recorded the attack, including amateur filmmakers Eda and Harold Oberg.

Harold rushed to one of the two windows in the master bedroom and looked out just in time to see a Nakajima B5N Type 97 carrier attack bomber pass overhead on its approach to release a torpedo at one of the ships of nearby Battleship Row.

Although the Obergs lived on post at Hickam Army Airfield, their quarters on 16th Street stood quite close to the Pearl Harbor naval base. In fact, the distance from the apartment to the mooring berth of battleship USS *Arizona* (BB-39) was just under a mile and a half.

The close proximity of their apartment

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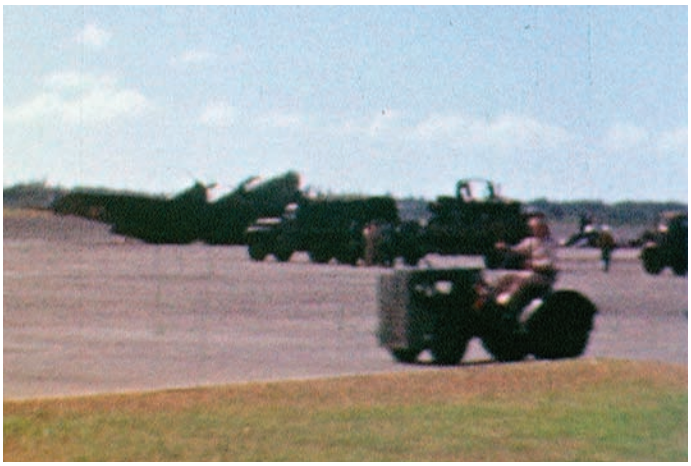
ABOVE LEFT: A still from the footage shot by Eda from the courtyard in front of her apartment building showing a thick cloud of black smoke from the burning Mahan-class destroyer USS *Shaw* which had exploded spectacularly a few minutes earlier in floating drydock YFD-2. ABOVE RIGHT: Another still from the footage shot by Eda at another vantage point shows smoke rising from the area of Drydock Number One where USS *Cassin* (DD-372), USS *Downes* (DD-375), and USS *Pennsylvania* (BB-38) are burning.



ABOVE LEFT: A frame from the footage Master Sergeant Oberg filmed during the attack showing the wreckage of B-17C #40-2074 piloted by Captain Raymond T. Swenson earlier that morning. ABOVE RIGHT: Tai Sing Loo, official photographer of the Pearl Harbor Naval Base, later captured the wreckage of Swenson's B-17 in this well-known photograph.

to this important target of the Japanese attack was such that torpedo bombers from the first wave passed directly overhead on their way there. When Harold recognized the insignia of the rising sun, he turned to Eda and said, "This is the real thing!" and with that dashed off to the closet to put on his uniform. On the way out the door, he told Eda, "Stay under cover!" and then sped off in the couple's car toward the flight line to report for duty.

Shortly after Sergeant Oberg departed, the first wave of the attack came to an end and Eda stepped outside thinking that it was over. She noticed that most of the apartments on 16th Street were empty and the doors wide open, and she could see thick black smoke rising from several points in the direction of the naval base.

That's when she remembered the Revere Model 88 motion picture camera. Although photography on Hickam was prohibited, Eda felt that the exceptional and historical circumstances that day created an exception.

Before she could begin filming, however, the second wave of the attack began, and that drove her back toward the apartment for safety. She then noticed women and children running down 16th Street away from the naval base, and she motioned for some of them to come into the apartment for shelter even though she had never seen them before. Only then did Eda begin filming.

Her initial two shots were from the window of the master bedroom looking toward Ford Island. The first focused on a massive plume of black smoke rising from the battleship USS *California* at Berth F-3, the southernmost berth of Battleship Row; the second faced straight north toward smoke clouds rising from the wrecks of the battleships USS *Oklahoma* at Berth F-5 and USS *Arizona* at Berth F-7. Eda then proceeded downstairs, walked out into the courtyard, and filmed one shot over the roof of the northern wing of the apartment building.

The time was shortly after 9:30 AM on December 7, and the shot captured a thick cloud of black smoke from the burning Mahan-class destroyer USS *Shaw,* which

had exploded spectacularly a few minutes earlier in floating drydock YFD-2.

After recording that brief shot, Eda continued across the courtyard to the northern wing of the building and entered the apartment occupied by Kay and Staff Sergeant John H. Honour; he was the senior NCO in charge of Hickam's control tower. Eda then climbed to the upper floor and recorded two shots facing Porter Avenue and the Marine Barracks on the naval base, a building known as Puller Hall today. In the distance, smoke could be seen rising from the area of Drydock Number 1 where the destroyers USS *Cassin* and USS *Downes* and the battleship USS *Pennsylvania* burned 1,000 yards away to the northwest.

Just as the second wave of the Japanese attack was ending, MPs came to the housing area on 16th Street warning the residents to leave Hickam in the interest of safety. With only a few minutes at her disposal, Eda darted back inside the apartment and grabbed some cash and a blanket, but before leaving she wrote Harold a quick note on the back of an envelope and left it behind along with the Revere Model 88. She then left Hickam Field, riding in silence with Kay Honour and Dorothy Norris, another neighbor from the building. The three women first stopped at Tripler Army Hospital, but they were quickly sent from there to Hemenway Hall on the campus of the University of Hawaii.

Eda Oberg, Kay Honour and Dorothy Norris reunited with their husbands on the campus of the University of Hawaii on December 17th. Harold and Eda (with her back to the camera) are at far right.

Throughout the second wave of the Japanese attack, Sergeant Oberg had remained on duty at 11th Bombardment Group Headquarters at Hickam's flight line about 1,000 yards to the southwest of his apartment on 16th Street. Shortly after the raid concluded, he returned home to check on Eda.

When he entered the apartment, he quickly noticed the note and the camera. Secure in the knowledge that Eda was safe, Sergeant Oberg then drove back to the field, but he didn't do so empty handed. He wanted to document what had happened too, and so he took the camera with him. His neighbor from across the courtyard, Staff Sergeant Honour, then admitted Oberg to the base operations building and led him up to the tower's roof. Once there, Oberg began filming.

His opening shot faced north toward Hangar Number 2 with a thick cloud of black smoke rising from USS *Arizona* in the background, two miles away. Then Oberg panned the camera left to reveal even more smoke rising from the burning wreckage of the battleships USS *Oklahoma* and USS *Maryland,* as well as the

Continued on page 96


Al Mampre

Medic Al Mampre treated Easy Company's wounded during Market Garden and later for the entire 2nd Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division's 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

Screaming Eagle Medic

"You're crazy to go out there!" a paratrooper shouted to medic Al Mampre as he bolted from a trench outside of the Dutch town of Eindhoven. But Mampre had his mission, and he knew what needed to be done.

When he reached Lieutenant Bob Brewer, who was sprawled out in a field, he sat down next to him. "I'll take care of you," he told the wounded officer. A sniper's bullet had gone through Brewer's neck below his chin. He was unresponsive and jaundiced. Despite the severity of the wound, it did not bleed much. Mampre sprinkled sulfa powder on the wound and covered it with a bandage. After struggling to find a good vein in Brewer's arm, he injected a plasma needle and held the IV bottle aloft.

Another medic sprinted out to join Mampre. Then shots rang out. The German sniper, occupying one of four houses across the field, had targeted the three Americans. Mampre heard what sounded like a bottle breaking and looked up at the IV, but it was still whole. Then another bullet clipped the other medic's heel, and he took off for the safety of the trench. Bullets kicked up dust around Mampre and Brewer. Three other paratroopers dropped around them, victims of the sniper's aim.

Then Mampre felt like a mule had kicked him in his left leg. "My leg was opened up like a roast beef," he said, but, like Brewer's neck, his leg did not bleed badly. "I could see the bone."

Mampre gave himself a shot of morphine and then lay down next to Brewer and in his best bedside manner asked, "Lieutenant, are you dead? 'Cause if you're dead, I'm leaving." "No," Brewer whispered, "but I don't know why not." As bullets stitched the ground, Mampre told Brewer he would stay with him.

The two men were in desperate straits. It was their second day of combat in the Netherlands. They had parachuted into the area the day before, September 17, 1944, as part of Operation Market Garden, the Allied attempt to cross the Rhine River with a combined armored and airborne force. Mampre had once been a part of Easy Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, but had been promoted to battalion medic before departing for Europe. Now, on his second day in combat, he found himself a casualty treating another casualty.

The war started for 19-year-old Mampre when he heard that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, while he was listening to the Redskins-Giants football game on the radio. "I didn't really realize the impact," he said. Mampre, from Oak Park, Illinois, was a ministerial student at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. A few days later, his church minister told him his studies would prevent him from being drafted. "That didn't sound right to me," he said.

In the spring of 1942, Mampre enlisted in the U.S. Army in Dallas but soon discovered he was not a rule follower. He liked wearing his overseas cap straight on his head. When his drill sergeant would shout, "Tilt that hat sideways!" Mampre did so, but straightened it out when the sergeant walked away. He often found himself scrubbing pots or handing out ice cream. This was not the Army he imagined. "I want to do something," he told himself. "I want to be a paratrooper." So he volunteered for the paratroopers and soon found himself on a train headed to Toccoa, Georgia.

Mampre joined the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, which had just been formed. Its commander, Colonel Robert Sink, proved to be a no nonsense soldier who wanted his regiment to be the best in the Army. When Mampre scored in one of the regiment's top three on a test, Sink told Mampre his standing, but added, "I have other news for you: you're not going to leave this outfit until you die."

American medics and soldiers seek cover from a German machine gun along a road in Holland. Mampre exposed himself to enemy fire on the way to Eindoven to treat Lt. Bob Brewer, who had been shot in the neck. Mampre himself suffered a leg wound while treating Brewer. OPPOSITE: Staff Sergeant Al Mampre, of Oak Park, Illinois, joined Easy Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, when it first formed in 1942, and was promoted to battalion medic before he shipped out to Europe.

National Archives

National Archives

Hopeful paratroopers leap over a water obstacle at Camp Toccoa, Georgia. Mampre and the other medics had to run an additional mile up Currahee Mountain since the medical barracks was a half mile from the base of the mountain.

On his first day at camp, Mampre and fellow private Edwin Pepping came across a 35-foot jump tower. They decided to test their skills, so they climbed the tower and threw themselves off. Both landed unhurt despite hard landings. Just then a lieutenant walked up and explained that the tower still needed the cables for paratroopers to slide down safely because the tower was designed for practicing door exits, not landings. "Dumb, dumb, dumb," said Mampre about the jump. "I thought they got handed all the dumbest guys, and they put them in the same regiment."

Mampre was soon assigned to Captain Herbert Sobel's Easy Company. Sobel, like Sink, wanted his company to be the best in the regiment. To achieve that goal, Sobel trained his men constantly, even when other company commanders gave their men time off. "The only trouble with Sobel," said Mampre, "was he couldn't read a map and couldn't find his way out of a paper bag."

Mampre took to the hard training immediately. Paratrooper candidates were required to run a three-mile route up Currahee Mountain and back. The first time Mampre did it, he went up with 90 other soldiers and came back with just six. At 5-6 and a wiry 122 pounds, he considered himself a tough son of a gun. "You don't worry about the little guys," he liked to say.

Mampre's training included tear gas drills, target practices, and foot marches. On one march, Sobel ordered the men to crawl over pig entrails. "We slept in that stuff that night," he said.

One day at the firing range, Mampre bet another private a candy bar he couldn't hit the target. The soldier took aim with his rifle and hit it. Mampre made the same offer, and he again hit the target. They kept going. "I figured sooner or later he'd miss," said Mampre. He didn't. By the end, Mampre owed the soldier eight candy bars. The soldier turned out to be Private Darrell "Shifty" Powers, considered by many to be the best shot in the company.

When the regiment formed a medical detachment, Colonel Sink asked Mampre if he would like to be a medic. Mampre said yes and joined with Pepping. The two developed a knack for obtaining anything they needed without going through proper channels, calling themselves the "Band-Aid Bandits." Both men considered medical training similar to what they learned in the Boy Scouts. The main difference: the medic candidates practiced giving shots to oranges. "I never ran into an orange in combat," Mampre mused.

After Mampre and Pepping received their medical certifications, the regiment assigned a new lieutenant to toughen up the medics. He started off by teaching them to properly salute. In retaliation for the senseless exercise, Mampre lit a can of photo film on fire in his barracks. As smoke filled the room, Mampre ran outside to the lieutenant, shouting, "They're trying to kill us!" The lieutenant went into the barrack and threw the burning can outside, telling Mampre, "I don't think you're gonna get killed."

The next day the lieutenant asked Mampre what the paratroopers did. Mampre told him, "Run the mountain." The lieutenant agreed and joined the medics for the seven-mile run (it was a half mile to the base of the mountain). Mampre was charging up the slope when he noticed the lieutenant running out of steam. "Check the rear!" the lieutenant ordered. "Don't need to!" Mampre shot back. The lieutenant decided he would. "See you at the obstacle course," said Mampre, hinting at more exercise later. Eventually, the lieutenant made it up Currahee. "He turned out to be very nice," Mampre recalled.

While the training honed the men's physical skills, it stimulated voracious appetites. One day, Mampre and his fellow medics caught the smell of fresh muffins wafting from the cook house. They found the tray of muffins and grabbed it, but not before the cooks grabbed the other end. The tug of war ended when the Military Police showed up and took down everyone's names. "One guy said his name was 'John Smith,'" explained Mampre, "another said 'Terpin Hydrate,' which means cough syrup." Later, Mampre and his comrades snatched a line of milk bottles laid out for the battalion's officers. "We were growing boys," he defended, "we needed them."

The medics drank more than milk. They often drove to local watering holes in an ambulance. Mampre would sit up front with the driver and Captain Samuel "Shifty" Feiler, the dentist, between them. When they reached the bar, someone would shout, "Last one out buys!" and everyone poured out. Mampre and the driver made sure they opened their doors last, ensuring Feiler, stuck in the middle, paid.

Before leaving Toccoa for more training, Colonel Sink picked Major Robert Strayer's 2nd Battalion, composed of Dog, Easy, and Fox Companies, to march 115 miles to Atlanta in three days on December 1, 1942. The battalion marched mostly through back roads, eating cheese sandwiches from food stations.

Mampre spent most of the march treating foot problems and running to catch up with Easy. He recalled that water froze in the canteens, and men relieved themselves without stopping. When the three-day march was complete, he became the noncommissioned officer medic for the entire battalion, and he took part in a second march with Major Oliver Horton's 3rd Battalion from Atlanta to Fort Benning. Mampre was in excellent shape.

After the marches, the regiment moved to Fort Benning for parachute training. Once Mampre completed his ground training, he and 23 other candidates parachuted out of a Douglas C-47 Skytrain. While he had no problems, one or two other candidates got sick in the plane. The hardest jump was the last, a night jump. "You couldn't tell the difference between the Chattahoochee River and the highway," said Mampre. "One guy who jumped," he recalled, "didn't remember jumping." Mampre never feared and felt that he would never die. He completed the required five jumps to receive his jump wings.

With his initial five jumps completed, Mampre and the rest of regiment transferred to Camp Mackall in North Carolina to continue training. There he perfected his jump technique: turning on his back so he could look up at the plane to see if the equipment had been released from the fuselage. He also perfected coming down fast by pulling down hard on his risers, four straps that extended from the parachute down to the harness strapped around his torso. By pulling all four risers he reduced the amount of parachute catching air, accelerating his descent. At the last second, before hitting the ground, he let up on the risers, fully inflating his parachute and breaking his descent. "I always landed standing up."

On one windy jump, Mampre landed and quickly collapsed his chute to keep from getting dragged across the drop zone. Another paratrooper was not so lucky. "There was another guy being dragged in a full-blown chute and making dust." Mampre jumped on the man's chute and began chewing him out for not collapsing it quickly enough. Mampre was in the middle of his curse-filled tirade when he wiped the dirt off the man's face, revealing Major Oliver Horton. "He just grumbled," said Mampre.

National Archives

Paratroopers from Major Robert Strayer's 2nd Battalion march 115 miles from Toccoa to Atlanta in December of 1943. Mampre treated sore feet and other mild ailments during the march, then did it again when Major Oliver Horton's 3rd Battalion made the same march.

In June 1943, Sink's 506th headed to Tennessee for large-scale maneuvers, where Mampre and his medical crew had some fun. During a night exercise, one of the regiment's doctors declared Captain Sobel—who most of the men considered a martinet—a casualty. Mampre and some other medics carried him back to a makeshift operating area while Sobel declared to anyone in earshot, "Look at me! I'm a casualty!" On the operating table, the doctor put Sobel under and then painted his abdomen red, scraped him with a scalpel, put in superficial stitches, and covered the spot with a pressure bandage.

The medics then brought in Lieutenant Jerre Grosse, a mustachioed officer who was scheduled to be married. After putting him under, they put his arm in a cast and shaved off half his mustache.

The medics put both Sobel and Grosse under a truck to recover. Mampre laid down between them to ensure their safety. Sobel woke up first and felt his pressure bandage. Then he looked down at his red abdomen. Shocked, he screamed out repeatedly to the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Strayer, "They operated on me!" Strayer simply laughed.

Sobel quickly recovered from the prank. The next day at a regimental review, he led Easy Company in mass formation while he counted cadence and hollered, "Hi-ho Silver!" Grosse also recovered. He simply broke off his cast and shaved off the other half of his mustache. His fiancée preferred him without it.

After additional training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Mampre and the rest of the regiment headed north to New York and boarded the RMS *Samaria*. After an uneventful trip across the Atlantic, the ship pulled into Blackpool, north of Liverpool, on September 15, 1943. As Mampre and the other troopers crowded the ship's deck, a flight of British Supermarine Spitfire fighter planes flew in low to greet the Americans. "It was a terrific sight," he recalled.

The regiment headed by train and truck to Aldbourne, west of London. Along the way the men heard Axis Sally on the radio welcoming the 101st Airborne Division—whose trans-Atlantic journey was supposed to have been secret—to England.

Once in Aldbourne, the unit continued to train and conduct air drops. At one training range, where men walked through pop-up targets, crows started landing in the trees. The paratroopers opened fire without hitting a single one. The scene made Mampre think, "We're going into combat and we're in trouble."

Despite the intense training, the medics managed small rebellions. One medic, a cook, smuggled some local girls into a stable. Mampre and Lieutenant (Dr.) Jackson Neavles, the battalion surgeon, went to the stable where Neavles ordered the cook out. When he didn't respond, they threw in colored smoke grenades. The girls ran out crying, their faces streaked with colors. "Those girls had to walk back to Swindon [about five miles away] like that," said Mampre. The cook, on the other hand, refused to come out.

Other medics had their own way of doing things. They dyed their hair with medicinal peroxide, turning them all blond or shades of red. When their hair grew back, leaving them with dual hair color, their British hosts did a double take. "They thought it was all the rage back in the U.S.," said Mampre.

From time to time during the war, Mampre received letters from Virginia Jobul, a girl he knew while growing up. She lived in Evanston, Illinois, and they had dated a few times before he left for college. He enjoyed her letters but that was all. "Most of us didn't think we should burden a girl with that," he said.

Possibly the most memorable incident at Aldbourne was the clash between Captain Sobel and Lieutenant Richard "Dick" Winters, the company's executive officer. On October 30, Sobel accused Winters of ignoring an order, and Winters requested a court-martial due to the fact that he never received the order. As tensions mounted, Lt. Col. Strayer transferred Winters to the battalion mess. Sobel's actions infuriated most of the NCOs, who jointly wrote letters to Sink demanding he either replace Sobel or they would turn in their stripes. "They thought we were gonna mutiny," Mampre said of the battalion staff's overreaction. "The regiment posted a machine gunner on the street. That made me mad."

Sink ended up transferring Sobel out of the company and replacing him with Lieutenant Thomas Meehan, and Winters returned to Easy Company to lead 1st Platoon. "Winters was firm but fair," Mampre said of the man who would eventually command Easy Company in its initial combat.

On March 23, 1944, Mampre jumped with the regiment's 2nd and 3rd Battalions for General Dwight D. Eisenhower, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley. Mampre boarded a C-47 with a calico cat and a homemade parachute. He tucked the cat and chute into his musette bag. When the green light went on, he charged out. Once his parachute inflated, he pulled the cat out of his bag, but the parachute slipped off and floated away. He quickly stuffed the cat back into the bag. After he landed, he went to pull out the cat, but, as he remembered, "the cat was all claws."

About 10 days before the June 6 D-Day drop, Mampre developed a painful cyst that almost circled his neck. A major ordered him to the hospital where surgeons removed it. While the surgery was successful, Mampre missed the invasion of France. When he learned about the airborne assault, he felt terrible. "All that training for nothing!" he lamented.

Mampre recovered and returned to an empty Aldbourne, but he was not alone for long. His brother Edward, with the Eighth Air Force, showed up, and the two brothers enjoyed a reunion. Edward gave Al a flight jacket, which he cherished.

One night they were out together when Mampre spotted a colonel and said, "Let's see

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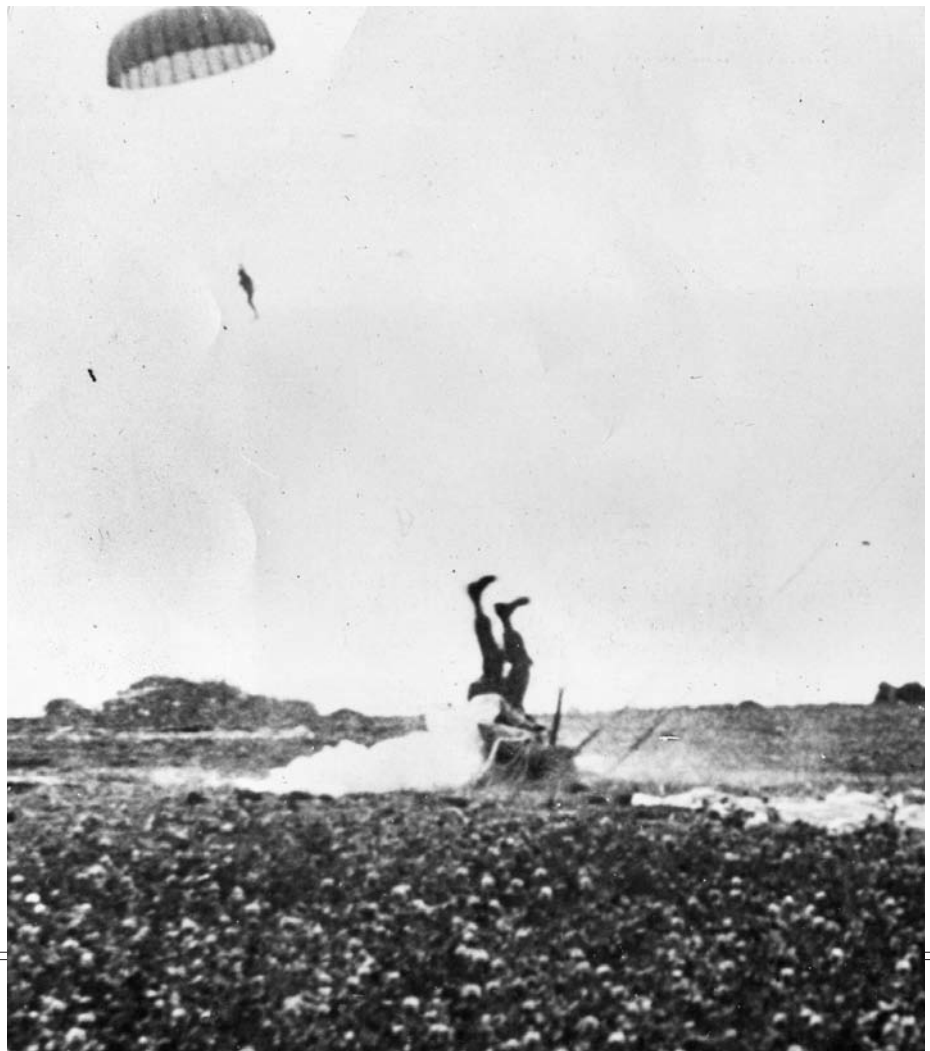

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ABOVE: Dutch civilians help some Screaming Eagles paratroopers find locations on a map. When Mampre took a bullet to his leg outside Eindhoven, civilians rushed from cover to treat his wound and, later, delivered him to the town of Son on a wheelbarrow. OPPOSITE: A paratrooper hits the ground hard during Operation Market Garden in the Netherlands in September 1944. Mampre experienced a similar landing when a fellow paratrooper fell into his parachute, collapsing it, causing Mampre to drop hard on the last 75 feet to the ground.

if this guy's on the ball." Mampre gave the colonel a sharp salute with his left hand. The colonel immediately called him back, then pulled Mampre's left hand and poked it with his finger. "That's your left hand," he declared before poking his right hand, "and that's your right! That's the one you salute with." The colonel was evidently on the ball.

Finally, after almost a month of fighting in France, the regiment returned to Aldbourne. The men continued to train for their next combat jump, which never seemed to come. The Allied armies in France were driving too quickly and planned drops were canceled.

One day a request came in for volunteers to jump into Poland, where the Poles were liberating Warsaw before the Soviet Red Army arrived. "We were gonna jump into the woods," said Mampre. Unfortunately, the Soviets halted at the Vistula River, allowing the Germans to crush the Warsaw rebellion. The mission never happened.

But the next one did. The entire division was alerted for Operation Market Garden, the Allied effort to jump the Rhine River in Holland, where it became the Neder Rhine. The 101st Airborne had been slated to capture the cities of Eindhoven, Son, Veghel, and Grave, ensuring the bridges in all locations were intact for advancing British armored forces. The daylight drop was scheduled for September 17.

Although Mampre did not pack a weapon, he weighed himself down with surgical equipment, including two canteens of ethyl alcohol. Being bowlegged, he strapped equipment between his legs. Once loaded up, he had trouble moving under his burden. "I had to be pushed up into the plane," he recalled. His C-47 took off and headed to its drop zone, while Mampre napped for part of the flight. As the plane reached the drop zone, Mampre saw Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter planes strafing the field.

Then the order came: "Stand up and hook up!" barked the jumpmaster at the door. When a green light by the door lit up, Mampre charged out with the rest of the men. As he jumped, he saw a blue sky before him and a freshly plowed field beneath him. "It was a nice clean jump," he said. But it did not last long.

Mampre was about 75 feet from the ground when a fellow paratrooper fell into his parachute and collapsed it. Mampre dropped like a missile and landed hard. The paratrooper landed on top of him, jamming his rifle butt into Mampre's chin. "Where's the enemy?" the paratrooper called out once he got his bearings. An irritated Mampre responded, "You're standing on him!" It was the first time Mampre did not land on his feet.

Mampre had volunteered to jump with a center-release chute button on his chest. He hit it, and his parachute straps fell off. Men hustled off the field while clouds of colored smoke designated the different assembly areas. Mampre soon heard another paratrooper call out, "I can't walk!" He painfully walked over to the man, shot painkiller into his leg, gave him a swig from his medicinal canteen, and told him to follow the blue smoke to his group.

As the paratroopers headed to Son, Mampre noticed well-dressed locals waving flags. Suddenly, an enemy machine gun opened up, and Mampre quickly took cover in a doorway. He noticed a woman's hand out of the corner of his eye. "This woman was feeding me cherries," he recalled. When the machine gun stopped, he took off, never having seen the woman or thanking her.

As Mampre raced through the town, he heard a vehicle engine failing to start. He hustled over to a backyard and spotted a German jumping over a fence, leaving a small pickup truck. Mampre found Easy Company's medic, Private Moore. "He could fix anything," said Mampre. Sure enough, Moore started the vehicle, which was used by the paratroopers throughout the Netherlands.

The Germans had destroyed the bridge over the Wilhelmina Canal, the 506th's objective, forcing the regiment's engineers to improvise a footbridge. By the time Mampre crossed, it was getting dark. He bedded down in a barn. When he woke the next morning, he realized he was next to a huge pig. "If the pig had rolled over me, I would have been flattened," he said.

The 2nd Battalion paratroopers headed to Eindhoven through a lightly wooded area that ended at an open field. Across the

field stood four houses. Mampre watched as Easy Company riflemen walked ahead of him. Someone called out, "Medic!" and he asked the battalion surgeon, Lieutenant Neavles, "Why are they calling for a medic? They have four medics in Easy Company."

He hurried forward to the wood's edge where several paratroopers occupied a trench. They pointed to an officer sprawled in a field. It was Easy's 1st Platoon leader, Lieutenant Bob Brewer. Mampre went out to help him. That's when a German bullet hit him in the leg and wounded the three other paratroopers.

As the five men lay in the field with bullets popping all around, a group of Dutch civilians ran to them carrying a ladder. They pulled Brewer onto the ladder while others treated the four Americans. Mampre gave them his bandages and sulfa powder to treat his leg. One of the civilians picked up Brewer's M-1 carbine and emptied the entire magazine at the house bearing the German sniper. The civilians helped the wounded to their feet.

Mampre worried when the civilians led the small group toward the same houses as the German sniper fire. As they neared the second house from the left, a woman standing nearby shouted, "*Tote*!"—the Dutch word for "dead." Mampre didn't know if she was talking about the German sniper or a relative of hers. Then Easy Company's Sergeant Myron Rainey called out to Mampre, who was hobbling on his own, "We got 'em!" The sniper, who had been in the fourth house, was dead.

The civilians brought the Americans into the house, where Mampre was first struck by its clean, immaculate floors. Then he was struck by the urge to throw up, a common reaction to morphine. He quickly made eye contact with a woman, made a circle with his hands, and pointed at his mouth with the expression that he was going to get sick. She understood and got him a bowl. "I'm not going to dirty her floor," he recalled.

Once everyone was treated, they brought the Americans outside and put them in a cart. Some of the Dutch did not want the Americans to leave, but Mampre wanted to get back to his unit. A Dutch doctor wanted to go to Eindhoven, but Mampre wanted to head to Son where he knew there was a division aid station. The discussion ended when the Germans opened fire on the group. The Dutch hauled the cart toward Son, while Mampre dropped headfirst into a German foxhole. Some Dutchmen pulled him out and threw him onto the wheelbarrow, delivering him to Son.

Mampre arrived in time to see the tanks, trucks, and infantry from the British XXX Corps streaming thought the streets, bumper to bumper. Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery passed by in his staff car, waving to the crowds, but Mampre was not impressed. "He looked like death warmed over," he recalled. At exactly 4:30 PM, the British stopped to brew tea. Mampre was shocked. "What are you doing!?!" he shouted at the Tommies. "There are Germans all over here!"

Mampre was brought to a hospital where, surprisingly, he gave a pint of blood. He was then sent to a mobile hospital in Belgium, where he complained of a constant stinging pain in his inner right thigh, which no amount of scratching cured. Then he noticed two holes in his pants. The doctors found a bullet hole in his right groin. They cleaned it, operated, and sewed him up.

Next, Mampre was sent to a hospital in England. There, he returned to his rebellious ways, sneaking out a window, on crutches, to play golf on a course where red- and blue-painted sheep were grazing, trimming the lawn. Mampre tried unsuccessfully to hit them with his golf ball. Whenever he finished a round, the course owners treated him to a glass of scotch.

Mampre, as a qualified paratrooper, thought he would be returned to his regiment but instead was sent to a replacement depot, known to the GIs as a Repple Depple. "They hated paratroopers," he said of the officers there. One staff sergeant had put an 82nd Airborne Division paratrooper on kitchen patrol (KP) duty every morning. Mampre told him not to go and went to the officer in charge, a Colonel Killian, to end the matter. "You're sending this guy to the kitchen all the time," Mampe demanded, "use another guy." Mampre later learned that Killian had been court-martialed.

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Three enlisted 101st paratroopers walk through bombed-out Bastogne. Seeing haggard American soldiers retreating through Bastogne has haunted Mampre for the rest of his life.

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Medics and civilian nurses treat wounded Americans in one of Bastogne's makeshift hospitals, January 6, 1945. Mampre treated countless wounded in a Belgian barracks across from Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe's headquarters in Bastogne.

Life at the Repple Depple was not all bad. Mampre was put in charge of the other replacements and would take them on five-mile marches. After leading the soldiers around a bend out of sight of the officers, he stopped them, then ordered two men to buy tickets to the camp movie house. The men would then take in a show.

Mampre finally made it to Mourmelon, France, near Reims, on November 29, 1944, where the 101st had set up camp. While there, he and his comrades took advantage of the regional ambrosia. The owners of Pommery's Champagne House in Reims told him they had champagne but no bottles, so he explored some old World War I trenches and found more than 100 empty bottles. He had his fellow paratroopers hook up a trailer to a jeep before driving it to Pommery's. "I had enough champagne for the rest of my life," he recalled.

Mampre also returned to his Band-Aid Bandit ways. He and some medics decided to steal an armoire from the upper story of an officers' barracks. Mampre attached ropes to the armoire and was lowering it out a window when a lieutenant walked up and asked, "What are you doing?" Mampre told him he was trying to haul the armoire up to the room. Seeing that Mampre was about to be yanked out the window, the lieutenant told him to lower it and departed. Mampre and his buddies had a new armoire.

In need of a shower, Mampre went into the officers' shower but, while he was showering, an officer came in and asked, "Lieutenant?" When Mampre didn't answer, the officer asked, "Captain?" Mampre finished, wrapped himself in a towel, and as he left said, "No. Staff Sergeant, but I'm clean."

While there he saw some washing machines in crates. He "borrowed" one and had his fellow medics dig a square into the ground to hide it. The medics looked cleaner than the rest of the regiment. "Colonel Sink was wondering what was going on," he said.

Mampre enjoyed his time in Mourmelon until December 18, when the entire division was put on alert. Two days earlier, the Germans had broken through the lines in Belgium and Luxembourg and were pressing west—the Battle of the Bulge. The paratroopers gathered what equipment they could and loaded onto trucks for a day-long journey east. Before Mampre climbed on board his truck, he reported to the hospital. "We found a washing machine in our area," he told someone in charge. "Good," the man replied. "We've been looking for it."

A long caravan of trucks took Mampre and the rest of the division to Bastogne, Belgium, where elements of the 10th Armored Division, as well as scratch forces of the 9th Armored and 28th Infantry Divisions, desperately held the north, east, and southeast approaches to the town. As Mampre's truck made its way into the town, he was shocked to see haggard American soldiers staggering to the rear. "It still haunts me," he said, "seeing files of Americans going the other way, telling us not to go there—and we're going in there."

Once in Bastogne, Mampre saw MPs directing traffic through the town's center as artillery shells rained down. Mampre arrived at an Army barracks where Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe, the acting division commander, had set up headquarters. Mampre was assigned to the regimental aid station located across from McAuliffe and began receiving wounded.

As Mampre worked on badly wounded men in Bastogne, time became a blur. He remembered men bringing in a young paratrooper named King, who had been killed accidentally by a strafing P-51 Mustang fighter plane. "A .50-caliber bullet was still in his chest," he said.

Another paratrooper with his arm torn off all the way to his shoulder lamented losing his watch. Yet another paratrooper had been shot in the head, but the bullet entered his helmet, tore through his helmet liner and exited the back without injuring him. One soldier had been hit in the helmet by a mortar shell that exploded. Again, it did not injure him.

Mampre experienced the same kind of luck when an artillery shell landed in front of him outside his makeshift hospital. It hit the ground and broke apart without exploding. Mampre simply looked at it and thought, "That's a really big shell." Yet the incident had little effect on him. "I never thought I could have been killed," he later said.

Mampre was often impressed with the medical staff as well as the paratroopers around him. Captain "Shifty" Feiler, the dentist who often had to pay for drinks back in Toccoa, treated 1,000 wounded

and frostbitten men by himself, the most in the regiment. "Winters wouldn't go near him," Mampre recalled. Feiler had tried to repair Winters' teeth and ended up making them worse.

One day, Captain Feiler ran into the hospital and breathlessly explained that he had almost been captured. He had been driving a truck full of soldiers when he saw Germans in front of him. He jumped out of the cab and threw a captured German Luger pistol into the woods. When Captain Buck Ryan, who had lent Feiler the Luger, asked him why he had done that, Feiler explained, "Do you know what would have happened if the Germans would have caught a Jewish boy with a Luger?" An unimpressed Ryan asked, "What do you think I'm gonna do to you?"

Mampre survived on cold C-rations and rarely slept. He guarded his brother's flight jacket. "If I was hit," Mampre explained, "that jacket would have been off me so fast," taken by others who prized the jacket. He noticed that, unlike the Americans, the wounded Germans hollered for relief. He discovered decades later that the German Army provided amphetamines to its soldiers.

When the Germans bombed or shelled the barracks, Mampre and his comrades fled to the basement. During one shelling, Mampre gave his blanket and a chocolate D-bar to a man in his underwear sitting next to him. When it got light out, Mampre realized the man was a German. "Hey!" he shouted upstairs, "There's a kraut down here!" Mampre took back his blanket.

In another instance, Mampre joked with a 17-year-old English-speaking German prisoner about exchanging uniforms. Mampre would be sent back to the United States as a prisoner, he explained to the kid, and the German could return home by following the American Army into Germany. The young man thought about the offer, and then said, "Ah, the hell with you. I want to go the United States. You go to Germany."

No matter how desperate the situation became, Mampre did not worry. "I never thought we were in trouble." When he heard that General McAuliffe responded to a German surrender demand with one word: "Nuts!" Mampre simply called it "pretty interesting."

ABOVE: A Screaming Eagle lieutenant explains the history of the Berchtesgaden Hof to some soldier tourists. Mampre served as the house physician at the Berchtesgaden Hoff and came into the possession of Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop's watch. OPPOSITE: Happy German soldiers carrying a white flag surrender to American troops from the 3rd Infantry Division near Berchtesgarden on May 7, 1945.

Mampre knew the campaign had swung in the 101st's favor on December 23 when the skies cleared. Mustang fighters strafed the Germans, and C-47s dropped supplies. "That was a welcome sight," he said. "I have such a tremendous respect for those pilots."

Mampre did his duty and survived the siege of Bastogne, but after Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's 4th Armored Division broke the siege the day after Christmas, he was sent to a hospital on January 9, 1945. He does not remember why.

Mampre rejoined the 101st in Berchtesgaden, Germany. On his way, he passed through Baden-Baden, where he saw thousands of German prisoners in an enclosed camp. Once with the division, he gave a 3rd Battalion medic a ride in a jeep that kept jumping out of gear and into neutral. Mampre lost control of the vehicle and bounced it off some huge rocks. The other medic cut his leg badly but refused to go to a hospital, so Mampre sewed him up with some German medical supplies.

When the 101st occupied the town of Berchtesgaden in southern Germany, which included Adolf Hitler's Eagle's Nest mountaintop retreat, Mampre was assigned to the division medical group and occupied the Berchtesgadener Hof, one of the nicest hotels in town, which was going to be converted to a visitors' center for dignitaries. The division surgeon sent Mampre to find out what medical personnel were needed at the hotel. Mampre returned to report to the colonel that all was taken care of. The surgeon then asked Mampre if he had moved into the hotel as medic, and he said he had. That made

him the house physician.

Life at Berchtesgaden was good. Every morning Mampre ate speckled trout for breakfast, which British Air Marshal Arthur Tedder, Eisenhower's deputy commander, caught in the mountain streams. For drink, Mampre found a stash of 1,000 liquor bottles from all over the world, including a dozen bottles of pink champagne. He took what he wanted and turned the rest over to the hotel's bar. "I don't know who got the money for that stuff," he said.

Mampre did well for himself. He ended up with Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop's watch, which was later stolen. He almost came into another fortune when a friend gave him a civilian pillow. Mampre kept it on his desk chair until two MPs and a woman showed up at his office. The woman pointed at the pillow, and MPs opened it up. It was filled with jewels.

While Mampre had just gone to Paris on leave, Nazi Germany surrendered. It was May 9, 1945. "The streets were a mob scene," he recalled. "I was happy as a lark." He spent the day riding around Paris and mixing with the crowds.

When it came time to go home, Mampre took a train to Marseilles, in southern France. Once there, Colonel Sink offered to allow him to fly home or go home with the whole unit. Mampre chose the plane, but before he left he reminded Sink of his comment about staying with the outfit until he died. "Well, I'm alive and I'm going to go home, and I'll be home and a civilian before you leave Marseilles—goodbye, Colonel." Mampre stressed the last words with a salute. Sink's eyes popped, but he didn't say anything.

Mampre's plane touched down in New York, and he took a train to Chicago, and then traveled to Fort Sheridan, Illinois, where he separated from the Army. Soon after he returned to Skokie, Illinois, he married Virginia on November 17, 1945—before the regiment made it home. Mampre and Virginia had three children, Virginia, Susan, and Elizabeth. The Mampres were married for 63 years until Virginia's death in 2009.

Al Mampre attended the University of Southern California. Instead of staying with ministry studies, he dual-majored in psychology and sociology. "My attitude was: 'Maybe I should work on the people side of it.'" He received his bachelor's degree from Pepperdine University and was earning a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1950 when he was offered a research fellowship with International Harvester at the old McCormick Works on the outskirts of Chicago. He stayed with the company until 1978, working in management development and as a public relations manager. He also did pro bono work for college students, lecturing at different schools. "I loved teaching," he said.

Both: National Archives

Mampre thought the 2001 HBO series *Band of Brothers,* based on the Stephen Ambrose book, was rather accurate, but he had a few problems with the scene pertaining to him. In Episode 4, "Replacements," members of Easy Company, sitting on British tanks, pointed out that Lieutenant Brewer (played by Brandon Firla), standing in the middle of the road, looked like General George S. Patton right before he was shot in the neck.

In actuality, said Mampre, "He was nowhere near a highway, and there were no tanks." He recalled that Brewer was tall and handsome. "He looked like Ted Danson." The episode also portrayed the incident as happening outside Nuenen, not Eindhoven.

Mampre was impressed, however, with actor Shane Taylor's portrayal of medic Eugene Roe. Throughout the series, Taylor squatted on his heels whenever he sat down, just like the real Roe.

Over the years, Mampre's back pain from the paratrooper landing on him in Holland became worse. Today, at 94, Mampre appreciates people's interest in World War II, but he does not consider himself or his comrades heroes. "People say, 'I couldn't do what you did,'" but he disagrees. "We were ordinary people."

Mampre uses a paratrooper in Bastogne as an example. Mampre watched a man climb a wall to string some communications wire between division and one of the regiments. An artillery blast knocked him down, but he climbed back up and resumed his work. Another shell knocked him down, and again he climbed back up. A third shell knocked him down, and he climbed back up to finish the job.

"Was he a hero?" Mampre asked. "No. He was mission oriented." To Mampre, that's how the Americans won the war. "We didn't wait for orders. We saw what needed to be done, and we did it." □

A TRAGIC TIDAL WAVE

BY MARK CARLSON

The truth behind Operation Tidal Wave—the disastrous air raid on the Ploesti oil refineries—has long been obscured. One member of the raid may have uncovered how the attack went so tragically wrong.

History is almost never "chiseled into stone." The fog of time can be blown away when new information emerges. So it is with the events of August 1, 1943, in the skies over the Mediterranean and the Balkans. On that fateful day, 178 Consolidated B-24D Liberator bombers of five heavy bombardment groups, carrying more than 500 tons of bombs, left bases in Libya to undertake the longest and most audacious aerial raid in history, a raid codenamed "Tidal Wave."

The targets were the Nazis' vital oil refineries around the Romanian city of Ploesti north of Bucharest, near the western shore of the Black Sea.

While it had been carefully planned and tirelessly practiced, Tidal Wave became a fiasco, and a deadly one, too. To this day there have been few military operations that engender more shock and awe than the accounts of the men who participated in that lone low-level mission to Ploesti. And no one who lived through it will ever forget what they saw and heard that terrible day.

Captain Philip Ardery was a pilot in the 389th Bombardment Group, led by Colonel Jack Wood. The "Sky Scorpions" were new to combat, having arrived in England only weeks before being sent to North Africa. Ardery's B-24 was in the third flight of ships headed for Red Target, the air over which was studded with black puffs of flak:

"We were very close behind the second flight of three ships," Ardery said. "As their bombs were dropping, we began our run in. In the center of the target area was the big boiler house, just as in the briefing pictures. We could see them flying through a mass of ground fire as thick as hail. The first ships dropped their bombs squarely on the boiler house and immediately boilers were blowing up and fires touching off the volatile gases of the cracking plant. The roof of the building blew up above the tall chimneys.

"Already the fires were leaping higher than the level of our approach. Now there was a mass of flame and black smoke reaching much higher, and there were intermittent explosions lighting up the black pall.

"At that moment, running a gauntlet of tracers and cannon fire of all types made me despair of ever covering those last few hundred yards to the point where we could let the bombs go. The antiaircraft defenses were literally throwing up a curtain of steel. From the target grew flames, smoke, and explosions, and we were headed straight into it."

Ardery recalled, "Suddenly, Sergeant Wells, our radio operator, called out, 'Lieutenant Hughes's ship is leaking gas. He's been hit hard in his left wing tank.' I looked out to the right for a moment and saw a sheet of raw gasoline trailing Pete's left wing. He stuck right in formation with us. He must have known he was hard hit because the gas was coming out in such volume that it blinded the waist gunners in his ship from our view.

"Poor Pete! Fine, religious, conscientious boy with a young wife waiting for him back in Texas. He was holding his ship in formation to drop his bombs on the target, knowing if he didn't pull up he would have to fly through a solid mass of fire with gasoline gushing from his ship.

"As we were going into the furnace, I said a quick prayer. During those moments I didn't think that I could possibly come out alive, and I knew Pete couldn't. Bombs were away.

"Everything was black for a few seconds. We must have cleared the chimneys by inches. We must have, for we kept flying. As we passed over the boiler house, another explosion kicked our tail high and our nose down. We pulled back on the wheel and the Lib leveled out, almost clipping the tops off houses. We were through the impenetrable wall."

Ardery then saw Hughes pull up and out of formation. "His bombs were laid squarely on the target along with ours. With his mission accomplished, he was mak-

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Major Robert Sternfels' B-24, *Sandman,* exits a heavy cloud of smoke over the Astra Romana refinery during the August 1, 1943, bombing raid on seven refineries at Ploesti, Romania. German radar detected the raid and antiaircraft gunners and German warplanes were ready, causing heavy casualties.

ing a valiant attempt to kill his excess speed and set the ship down in a little river valley south of the town before the whole thing blew up. Pete was too low for any of them to jump and there was no time for the airplane to climb to a sufficient altitude to permit a chute to open. The lives of the crew were in Pete's hands, and he gave it everything he had.

"But flames were spreading furiously all over the left side of the ship. I could see it plainly. Now it would touch down—but just before it did, the left wing came off. The flames had been too much and had literally burnt the wing off. The heavy ship cartwheeled and a great shower of flame and smoke appeared. Pete had given his life and the lives of his crew to carry out his assigned task. To the very end he gave the battle every ounce he had."

Lieutenant Lloyd "Pete" Hughes was one of the five men to receive the Medal of Honor for his courage that day. But he was only one of the 1,752 Americans who took off from Benghazi, Libya, on the most daring air raid in history.

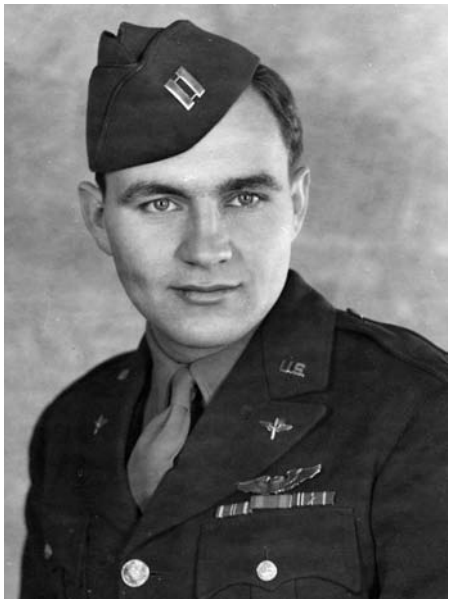
As shocking as Ardery's account is, it must be remembered that the attack on Red Target was one of the only two successful attacks of Tidal Wave. The rest of the mission had turned into a confused snarl of over a hundred huge bombers desperately seeking a target or escaping from airborne death. What had started out with such promise turned into a catastrophe from poor planning, bad leadership, and overconfidence.

Tidal Wave was conceived by Colonel Jacob Smart, considered one of the best planners in the Army Air Forces. He was well aware of Ploesti's importance to Hitler's conquest of Europe and the Soviet Union. Germany had gained control of Romania through diplomatic intimidation and political deception in 1941. While the region had tactical value to the Third Reich, it was the black gold and Ploesti's refineries that made Romania into what Winston Churchill called the "taproot of German might."

Together, a dozen modern refineries turned out millions of tons of high-octane aviation fuel and gasoline that kept Hitler's tanks, trucks, trains, and planes moving in all of Germany's theaters of operation.

Courtesy Robert W. Sternfels

Courtesy Robert W. Sternfels



ABOVE: Capt. Robert W. Sternfels in 1943. TOP: Just before takeoff, co-pilot Ralph Thompson, left, and K.K. Compton, right, help General Uzal Ent into his flak jacket. Note the navigation charts under Compton's arm. BELOW: Left: Colonel John "Killer" Kane, 98th Bomb Group commander. Right: Colonel Keith K. Compton, who led the 376th BG to Ploesti.

Both: National Archives

Ploesti's (pronounced Ploi-yhest) refineries were arranged like the reefs and islands around a lagoon, with the city in the center. They made a difficult target. Only by hitting and destroying specific structures like the boiler houses, cracking towers, powerhouses, and stills would a modern oil plant be put out of action. Pinpoint accuracy on a scale unheard of in high-altitude bomber operations was required.

The only solution that seemed to offer hope was daring and difficult. Colonel Smart began to consider a low-level mission. Medium bombers such as the North American B-25 or Martin B-26 were excellent for the purpose, but the extreme distance from Allied air bases in Africa meant that only long-range bombers such as the Boeing B-17 or Consolidated B-24 could make the round trip.

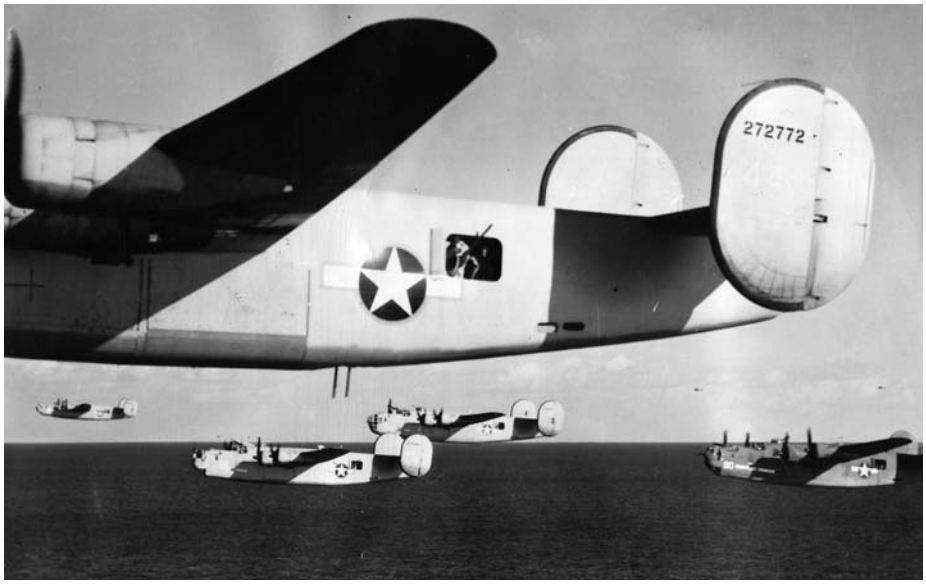
By the spring of 1943, Smart had found some real advantages to the low-level strike concept. Radar would not be able to detect and track the incoming force. Axis fighters would be cheated of half of their sphere of attack, and ground antiaircraft gunners would have little time to track and aim their guns at the fast-moving bombers. The air gunners on board the bombers would for the first time be able to shoot back. Damaged planes could ditch instead of having their crews bail out.

One by one, the advantages of a low-level raid outweighed the drawbacks. By early summer Smart had sold the Army Air Forces high command on his daring idea. Now they needed five groups of bombers. Two were already available in Africa, based in Benghazi, Libya, which had recently fallen to the Allies.

General Lewis H. Brereton's Ninth Bomber Command consisted of two heavy bomb groups of B-24s, the 376th "Liberandos" under Colonel Keith K. Compton and the 98th "Pyramiders" commanded by Colonel John "Killer" Kane. The Eighth Bomber Command in England provided three more: Colonel Leon Johnson's veteran 44th, the "Eight Balls," and the 93rd

Courtesy Robert W. Sternfels

National Archives



ABOVE: Colonel Leon Johnson's group of B-24s fly low over the Mediterranean Sea on their way to hit Ploesti. The group flew over Greece and the mountains of Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria before penetrating into Romanian airspace. TOP: The crew of Major Sternfels' B-24, *Sandman,* photographed after the raid. Co-pilot Barney Jackson is standing next to Sternfels.

"Traveling Circus," commanded by Colonel Addison Baker. Colonel Jack Wood's fledgling 389th "Sky Scorpions" filled out the huge force.

The Consolidated B-24 Liberator has entered history as one of the most innovative and important aircraft of World War II. With its boxlike fuselage and distinctive twin rudders, the four-engine Liberator could carry more bombs and fly farther and faster than its more famous predecessor, the B-17 Flying Fortress.

With a crew of four officers and five gunners—the B-24D did not yet have the ball turret—it was a huge plane to be flown at treetop level. All its pilots agreed it was a difficult plane to master, requiring much upper body strength to maneuver its 60,000-pound bulk. But it was the only plane that could manage the 2,400-mile, round-trip flight. Each plane could carry two tons of bombs along with two bomb bay tanks of additional fuel.

The bomb group commanders were awestruck by the audacious concept when they were briefed by Smart and Brereton.

Ploesti was not, strictly speaking, a virgin target. In 1942, 20 B-24s of the Halverson Detachment had been assigned to fly from the East Coast of the United States, down to Brazil, across the Atlantic to Africa, then on to India and China. Their ultimate goal was to bomb Tokyo. But the Doolittle Raid of April had closed all the China bases, and the force, led by Colonel Harry Halverson, was reassigned to bomb Ploesti.

The so-called "Halpro" mission was a hasty, improvised attempt to hit the largest oil refinery in Europe, Astro Romana. It was hoped that cutting off a vital source of fuel to Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps might give the Allies the edge they needed to drive the Germans out of Africa. But bad weather and poor navigation caused the 13 ships of the Halpro force to drop their bombs far off target. Until August 1943, Halpro was the longest bombing mission attempted during the war.

For Tidal Wave, seven of the most modern and largest refineries in Europe were targeted.

All five groups were to take off in the predawn of August 1 and form up. The 376th was to be followed in turn by the 93rd, 98th, 44th, and 389th. The bomber stream would be almost 20 miles long. They were to maintain visual contact from the start since strict radio silence was to be observed. After flying north over the eastern Mediterranean, the bombers were then to turn northeast at the island of Corfu and head over Albania and into western Romania.

They would then descend to low altitude along the southern foothills of the Transylvanian Alps to reach the third and final Initial Point (IP) at Floresti and turn southeast to the refineries. Timing and distance between groups was critical. They all had to reach the IP at exactly the right time and intervals. Smart intended that the bomber groups make simultaneous turns to their targets, which would be directly in their path.

Compton, in the lead, had White One on the far left, while Baker and the Circus would hit a target designated White Two, west of White One. Baker's deputy, Major Ramsey Potts, was assigned to White Three, while Kane and the Pyramiders, the largest group, went southeast on the left side of the railroad directly at White Four. To his right, the Eight Balls under Johnson took White Five. Section B of the Eight Balls angled to the right to bomb Blue Target, located southwest of the city.

Meanwhile, Jack Wood's Sky Scorpions,

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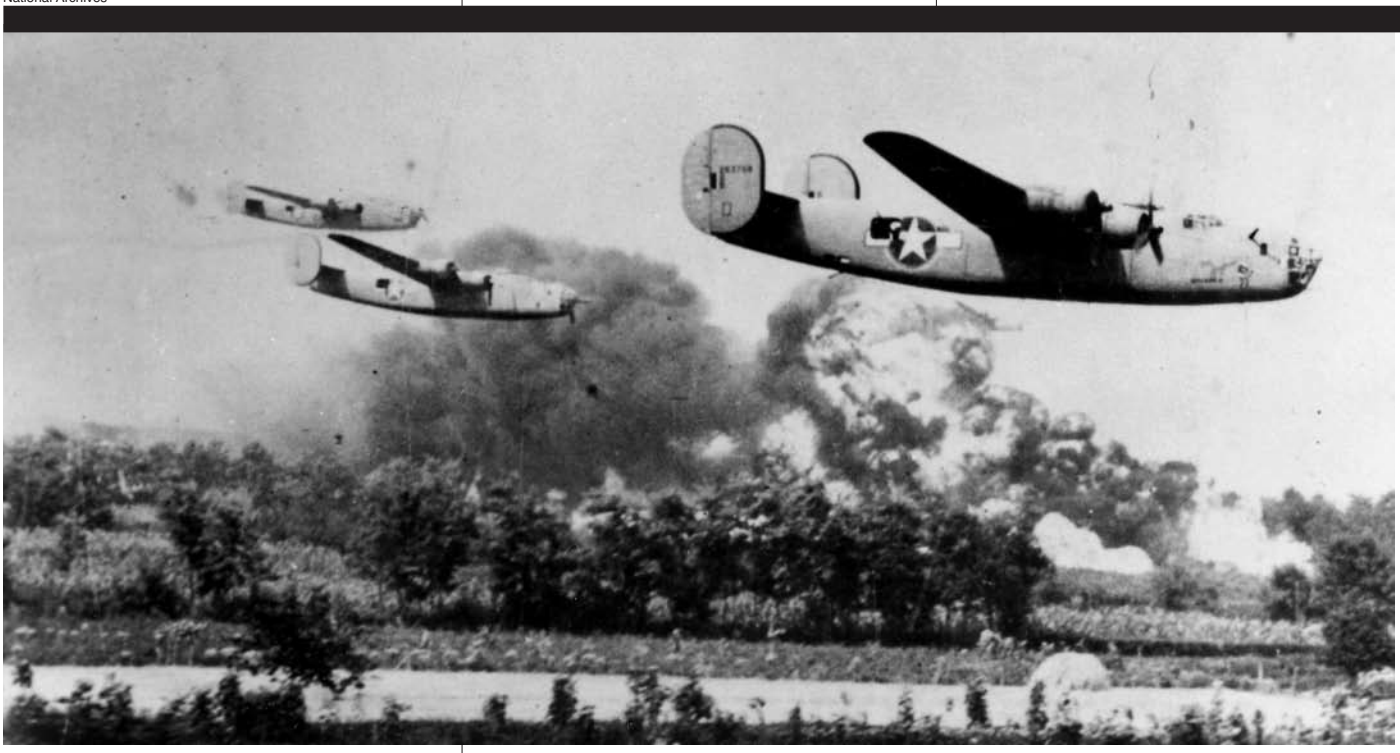


ABOVE: Three of the 177 B-24s that began the raid fly in formation at treetop level, with a blazing refinery in the distance. OPPOSITE: The planned route to Ploesti is shown at left, while the actual routes flown by the five bomb groups is at right.

which included Ardery and Hughes, were to turn northeast at the second IP and attack Red Target at Campina in the valley north of the city. Each bombardier had specific targets for his bombs—the near wall of a powerhouse, for instance. The gunners were to throw out small thermite bombs to ignite fires among the heavily volatile refinery grounds.

It would literally be a tidal wave of huge bombers dropping tons of high explosives in one cataclysmic conflagration. The time from the first bombs on White One and the last on Red Target would take 20 minutes. The first bombs had a delayed-fuse setting of 45 minutes, while the last were set for only 45 seconds. This would ensure that no bombs exploded under the following Liberators.

If all went well, the massive aerial assault would cut a third of Hitler's oil refining capacity and deal a nearly fatal blow to the Axis in a single mission.

But all did not go well. Tidal Wave only succeeded in destroying two of the refineries and damaging three others at the terrible cost of 53 Liberators. After nearly 16 hours and some of the most savage and desperate fighting ever seen in the air, 440 Americans were dead, more than 300 wounded, and 108 taken prisoner in Romania. Scores were imprisoned in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria or interned in Turkey. Far from being the smashing success planned by Smart, Tidal Wave has become an example of how no plan ever survives first contact with the enemy—or with bad luck.

What went wrong? Some of the causes are obvious when viewed with 20/20 historical hindsight. For one thing, the Germans were fully prepared and alerted long before the B-24s reached the Balkans. The ineffective Halpro raid had one unforeseen consequence: the Germans realized that Ploesti was a key target and began bringing in three fighter groups and hundreds of antiaircraft guns. Radar was constantly on the alert for any incoming raid. The Germans built thick concrete blast walls and complex rapid recovery systems to keep the refineries working even after an air raid. The U.S. Army Air Forces suspected none of this.

Among the official reasons that supposedly contributed to the disaster was the loss of the lead mission navigator on a plane that inexplicably fell into the Ionian Sea. Second, a high storm front over the mountains of Albania further degraded the integrity of the bomber stream. Third, total radio silence made it impossible to regroup without alerting the enemy.

And, finally, a disastrous wrong turn short of the final IP by Compton and Baker caused the leading groups to head for Bucharest instead of Ploesti. After that the entire mission was a shambles and failed to achieve the crippling blow that Smart had predicted. Those are the main points of what history considers the reason for Tidal Wave's failure.

Yet history can be revised and even changed when new information becomes available. And the best source of information often comes from those who were present.

Major Robert Sternfels is a veteran of Kane's 98th Bomb Group at Ploesti. On the drive to White Four, Sternfels was in the thick of it, at the controls of his Liberator, *Sandman*. Sternfels, with more than 300 hours of combat on 50 missions, admitted he had never seen anything like it before or since. He saw it all.

So how did such a carefully planned, rigorously practiced mission that had so much going for it turn into a horrible disaster? According to Sternfels, the root of the debacle

lay at the feet of two men: the very man who had originally planned the raid from the beginning, Colonel Jacob Smart, and Colonel Keith K. Compton, commander of the 379th Bomb Group. Together these two men were predominantly responsible for the Tidal Wave calamity.

The South Carolina-born Smart had graduated from West Point in 1931 and became a flight instructor after getting his wings in the Army Air Forces. He tended to catch the eye of senior officers and was soon on the Air Force Advisory Council—under General Henry "Hap" Arnold—where he was involved in the early planning of the invasions of Europe and North Africa. As operations officer for General Lewis H. Brereton's Ninth Bomber Command, he planned missions to Sicily and Italy. In early 1943, he was tasked to plan the most effective way to destroy the vital Ploesti oil refineries. Smart came up with the idea of hitting the targets with heavy bombers at extreme low altitude.

But as things turned out, he was out of his depth.

"Smart conceived the entire low-level concept," the 96-year-old Sternfels said in an interview with the author in his Laguna Beach home, "the route, approach, and bomb run for each plane. The four leading groups were to turn southeast onto the bomb run in waves of several planes each, keeping formation in the turn. That was the idea, at least."

Smart sold the idea, but the men who would actually have to carry it out didn't think it could be done. Among those was the burly, hard-driving commander of the Pyramiders, Colonel John Riley "Killer" Kane, who never minced words in expressing himself. Sternfels noted, "During the initial mission briefing meeting Kane said, 'What idiot armchair lawyer from Washington planned this one?'"

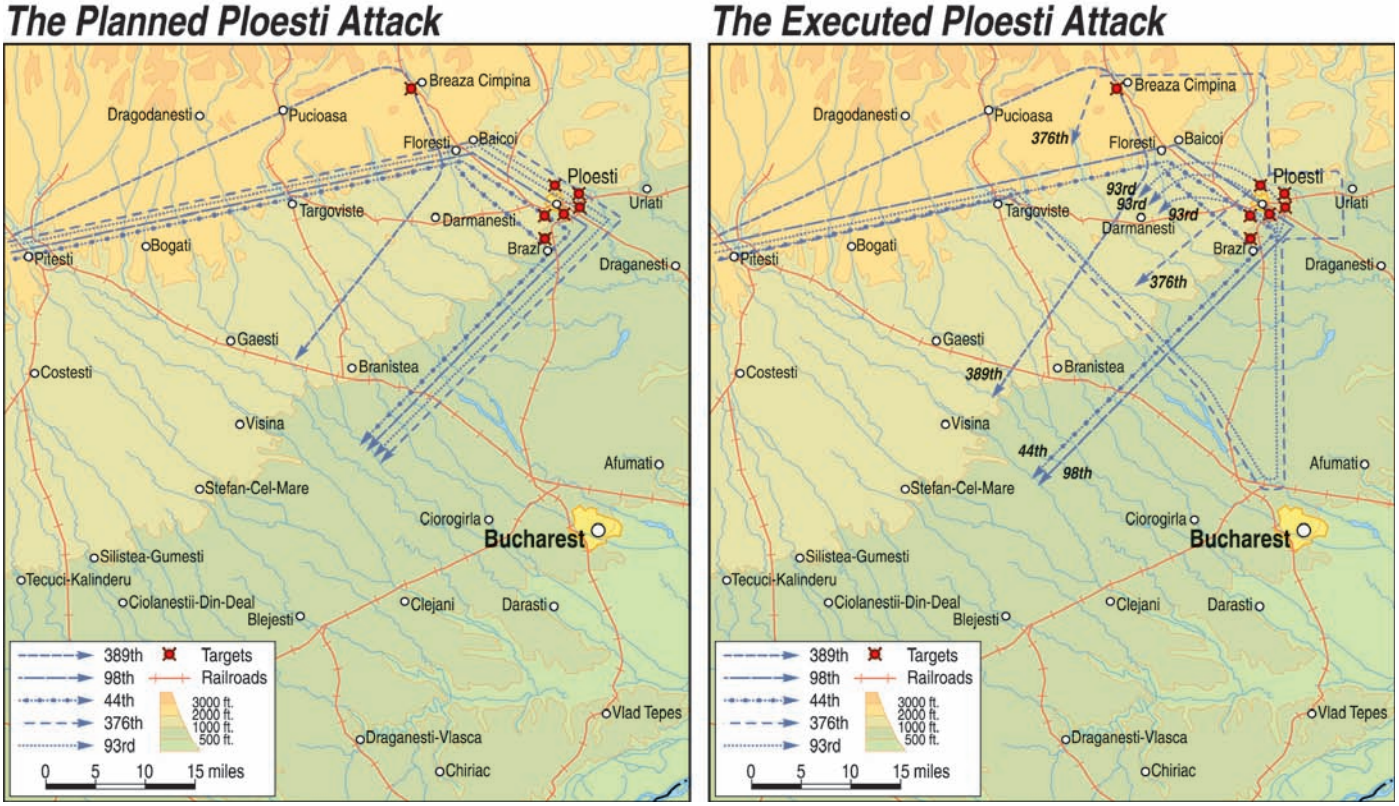
Sternfels related an incident that patently demonstrated how ill suited Smart was for planning Tidal Wave. "On 15 July, just two weeks before Tidal Wave, my crew and I were preparing for a mission to Foggia, Italy, when a staff car pulled up. And out stepped Smart, fully geared up in brand-new flight suit and Mae West life preserver. He came up to me and said, 'I'd like to fly with you today as an observer.'

"Smart was on the flight deck with me, my co-pilot Barney Jackson, and our flight engineer, Sergeant Bill Stout. He was standing there between our seats watching as we went through our checklist. I asked him if he would step back to let my flight engineer come forward and call out speed and engine readings. Smart did so and we took off."

On the way north toward Italy, Smart again came between the pilots' seats. Then he did something virtually unheard of in any aircraft.

"He reached out to adjust the fuel mixture controls," said Sternfels, still astonished after more than 70 years. "You just don't do that if you're a passenger. Even a general doesn't do that without the pilot's permission. I didn't say anything but adjusted the mix to what I wanted and we flew on. A little while later Smart did it again!"

That was too much of a breach of protocol for Sternfels. "I said, 'Colonel, please don't touch the controls!' He didn't say anything. I never forgot about it, and later, after Tidal Wave, I often thought about that mission to Foggia. I wondered if it could relate to how Tidal Wave had turned out."



Map © 2019 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

"In 1993, I went to South Carolina to interview Smart," Sternfels said. The meeting between the Tidal Wave planner and pilot was pleasant but held an astonishing revelation. "I always wanted to ask him about his actions in my plane, but I didn't want to just come out with it. So I asked him in a roundabout way, 'By the way, how many hours did you have in B-24s before that mission with me?'"

Smart's answer stunned Sternfels. The man who had conceived and planned the daring and complicated raid said, "I just completed my first check-out ride a week before."

Until just three weeks prior to the huge mission he had already planned, Colonel Jacob Smart was totally unfamiliar with the B-24 or how it handled in close formation. "I don't know if he flew a combat mission prior to Foggia," Sternfels said with evident disbelief.

Sternfels had also wondered about how much the Army Air Forces and Smart knew about the heavy defenses around Ploesti. He asked Smart, "Why didn't we send some RAF Mosquitos to photograph the target?" Smart said they didn't want to alert the Germans to the impending raid.

"As if the sudden arrival of almost 200 B-24s in Libya wouldn't have done that," Sternfels said laconically. "Ploesti was the only major target that would require long-range Liberators. So our briefings never mentioned the fighters, heavy flak, or barrage balloons around the refineries. We were told the few flak guns were manned by Romanians who would run to the shelters when we flew over. We had no idea how vicious the flak would really be. They knew we were coming. Maintaining radio silence was a moot point. Of course, no one could know that then, so the planners can't be blamed for trying to keep the Germans in the dark."

After the war it was established that German radio intercept stations in Athens had picked up the radio traffic during the takeoff. Later, radar units in the Balkans picked up the mission as it headed north from Benghazi and over the Mediterranean. By the time the lead ships passed over the

A German officer instructs a Romanian antiaircraft gun crew how to operate their weapon. The Americans believed the refineries would be lightly defended, not realizing the facilities had been reinforced.

Albanian coast and headed northeast, Ploesti was the obvious target. The German and Romanian gunners and fighter pilots had plenty of time to prepare a warm reception for Brereton's bombers. They were headed directly at the most heavily defended target in Europe.

But Sternfels reserved most of the blame for the chaos that ensued over the Danubian plains on one man: Colonel Keith K. Compton, who led the mission. "I don't like to say anything bad of a man who is no longer alive to defend himself," Sternfels said cautiously. "But Compton was very overconfident and at times even arrogant. He was accustomed to doing things his own way. That was a primary reason for the way the mission came apart." Sternfels' reasoning was based on his own observations before, during, and after Tidal Wave, and postwar examination of documents and photos. He interviewed several other Tidal Wave veterans, including Compton himself, then a retired lieutenant general.

Keith Compton was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1915 and graduated from college with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1937. After earning his wings in 1939, he worked his way up the Army Air Forces ranks—first to bomber squadron command and then to the new 376th Bomb Group in North Africa. Compton was known to be ambitious and assertive in both operations and combat.

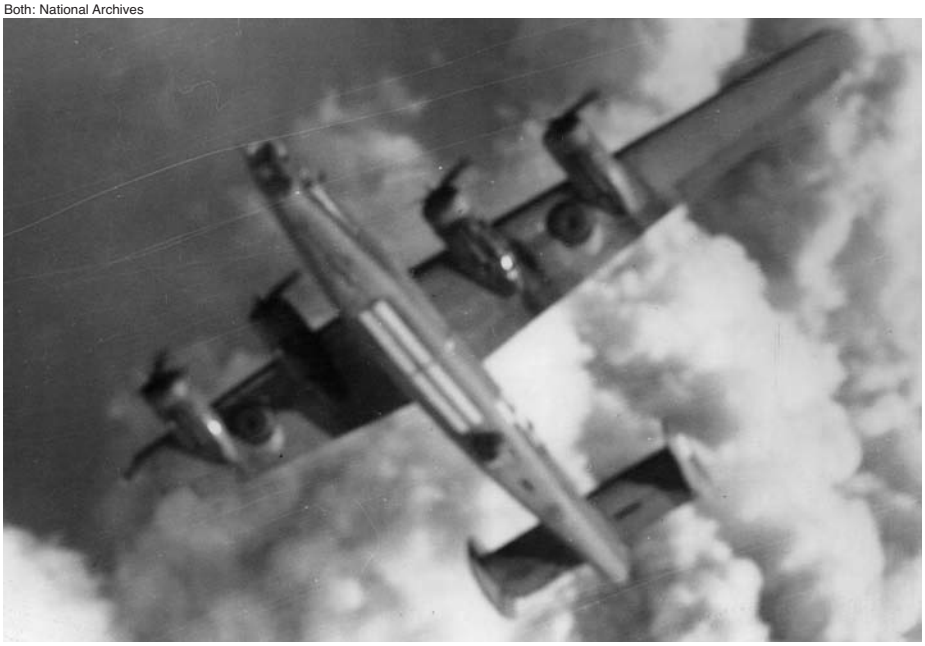
Compton's own plane, *Teggie Ann,* which also carried the mission commander, Brig. Gen. Uzal Ent, took off from Benghazi at 6 AM. For the next hour the sky over the airbases was filled with the roar of over 700 Pratt & Whitney radial engines as they blew choking storms of dust and sand for miles.

Berka Two and Terria, the 376th and 93rd bases, were much closer to the coast than Lete, Kane's field. Once the 40 Liberandos were assembled, Compton put his plane on high-power settings and headed north. In a relatively short time the 376th and the 93rd were far ahead of Kane's desert-weary ships, which stayed at lower power settings to conserve fuel.

"The gap started at takeoff and widened over the Mediterranean," Sternfels explained. "Compton never gave a thought to the following groups." He apparently made no attempt to determine if they were keeping up. But they were falling farther and farther behind."

Then a curious but tragic thing happened. After a series of violent pitch oscillations,

Both: National Archives



ABOVE: With part of its left wing missing from intense flak, a B-24 rolls onto its back and goes down during the raid. A total of 54 B-24s were lost on the mission, including 13 that turned back for mechanical reasons. RIGHT: Colonel Jacob Smart, left, who conceived of Tidal Wave, with Henry "Hap" Arnold. After the war, Sternfels had harsh words for Smart and the fiasco that Tidal Wave became.

Lieutenant Brian Flavelle's *Wingo-Wango* flipped onto its back and fell into the Ionian Sea, killing all aboard. Another B-24, piloted by Lieutenant Guy Iovine, dropped out of the formation to assist Flavelle. "Iovine later said they wanted to drop life rafts," Sternfels said, "but that makes no sense at all. There's no way to drop life rafts from a B-24. They are in compartments on the top of the fuselage. You can't get at them in flight." Iovine's heavily burdened plane was unable to climb to rejoin the mission and had to turn back.

Flavelle's plane was supposedly carrying the mission lead navigator, Lieutenant Robert Wilson. To make matters worse, Iovine's plane also carried the deputy mission navigator. So in one bizarre incident, the two most important—and presumably most experienced—navigators were lost to the mission. This was the reason, according to the Army Air Forces, why the leading bombers made the wrong turn at Targoviste instead of Floresti, the third and final IP.

But this, according to Sternfels, was closer to folklore than fact. As for losing the two most experienced navigators, Sternfels stated, "That's baloney. If only two men knew the route, why did we take along 176 others? All the navigators were well trained and had very cleverly drawn low-level course charts."

How then, could so many qualified navigators have failed to keep the force on course at the critical moment? They didn't, according to Sternfels. "The man who made the wrong turn was not a navigator. If Flavelle had really been carrying the mission lead navigator, he would have been flying ahead of Compton, and the rest following. Compton would have seen him go down. But Compton told me when I talked to him in 2000 that he didn't learn about Flavelle's crash until he returned to Benghazi nearly 14 hours later. Compton admitted to me that he led the mission from takeoff to landing. I later found documentation in the Air Force archives to back it up."

This sheds an entirely new light on the events that transpired. By the time the leading groups reached the 9,000-foot Pindus Mountains of Albania, Compton and Kane were separated by at least 30 miles. And the gap was widening with each passing hour.

Ploesti, a controversial book by James Dugan and Carroll Stewart, cites that the storm clouds over the Albanian mountains convinced Kane to begin circling in what was known as "frontal penetration," a maneuver to prevent collisions in cloud. Frontal penetration had the planes begin flying in a huge racetrack formation until all were involved. Then in small elements of three planes, they peeled off and penetrated the cloud front. When they emerged on the far side they again resumed flying in a racetrack. When all were assembled, they resumed their original course.

This earned a strong comment from Sternfels. "We never did that. That was a fictional explanation for the wide gap between the two formations. But it never happened. In fact, I had never heard of it until long after the war. Our navigation logs show we climbed and worked our way through."

In any event, there are other reasons to doubt the book's account. Frontal penetration requires some radio traffic, which was not permitted. Second, the two groups following Kane would have had to do the same, so the maneuver would have taken far longer than can be accounted for by the distance that separated the Compton-Baker group from the Kane-Johnson-Wood group. The book also states that there was a strong tail wind at Compton's altitude that was not present at Kane's lower altitude, further widening the gap. This was also untrue, according to Sternfels after his talk with Compton.

At last the leading ships had passed over southern Yugoslavia and entered Romania, descending to the preplanned low level that would screen them from German radar and

National Archives

ABOVE: With fires burning over the target area, another wave of B-24s can be seen coming in for their bombing run. OPPOSITE: Barely missing tall chimneys, Sternfels' B-24 emerges from the smoke over the Astra Romana refinery in a photo taken moments after the earlier photograph at the beginning of this article.

fighters. Ahead on the left were the foothills of the Transylvanian Alps, a series of ridges and valleys whose rivers and streams emptied into the Danubian plain. The rich land was a peaceful patchwork quilt of farms and pastures, quiet streams and small forests.

The towns of Pitesti, Targoviste, and Floresti were the three all-important Initial Points that guided the navigators to the bomb run. Each navigator had a set of sequentially numbered drawings that showed the details of every landmark along the route. All they had to do was follow the line on the charts as they matched up with the actual landscape.

Sternfels had more surprises in store: "I found a photo of Compton taken just prior to takeoff. In this photo, he is holding under his arm a set of charts and maps. Compton was familiar with the route and approach. But his job as the mission leader wasn't to be looking at maps. That was Wicklund's job," he said, referring to Captain Harold Wicklund, one of the most experienced navigators in the Army Air Forces. Wicklund had flown to Ploesti on the Halpro raid in 1942.

Sternfels interviewed Compton's co-pilot, Captain Ralph Thompson, who confirmed that Compton had the charts and maps on his lap during the approach to the target area. The lead pilot, the man who did things his own way, was doing the job of his navigator.

"The 376th and 93rd reached the first IP at Pitesti and continued on." Kane and Johnson were by now almost 60 miles behind the lead force. But Kane, determined to make up the lost time and distance, was driving hard to reach the IP and make their turn.

"When Compton reached Targoviste," Sternfels said, "which was only the second IP, he unexpectedly turned the force southeast; most of the other pilots realized it wasn't the right place. Compton ignored their frantic radio calls that they'd turned too early. According to Sternfels, this was typical of Compton. "It would have taken only a few minutes to get back to the correct route." Such a move would also have given the following groups time to catch up and possibly return the mission to the original plan.

But the Liberando commander, with the mission commander beside him, continued on the wrong course, followed by Lt. Col. Addison Baker and Major Potts with the 39 ships of the Traveling Circus. It is not known whether Baker accidentally made the wrong turn or had decided to follow Compton.

They were now headed directly to Bucharest while they passed Ploesti on the left. Baker and his co-pilot, Major John Jerstad, at the controls of *Hell's Wench,* apparently realized their heading was taking them away from their target, now far to the east beyond Ploesti. They turned east to attempt an improvised attack on Kane's target, White Four, when the Circus flew into a deadly hailstorm of flak. German gunners found easy targets at point-blank range. Huge 88mm and rapid-firing 37mm batteries fired streams of hot steel that wreaked terrible carnage on the low-flying B-24s.

Over the city, refineries, and plains they fell, burning like torches as they shed wings and bodies. Many planes and crews ended up as long, flaming smears of wreckage in the fields around the fiercely burning oil tanks.

When the Circus came out, *Hell's Wench* wasn't among them. Baker and Jerstad had taken a hit just before reaching White Four, and the fuel-laden Liberator became a flying blowtorch.

Only 12 Circus ships returned to Benghazi.

By this time, General Ent, on board Compton's plane, decided that the enemy defenses were too fierce to breach. He sent a radio call to the Liberando ships to break off the bomb

run and hit targets of opportunity. With this, the B-24s of the 376th began pulling away from the main group.

"It still amazes me," continued Sternfels, "that General Ent ordered the 376th to break off the bomb run. A lot of pilots just jettisoned their bombs rather than face the flak. They weren't even under fire when he sent that order."

Compton's bombardier, 1st Lt. Lynn Hester, said in an interview with Sternfels, "I was told to drop the bombs but Compton pulled the lanyard on the pilot's pedestal and dropped them right through the doors, knocking them off their tracks. I never saw the target nor did I see the bombs explode."

In the Dugan and Stewart book, Compton stated in his debrief that he had dropped his bombs on "what looked like a powerhouse." But the B-24's manual reveals that a firing unit switch must be turned on or the bombs will not be armed. This was not done, so Compton's bombs probably never exploded.

Sternfels commented, "Few of the 376th planes came close to a refinery. Otherwise, they'd have lost a lot more planes flying into that flak." As it turned out, only five of the 29 Liberandos managed to do any substantial damage with their bombs.

"Those were led by Major Norman Appold, a very smart and excellent pilot," said Sternfels. When the mission came apart, Appold decided to find a worthwhile target for his bombs. He called his wingmen, "Hang on to your bombs. We're going to use them."

He passed the briefed Liberando target, White One, which he did not recognize from this unfamiliar angle. Appold took his improvised element around the city and headed for Concordia Vega, White Two, the target assigned to Baker of the Circus. He and the other four planes approached the refinery at 10 feet of altitude. He managed to avoid the tall smokestacks and Ramsey Pott's Circus ships coming from directly ahead. His small group destroyed 40 percent of the refinery's capacity.

Tidal Wave was total chaos even before the three following groups at last arrived at the correct IP and made their turns.

"That turn to the southeast was conceived by Smart," observed Sternfels, "but it proved that he had no real idea how difficult it is to fly in formation, let alone manhandle huge, overloaded bombers in a critical maneuver. It looked good on paper but that turn was totally impractical."

National Archives

This had been proven when they practiced over the desert. A full-scale mock Ploesti consisting of painted lines and poles denoting key aiming points was set up in the desert. The pilots, bombardiers, and navigators trained in the approach to the bomb run and aiming points for their specific targets.

But actually doing the turn while in a tight wingtip-to-wingtip formation proved to be nearly unmanageable. Turning a heavily laden B-24 under ideal conditions was not easy, but doing it when tucked into a 1,000-foot-wide formation was next to impossible. While the planes at the inside of the turn, the hinge, as it were, need only alter their heading, the planes stepped farther out on the line also needed to increase speed to stay in formation. The bombers farthest out would be hard pressed to remain in their assigned slot.

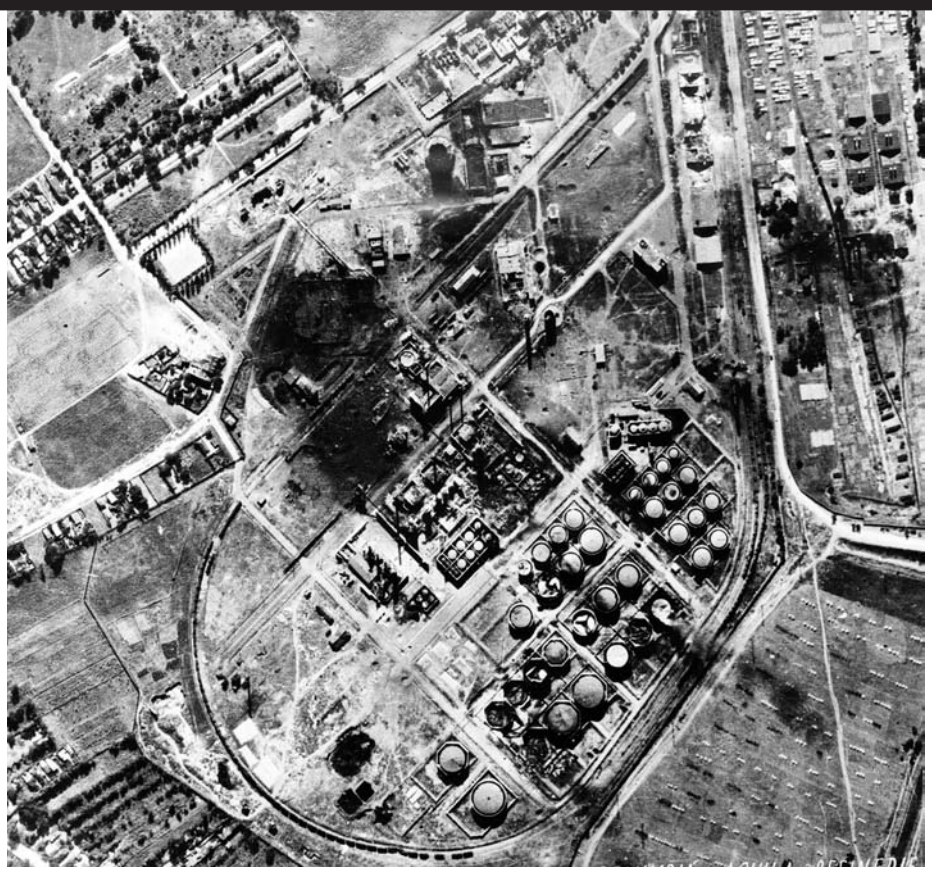
Kane's ships were arranged in five waves of nine planes each, with 2,000 feet of spacing between waves. His force was on the outside of the turn that included the 44th Bomb Group, headed for White Five and Blue Target. Altogether, more than 90 huge bombers were supposed to make that turn in a swath nearly a mile wide.

"We practiced staying in formation over the desert but didn't dare try that turn," said Sternfels. "It was dangerous to try even once, and that was in training, without anyone shooting at us."

But there was more to contend with that Smart had not considered. When large aircraft fly in close formation, it creates turbulence capable of tossing 30-ton bombers around like leaves in a storm. The Liberator requires a lot of effort to maintain trim, to say nothing of keeping perfect formation.

"The prop wash was fierce," Sternfels recalled. "Both my co-pilot Barney Jackson and I had our hands full just trying to stay on the bomb run. We were in formation as we reached the correct IP, but after that turn the entire formation was scattered. It was impossible to get it back

Both: National Archives



ABOVE: A U.S. Air Force bomb-damage assessment photo taken shortly after the attack. About 40 percent of refinery capacity was knocked out—temporarily. Within a few months, the facility was operating at more than pre-raid levels. OPPOSITE: B-24s returning to their bases in North Africa after the attack. Five Medals of Honor were awarded to Americans who took part in the raid, but 532 men never returned.

together in the few minutes we had before we reached the target. My ship was originally in the fourth wave, but we were so tossed around, to this day I can't tell you which wave we ended up in."

But Sternfels still has vivid memories of following Kane along the railroad line leading to the city. The Germans had put an ingenious flak train on the tracks paralleling the bomb run, and it hosed deadly point-blank fire into the low-flying B-24s, damaging nearly all the ships closest to the tracks before they reached their targets. The train was shot up by the bomber gunners, but not before German gunners on the ground shot down at least eight planes.

Kane led his 47 planes right into the fires and towering black smoke rising like a solid curtain from oil tanks and pipelines. To his right, Leon Johnson led the Eight Balls toward the untouched White Five. James Posey's section was angling off to the right to head to Blue Target at Brazi, southwest of the city. The bellicose Kane was angered and perplexed to find his target already burning; Astro Romana had been hit by bombs from Baker's shattered Traveling Circus. Huge oil tanks were exploding under the low-flying Liberators.

At this moment, three different bomb groups were flying over Ploesti from three different directions. The remnants of the Circus were flying east, while Appold's small detachment was coming west after hitting their improvised target. Then Kane swept south, headed for the burning White Four. It is incredible that there were no collisions.

General Alfred Gerstenberg, the German commander for the defense of Ploesti, had come out of his headquarters at the height of the raid and watched in stunned wonder as three groups of huge Liberators flew in three directions and altitudes overhead. He was greatly impressed by the daring skill of the American pilots; he had no idea he was witnessing a fiasco.

"When we went into that black smoke," recalled Sternfels, "I could only use instruments." *Sandman* was immediately engulfed in total blackness. The air was roiled up from the explosions and fire below.

"Balloon cables were all around us," he said, referring to the low barrage balloons with explosive-laced cables the Germans had tethered over the refineries, "but I couldn't see them. The right wing struck one and fortunately the propeller broke it. I was more scared at that moment than I've ever been in combat. I don't know what we hit with our bombs. The target was nearly impossible to see."

A famous photo from the raid shows *Sandman* emerging from the pall of black smoke. The B-24 has narrowly missed a tall smokestack. Tidal Wave had become a total debacle. Liberators fell with terrifying frequency as they attempted to get away from the hellish maelstrom of enemy fire and fighters.

At this time, Compton compounded his error. After conferring with General Ent, he sent "MS" for "Mission Successful" to Benghazi. To do this when it was obvious that Tidal Wave had gone disastrously wrong is an indication of how far Compton was willing to go to cover his many errors.

The remaining ships were hard pressed to escape Gerstenberg's deadly web. From the plains of Romania, over the mountains of Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Turkey, the B-24 crews fought for their lives. Some flew all the way back alone, while others sought safety in pairs and groups.

Sixteen hours after it had begun, Tidal Wave was over. The death toll was staggering. Nearly a third of the 1,752 men who took off that morning were dead, while another 300 had been wounded. More than a hundred were in captivity from Romania to Bulgaria. Fifty-three Liberators were lost, nearly a third of the force. Less than 50 were fit to fly. Many men were so exhausted that they needed to be carried off the planes. At last the skies over the eastern Mediterranean were silent.

The pilots of *Sandman* did manage to bring their ship and crew back to Benghazi, one of the 25 survivors of Kane's original 47 ships. Of Bakers' 39 Liberators, only 12 made it home. The Traveling Circus had virtually been wiped out.

After Compton returned to Benghazi, he went into conference with Brereton and Ent. A photo found by Sternfels after the war tells a very compelling story. "It was taken only minutes after Compton's plane landed," Sternfels explained. The image shows the side of Compton's plane, Teggie Ann. Just visible are the torn tracks for the bomb bay doors, a clear indication that the bombs were jettisoned right through them, as bombardier Lynn Hester said.

But there is another, far more compelling story in the photo. "If you look at Compton's face, he doesn't look like a man who led a successful mission, nor does he look like someone who ran into a ton of bad luck. He looks guilty."

While Sternfels admits that this is his own interpretation, it does fit Compton's supercilious nature. "He always did things his way," the old pilot said.

From the moment the last propeller came to a stop, the Army Air Forces began the job of evaluating the mission. Reconnaissance photos taken a few days later revealed that only Red and Blue Targets were totally destroyed; White Two, Four, and Five had taken moderate to severe damage. White One and Three were virtually untouched.

The cost in lives and planes had scarcely been worth it. The shocking losses and meager results forced the Army Air Forces to legitimize the mission by awarding five Medals of Honor to pilots, both living and dead. Among them was Colonel John "Killer" Kane, who had the dubious distinction of being both cited for his actions and censured for them. He never again held a combat command. Every airman was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Tactically, Tidal Wave was a failure but strategically it was a moderate success. While it fell far short of the original goal, it did cut off the reserve of vital oil distillation capacity just when Hitler's war machine needed it most to stop the relentless Red Army's drive toward the Fatherland.

Suddenly, the Third Reich was short of fuel for combat, transportation, and training. When the Allies took Italy, the new Fifteenth Air Force was established at Foggia. From there hundreds of B-17s and B-24 ranged far into Germany and Austria.

But one goal was now within easier reach: Ploesti. Nearly a year after Tidal Wave, heavy bombers again appeared in the skies over the oil refineries. This time they flew at over 28,000 feet. They took heavy losses but continued to rain high explosives on their targets. While Ploesti never stopped producing fuel, there came a time in early 1945 when the Third Reich was forced to abandon Romania. By then, Germany was living off its rapidly diminishing hump as it used up gasoline and aviation fuel to fend off the advancing Allied armies.

Over the past seven decades Sternfels has tried to find the truth about how the mission went wrong. He scoffed at the official report and even more at what was in the Dugan and Stewart book. At reunions and interviews with fellow Tidal Wave veterans, Sternfels became more convinced that, rather than bad luck, the real reason for what happened on August 1, 1943, rested on the shoulders of Smart and Compton.

"I didn't set out to prove that Smart and Compton were the cause of the mission failure, but that's where my investigation eventually led me," he said. "My talks with both men and my research into official documents and photos further confirmed my conclusions."

While it could be argued that some of Sternfels' conclusions are not proven, they are nonetheless compelling and should be taken seriously. They may be the answer that so many historians have sought over the last seven decades to explain why Tidal Wave failed to achieve its grand goal.

Sternfels wrote *Burning Hitler's Black Gold* in 2002. The book details the points outlined in this article and contains a great deal of unknown facts about Tidal Wave. Major Robert Sternfels may well have found the long-missing key to the truth about Tidal Wave. □

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FORWARD TO THE MEUSE

Fritz Bayerlein's elite Panzer Lehr Division was one of the spearheads of Hitler's last major offensive in the West, the Battle of the Bulge.

BY ARNOLD BLUMBERG

ON December 10, 1944, Generalleutnant (equivalent to major general in the U.S. Army during World War II) Fritz Bayerlein was called to a meeting at Kyllburg (Eifel) to participate in a map exercise involving an advance to the Meuse River.

Among the German Army officers present was General der Panzertruppen (i.e., lieutenant general) Hasso von Manteuffel, commander of the Fifth Panzer Army, and several tank corps leaders. Bayerlein, commanding the Panzer Lehr Division, was specifically asked if he could take the Belgian crossroads town of Bastogne, to which he replied that unless the place could be captured by surprise "otherwise only a heavily prepared attack could take it."

It was apparent to the tank leader that a German offensive in the West was in the offing, but where and when it would take place he did not know. The answers to those questions came two days later.

December 12 witnessed a summons for Bayerlein to appear at the Wehrmacht high command's headquarters in the West located at Ziegenberg. There he found assembled all the German army, corps, and division commanders serving on the Western Front. A half-hour bus ride brought the entire group to the field headquarters in the West of, and face-to-face with, their supreme leader: Adolf Hitler.

The Nazi dictator harangued his generals with a two-hour prepared speech, ending with the declaration that in a few days the German Army would launch a massive counterattack in the West. The Führer explained that he had managed to scrape together everything he could—25 divisions containing 250,000 men and 800 armored fighting vehicles—for the effort, and if it did not succeed, the war would be lost.

Warming to his subject, Hitler said that the German Sixth Panzer Army would capture Liege, Belgium, while to its immediate south Manteuffel's Fifth Panzer Army would take the port city of Antwerp. A third German army—the Seventh under General der Panzertruppen Erich Brandenberger—was tasked with guarding the southern flank of the German offensive.

With Antwerp, the main entry point for Allied supplies into northwestern Europe, in German hands, Hitler exclaimed, the Americans, English, and French would be forced to make an immediate negotiated peace with the Reich.

Along with the vast majority of officers at the meeting, Bayerlein seriously doubted the concept and the new German offensive, as well as its ability to achieve any positive military results. Leaving the Führer's headquarters, he stopped at the city of Würzburg to visit his family, suspecting it would be the last time he would ever see them.

Regardless, Bayerlein remarked to members of his staff that he would do all in his power to have his unit ready for the coming operation, expressing confidence that his "boys" would perform with determination and courage regardless of the harsh weather

Two Panzer V "Panther" tanks of Panzer Lehr drive through a Belgian village on their way to hit American lines, December 1944. Formed in January 1944, the division proved its mettle during both the Normandy invasion and the Ardennes Offensive, aka the Battle of the Bulge, but in the end could not give Hitler the victory he demanded. OPPOSITE: Fritz Bayerlein, pictured in North Africa while serving on Rommel's staff, was the hard-driving commander of the Panzer Lehr Division.

Bundesarchive Bild 183-J28646; Photo: Schulz

conditions, lack of friendly air support, fuel, transport, and weapons that currently plagued his division.

Bayerlein was right in the high regard he held for his current command; it had been created as an elite tank formation to be employed as an armored mobile strike force against the Western Allies when they invaded the shores of France.

Just as Bayerlein held his new command in high regard, the men of Panzer Lehr viewed their leader with great esteem. Born January 14, 1899, in the Bavarian city of Würzburg, Fritz Hermann Michael Bayerlein was one of three children of a lower middle-class family with no prior military tradition.

Before to the start of World War I in August 1914, Fritz had been a student pursuing a career as a teacher of geography and history. The Great War interrupted his scholastic plans when he was drafted into the German Army in June 1917 as a private and a Fahnenjunker (officer candidate). Fritz was the second member of his immediate family to serve in the Army; his older brother, Leutnant Richard Josef Bayerlein, had been drafted the year before and had died on the Western Front in May 1918.

By August 1918, Fritz was serving in a machine-gun squad in France, even commanding it at times. That same month he was wounded by grenade fragments, sent home on sick leave, and the next month, for his exemplary conduct in battle, made Fahnenjunker-Unteroffizier (a noncommissioned officer).

The war ended, but in 1919, Bayerlein was sworn into a much-reduced German Army, and in 1922 he was promoted to second lieutenant. Seven years later, Bayerlein, now a first lieutenant, was assigned as an instructor at the Army Infantry School, where he met Hauptmann (captain) Erwin Rommel.

Fritz Bayerlein was made captain in 1934 and then major four years later. During the German invasion of Poland in 1939, Bayerlein served as the operations officer of the 10th Panzer Division. The war against France in 1940 saw Bayerlein on the staff of General Heinz Guderian's XIX Panzer Corps. When Hitler's armies marched into the Soviet Union in June 1941, Oberstleutnant (lieutenant colonel) Bayerlein was the operations officer on Guderian's 2nd Panzer Group staff.

In early October 1941, Bayerlein was transferred to North Africa and fought with Rommel's Afrika Korps, where he became a full colonel and in June 1942 the latter's chief of staff. Numerous times between that date and when it surrendered in Tunisia in 1943, Bayerlein commanded the Afrika Korps. In May 1943, he was ordered back to Germany for medical reasons.

Between the fall of 1943 and the winter of 1944, now Maj. Gen. Bayerlein commanded the prestigious 3rd Panzer Division against the Russians, but the war on the Eastern Front was going badly for the Germans. During mid-January 1944, he was removed from the Eastern Front to organize and train the Panzer Lehr Division.

The new armored outfit, officially listed on the German Army's order of battle as the Panzer Lehr Division 130, came into being as a result of Führer Directive #51, issued just before Christmas 1943.

At a January 26, 1944, meeting between General Oberst (colonel general) Guderian,

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ABOVE: Smoke and dust rise following close-air-support bombing during Operation Cobra, the Allies' breakout from the Normandy beachhead. Panzer Lehr suffered heavily in the Allied aerial attacks. OPPOSITE: Photographed weeks after the battle in Normandy, this knocked-out panzer belonging to Panzer Lehr served as a reminder of the fierce fighting .

Inspector General of the German Army's armored forces and then Generalmajor (brigadier general) Fritz Bayerlein, Guderian informed his subordinate that the new tank formation in question was to be activated specifically to meet the expected Allied invasion in the West and that Bayerlein had been picked to head it because of his experience in fighting the Americans and British in North Africa.

Bayerlein recalled that Guderian emphasized, "With this division alone, you must throw the Allies back into the sea. Your objective is the coast—no, not the coast, it is the sea."

In January 1944, the various German tank training school and demonstration units (i.e., Lehrtruppen) that were to make up Panzer Lehr gathered for initial training and activation of the unit in northeastern France, the various elements being quartered near the cities of Nancy, Verdun, and Toul.

However, as the division commenced its training it was alerted for a movement to the south of France where the Wehrmacht's high command feared an imminent Allied amphibious assault from the Mediterranean Sea. As it turned out, the division was ordered to Hungary in early March 1944 to prevent that German ally from exiting the war.

After six weeks in Hungary, where the division did not engage in combat, Panzer Lehr was moved back to France and stationed west of Paris. Training continued, and the infusion of men and material saw the unit by June 1944 reach 14,634 officers and men. Sixty percent of them were veterans of the Eastern Front and/or North Africa. Many later served as tank instructors in Germany, training new German tank crews in the use and maintenance of armored vehicles as well as tank combat tactics. The remaining 40 percent of the personnel were young men age 18, and fully trained. The average age for the entire division was only 21½ years.

The combat formations of Panzer Lehr included a tank regiment consisting of one battalion of 79 Mk. V Panthers and one battalion of 103 Mk. IV tanks; four panzergrenadier battalions split between two regiments all carried in 674 armored half-tracks; an armored reconnaissance battalion; 42 field howitzers ranging from 105 to 155mm guns; 18 88mm flak guns; and a self-propelled tank destroyer (panzerjäger) battalion numbering 31 weapons.

These units containing 8,000 combat troops were supported by 5,000 supply and support services personnel who made the division the best German armored unit in the Wehrmacht, with a robust offensive and defensive capability.

Within hours of the launch of Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of the European continent on June 6, 1944, Panzer Lehr underwent its baptism of fire, followed by months engulfed in the crucible of battle including the struggle in the bocage country of Normandy, the retreat across France to the German border defenses referred to as the West Wall, and the fighting in the Lorraine region of northeastern France.

Ordered on June 6 to move 100 miles from its assembly area around the city of Chartres to Caen, the division was on that day and the next attacked by Allied airpower as it rolled north to Normandy. The enemy's assaults from the sky were relentless, and divisional losses in men and material—including 84 half-tracks and self-propelled guns, five tanks, and 130 trucks—were so severe that the Germans dubbed the route of Panzer Lehr's march "Jabo Rennstrecke," or the "fighter-bomber racecourse." As bad as the initial losses suffered by Panzer Lehr were during the opening stages of the fight for Normandy, the following months of combat would be even worse.

Placed under SS General Joseph "Sepp" Dietrich's 1st SS Panzer Corps, Bayerlein's men were positioned in the Seulles Valley west of Caen, facing the British and Canadians. Throughout June 1944, the division and the other units making up the 1st SS Corps repelled repeated English assaults but at a terrible cost. Then, in early July, the command was moved to the St. Lô area, where it faced the American First Army.

July 25 witnessed the opening of Operation Cobra—the American attempt to break out of Normandy and strike into the heart of France. Following an aerial bombard-

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ment involving 1,500 heavy bombers from the U.S. Eighth Air Force, preceded by waves of Ninth Air Force fighter-bombers, the American ground attack began.

Dug in along the target area near the town of St. Lô was Panzer Lehr, now at only half its original strength. Bayerlein described the bombing as "hell…. The fields were burning and smoldering. My frontlines looked like a landscape on the moon, and at least 70 percent of my personnel were out of action."

The next day Field Marshal Günther von Kluge, commander of Army Group B, ordered Bayerlein to hold his position at all costs. No man was to leave his position, Bayerlein was told. The division leader responded by solemnly stating, "My grenadiers, and my pioneers, my anti-tank gunners, they are holding. None of them have left their positions, none. They are lying in their holes, still and mute, because they are dead." For all intents and purposes, Panzer Lehr had ceased to exist as a fighting unit.

On July 27, after gathering eight tanks and the few headquarters staff still alive, Bayerlein was ordered to the area around Paris, where by mid-August the division's strength had been built up with 5,000 men from the support echelons, 1,000 combat troops (mostly new recruits), 20 tanks, four artillery batteries, and a few flak guns. On August 23, the unit received another hard blow when Bayerlein was wounded.

Upon his return to duty in November 1944, Bayerlein and his command were transferred to Paderborn, a tank depot, where he received 60 new tanks, as well as antitank and artillery units. He put his men through vigorous anti-air attack defense discipline, and as part of that regime stressed night assault training and the need to effectively implement camouflage techniques. However, the lack of gasoline made the training exercises largely useless.

Late November saw Panzer Lehr take station in Alsace near the city of Sarreguemines. After sparring with the Americans there, at the end of the month Panzer Lehr was ordered to the town of Cochem on the Moselle River to rest and refit. Bayerlein and his men did not know at the time that the Ardennes Offensive was just around the corner.

Returning to his headquarters from Hitler's December 12 briefing, Bayerlein spent the next day frantically preparing for the coming German counteroffensive in the West. A few more tanks and a little more fuel were received. Concerning the latter commodity, he had been promised enough petrol to make a 500-mile march. What he got was enough for less than a 200-mile trek, which in the rough terrain of the Ardennes was barely enough for a movement of 100 miles.

The division proceeded by night to the area around Kyllburg, with the last division echelons arriving on the night of December 15. A Luftwaffe liaison officer arrived at the command post, the first one attached to the division since the fight for St. Lô that July. Bayerlein had been told that the Wehrmacht attack would be preceded by Operation Goldregen (Gold Rain), a massive Luftwaffe bombing of the American battle lines. When questioned by Bayerlein about the number of aircraft assigned to Goldregen, the Luftwaffe officer had little information to relate. In the event, no large-scale German air support kicked off the offensive.

For the Ardennes Offensive, Panzer Lehr's ultimate mission was to cross the Meuse River in the Givat-Dinant sector on the southern margin of Fifth Panzer Army. It was part of the XLVII Panzer Corps led by General der Panzertruppen Freiherr von Lüttwitz and included the 2nd Panzer and 26th Volksgrenadier Infantry Divisions.

Initially, the unit was to support the 26th Volksgrenadier Division in establishing bridgeheads over the Our and then the Clerf River near the Belgian towns of Gemund and Drauffeld, respectively. Once over the Clerf, Bayerlein was to head for the vital Ardennes crossroads town of Bastogne and then on to the Meuse at Dinant.

It was assumed Bastogne would be taken by a coup de main; if not, it was to be bypassed to the south and its capture would be the responsibility of the 26th Volksgrenadiers.

The terrain Panzer Lehr was to attack, and later to defend, alternated between deep, winding mountain valleys and long stretching high plains covered by large forests. Traveling through this ground made up of the curving, steep, and narrow mountain roads of the Eifel, even in dry weather, quickly took its toll on both vehicles and drivers and consumed an inordinate amount of fuel. The snow on the ground by mid-December 1944 only exacerbated a normally difficult situation for any force trying to transit the area.

The American front line that Panzer Lehr was to penetrate ran along mountain road N7 directly behind the deep, rugged valley of the swollen Our River. From this valley only a few narrow roads ran along the serpentine slope referred to by the Americans as "Skyline Drive." The roads were not passable for tanks, and the elevated ground on Skyline Drive afforded a defender good observation to bring down devastating artillery on any attacker.

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ABOVE: American soldiers of the 84th Infantry Division dig protective holes in the snowy ground near Bérismenil, Belgium, north of Bastogne, in anticipation of a German assault. OPPOSITE: German Grenadiers advance through the heavy woods of the Ardennes Forest, December 22, 1944. The soldier in the foreground is armed with an Sturmgewehr 44, considered to be the first military assault rifle.

The valleys located behind the Clerf River and the town of Wiltz were flatter and easier to traverse. To the west rose rich farm hill country sloping gently to the Moselle and Meuse Rivers' watershed near Bastogne and then, playing out into a long depression suitable for tanks, up to the Meuse River.

This depression was broken by the flat valleys of the Ourthe, L'Homme, and Lesse Rivers, all rather wide and presenting a significant obstacle to any east-west movement. Like the roads, the terrain that Panzer Lehr, and all of Fifth Panzer Army, had to contend with ran from northeast to southwest. There were no suitable east-west thoroughfares in the zone of operations.

Barring Panzer Lehr's path to the Meuse was the U.S. 28th Infantry Division under the command of Maj. Gen. Norman D. Cota. The 28th, nicknamed the "Bloody Bucket" Division, held a front in the Ardennes of about 15 miles and was squeezed between the U.S. 106th Infantry Division to its north (left) and the U.S. 4th Infantry Division on its south (right).

Combat Command A, U.S. 9th Armored Division, supported the 28th and was located a little to the infantry unit's right flank. These three infantry and one armored division made up the VIII Corps of the U.S. First Army, commanded by Maj. Gen. Troy Middleton. The corps' total frontage in the Ardennes was about 85 miles long.

The 28th Division's three infantry regiments were all on line, with the 112th on the division's northern flank, the 110th in the center, and the 109th anchoring its southern margin.

Formed from a Pennsylvania-based National Guard unit, the 28th Infantry Division had been badly chewed up in the fall 1944 fighting in the Hürtgen Forest. Rotated to the "quiet" Ardennes sector,

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Men of the 28th Infantry Division (Pennsylvania National Guard) march through Bastogne after holding off the Germans at Hosingen.

the division was undergoing training and receiving replacements of men and weapons, as well as taking a well-deserved rest, when the Germans struck in mid-December.

The Panzer Lehr, which fought in the last great German offensive in the West in World War II, was a mere shadow of the military formation that had entered combat in Normandy six months before. Relieved from the front line in the Saar region (French Alsace) on December 5, 1944, the unit made seven night marches to the area of Cochem on the Moselle River, about 40 miles southwest of the city of Koblenz. There, between December 10 and 12, it received needed reinforcements in the form of 600 panzergrenadiers, some transport, tanks, and guns. In December 1944, the unit fielded about 9,000 troops—both combat and support troops.

On paper the division had 63 panzers, an impressive number of tanks compared to the armored fighting vehicles found in the vast majority of other panzer divisions currently in the Wehrmacht's order of battle. However, the panzer regiment had only one mixed tank battalion made up of Mk. Vs and Mk. IVs, instead of one each of Mk. V Panthers and another with Mk. IV tanks.

Its battalion of Panthers was fighting in Hungary, and in its place the 559th Heavy Panzerjäger Battalion, equipped with self-propelled Jagdpanther antitank guns, was attached. As it turned out, this substitute unit did not join the division until after Christmas 1944. Not so the promised 243rd Assault Gun Brigade, which never joined the division at all. Worse yet, the actual number of operational tanks as of December 12, 1944, stood at 23 Panthers out of 29 on hand; and 30 out of 34 Mk. IVs.

The division had 15 Panzerjäger 40s (14 in working order), but its Panzer Lehr Panzerjäger Battalion had the drawback of also having an antitank company comprised of towed, unarmored 75mm weapons. Panzer Lehr's antiaircraft assets were pitiful at the start of the Ardennes attack with only four 88mm flak guns and two 20mm antiaircraft guns serviceable.

The shortages in manpower were partially made up for by the incorporation of young and enthusiastic new recruits and far less contented former Luftwaffe personnel. For the most part, the four battalions of panzergrenadiers were partially motorized with armored personnel carriers, but due to a lack of gun-mounted half-tracks and infantry support guns, the infantry lacked its former firepower.

The division's armored artillery regiment was "armored" in name only. In mid-December 1944, it consisted of only two instead of three battalions: a light battalion of mostly 75mm weapons and a two-battery mixed (nine guns) 105mm and 155mm howitzer battalion. Since there were not enough prime movers, all of the unit's artillery could not be repositioned at any one time. The division's supply services were in even worse shape with a drastic lack of trucks to haul needed food, ammunition, weapons, and vehicle maintenance equipment.

Directly in the path of the advance of the German XLVII Panzer Corps was the American 28th Division's 110th Infantry Regiment thinly stretched across a front of about 15 miles. The U.S. defense line was composed of squad-sized outposts stationed near the river, night patrols, and rifle companies bedded down in the villages near the ridgeline astride the five roads leading up from the river.

Divisional artillery was placed close to the front line to cover the regiment's extensive frontage. The town of Marnach controlled the way from Clervaux to Bastogne, while Hosingen blocked the road from Drauffelt to Bastogne.

The XLVII Corps' plan for the opening phase of the German offensive was for the 26th Volksgrenadier Division to establish crossings over the Our, followed by a rapid advance by the 2nd and Panzer Lehr Divisions to Bastogne. Marnach and Hosinger were to be directly attacked to open the two roads west to Bastogne, while other German forces infiltrated through the gaps between the other spread-out U.S positions.

To carry out his part of the plan, Bayerlein divided his command into three detachments: the Advance Detachment (primarily the divisional reconnaissance battalion), or Kampfgruppe von Fallios, composed of 15 Mk. IV panzers, one company of self-

propelled antitank guns, four light howitzers, and one pioneer (combat engineers) company; Kampfgruppe 901 made up of five Mk. IV tanks, the 901st Panzergrenadier Infantry Regiment (two battalions), and the 2nd Battalion of the 130th Armored Artillery Regiment; and Kampfgruppe 902 formed by the 902nd Panzergrenadier Regiment (two battalions), with the 2nd Battalion of the Panzer Lehr Panzer Regiment (10 Mk. V Panther tanks).

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ABOVE: Guarding a road leading into Bastogne, paratroopers of Julian Ewell's 501st Parachute Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, point their antitank "bazooka" in the direction of an expected German attack. BELOW: Rolling past a knocked-out American half-track (left), a self-propelled Sturmgeschutz III Ausf. G advances in the Ardennes, January 1945.

Bundesarchive Bild 183-J28475, Photo: Pospesch

In division reserve was a battalion of panzerjäger vehicles. Leading the entire effort would be two patrols of reconnaissance Puma armored cars that were to embark on "nuisance duty"—that is, to break through enemy lines and cause as much panic as possible in the enemy's rear.

The Advance Detachment was initially tasked with supporting the 26th Volksgrenadiers in creating bridgeheads over the Our and Clerf Rivers, then moving rapidly to capture Bastogne. Kampfgruppen 901 and 902 were to cross at the Gemund bridge and then stand by to attack Bastogne. The divisional artillery would meanwhile take station east of the rivers and support with fire the efforts of the 26th Volksgrenadier Division. Bayerlein's engineers were to build two 60-ton bridges over the targeted rivers as rapidly as possible.

At 5:30 AM, December 16, 1944, the Germans launched their last great offensive in the West. In the XLVII Corps sector, although greatly outnumbered, the American GIs fought stubbornly to deny the 2nd Panzer Division the vital avenue through Marnach and the critical route through Hosingen. Many of the infiltrating German units were tied down in bitter combat around isolated American outposts that could not be bypassed.

Strong river currents impeded the construction of the needed bridges, which were not completed until well into the afternoon of the 16th. Continuing American resistance at Hosingen denied the Advance Detachment the road to Drauffeld, resulting in the main body of Panzer Lehr being confined to the bridgehead for the entire first day of the offensive.

On the 17th, the division moved to the Our River under a heavy rain. Due to problems at the Gemund crossing site, the 902nd Kampfgruppe was diverted to the 2nd Panzer Division's crossing point at Dasburg, passing over the Our late in the day.

Throughout the 17th, American troops continued to deny the Germans control of Skyline Drive—the ridge road positions leading west to Bastogne. Meanwhile,

Hosingen did not fall until the morning of December 18, thus preventing the Advance Detachment from passing over the Clerf at Drauffeld.

Hearing that new a crossing point over the Clerf had been captured near the village of Kautenbach, XLVII Corps ordered the Advance Detachment to head for that area and cross the Our there instead of at Drauffeld. However, Bayerlein's lead component encountered stiff opposition at the village of Holzthum on the way to the Kautenbach crossing. The 26th Volksgrenadiers were not able to clear Holzthum of the enemy until late that night.

Through a mix-up in orders intending to expedite both the capture of Holzthum and at the same time return to the original plan to send elements of Panzer Lehr across the Our at Drauffeld, Panzer Lehr was fragmented during most of December 17, when it became engaged in three separate battles at three different locations. The result was that the command made no westward headway for most of the 17th.

With the fall of Hosingen on December 18, the paths to Bastogne for Panzer Lehr and the 26th Volksgrenadier Divisions were finally open. But, the day before Lüttwitz had learned that American reinforcements from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were on their way to Bastogne.

The delay the Americans had handed the Germans during the first two days of the great attack now threatened not only to deny the critical road junction of Bastogne to the Wehrmacht, but the hope of reaching the Meuse as well. Lüttwitz ordered an immediate advance on Bastogne: 2nd Panzer was to bypass the town to its north, while Panzer Lehr and the 26th Volksgrenadiers moved on it directly.

Throughout the morning hours of December 18, Panzer Lehr's Advance Detachment and its Kampfgruppe 902 struggled to combine at Eschweiler and move on Bastogne. Kampfgruppe 901 continued to fight at the town of Consthum, 13 miles southeast of Bastogne.

Just south of Eschweiler, 15 miles east of Bastogne, Panzer Lehr's reconnaissance battalion, part of the Advance Detachment, encountered fleeing Americans and captured eight U.S. half-tracks and four tank destroyers. Moving on after the brush with the GIs at Eschweiler, the Kampfgruppe 902, followed by the Advance Detachment, reached Nieder-Wampach, only about eight miles due east of Bastogne.

Corps orders for December 19 were that Panzer Lehr was to advance on Bastogne from the east and, if possible, push west that same day. The 26th Volksgrenadier Division was to move on Panzer Lehr's right and enter Bastogne from the north. Lüttwitz, concerned about the muddy conditions, suggested to Bayerlein that he move on Bastogne via the more distant but solid road through the village of Bras.

Assured by Belgian civilians that the shorter and more direct side road through Benonchamps to Mageret was suitable for armor, Bayerlein took their advice and found to his dismay the route was terrible; it cost him precious time. Nevertheless, meeting no enemy resistance, his men entered Mageret at 2 AM on the 19th, capturing a U.S. medical team stationed there. Panzer Lehr was only four miles from its coveted target.

In Mageret, Bayerlein received more erroneous news from the local populace. He was warned that an American armored column, led by a major general, made up of 50 tanks and other fighting vehicles, had passed through town just two hours earlier. The force referred to was, in fact, Captain Willis B. Ryerson's much smaller detachment from Combat Command B, 10th U.S. Armored Division. Taking counsel of his fears, Bayerlein worried that enemy tanks were now on the Longvilly Road between him and the main body of the German Army.

At 5: 30 AM, after securing his rear by stationing three tanks, some infantry, and laying a few mines in Mageret, Bayerlein led his Advance Detachment into Neffe, located a little over three miles directly east of Bastogne. A half hour later in dense fog, the Germans probed Neffe with a few tanks and two platoons of infantry.

The move resulted in contact with an American road-blocking force known as Team Cherry. During the clearing of Neffe, the Germans lost one panzer to mines while claim-

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ABOVE: The hamlet of Mageret was the scene of fierce fighting and a German victory. Here, a dead German soldier lies behind a Sherman tank that has met its demise. But the battle bought time for U.S. XLVII Corps. OPPOSITE: A Sherman tank of the 9th Armored Division heads to Mageret in a brave but costly attempt to halt Bayerlein's advance.

ing the destruction of two American tanks and the capture of several wheeled vehicles.

With Neffe allegedly free of the enemy, the Germans soon started to move toward Bastogne. Then the German column was hit by Yank paratroopers from the approaching 1st and 2nd Battalions, 501st Parachute Regiment, 101st Airborne Division.

The German Landsers stopped in their tracks, and the German armor refused to go forward without infantry support. Then American 105mm howitzers began to hammer Neffe. To Bayerlein, the U.S. artillery fire sounded like tank gunfire, and he was convinced he was now faced with enemy armor.

Adding to the German division leader's concerns was the fact that Neffe was not empty of the enemy. All day on the 19th, Lt. Col. Henry Cherry had held out against the Germans in a chateau just south of Neffe proper. At the same time, U.S. tanks, part of Combat Command Reserve, 9th Armored Division, which had been withdrawing from Longvilly, almost eight miles northeast of Bastogne, were attacking his small force at Mageret while the 2nd Battalion, 501st Parachute Regiment had been battling parts of the 26th Volksgrenadier Division between Mageret and Neffe.

To Bayerlein, it must have seemed that he and his men were surrounded by an unknown number of Americans. To add to the general's problems, he had been slightly wounded by a shell fragment during the fighting at Neffe.

The march from Longvilly by Combat Command Reserve, 9th Armored Division, had come to the attention of the leadership of XLVII Panzer Corps, as well as the commanders of its subordinate formations.

Elements of the 2nd Panzer and the 26th Volksgrenadier Divisions independently struck the American tank column from the east and southeast, respectively. Joining them from the west and heading east, Bayerlein, like the commanders of the other two German units, did not know their corps comrades were attacking CCR. He launched an assault with 20 tank destroyers and two companies of panzergrenadiers.

The result was awful carnage to the U.S. tank force strung out on the congested Longvilly-Mageret road. Another result was that the slaughter of CCR diverted German attention and strength from Bastogne, thus giving the Americans more time to prepare to deny it to XLVII Corps.

As Combat Command Reserve died during the morning of December 19, Panzer Lehr's Advance Detachment was ordered to strike at Bastogne from the south along the Wardin-Marvie axis. Entering Wardin at 1 PM, the detachment's advance guard—made up of tanks and artillery in support—clashed with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 501st Parachute Regiment. By evening, after bitter house-to-house fighting, the paratroopers were forced out of the town, but the Germans were too exhausted to proceed to Marvie.

Pulling back to the high ground near the town of Bizory, the 501st Parachute Regiment, commanded by Lt. Col. Julian J. Ewell, remained there for the balance of the battle for Bastogne. That same day, Bayerlein urged Lüttwitz to throw the entire weight of his XLVII Corps against the defenders of Bastogne. He argued that the place was critical as a transportation/communication hub and supply line for the Germans heading for the Meuse.

Further, the capture of Bastogne would not only eliminate an enemy force in the Germans' rear as the army advanced to the Meuse, it would also alleviate the need to tie up friendly forces required to contain the enemy garrison holed up in Bastogne.

Bayerlein's reasoning was sound, and Lüttwitz agreed, but Manteuffel had other ideas. To him—and, more importantly, to Hitler—the advance to the Meuse was paramount. Therefore, the Fifth Panzer Army leader decreed that all efforts and resources must be directed to that end.

While the bulk of Fifth Panzer Army swept toward the Meuse, the 2nd Panzer Division would bypass Bastogne to the north while the 26th Volksgrenadier Division attacked it from the north and Panzer Lehr attacked from the east.

But the December 19 attacks by Panzer Lehr and the 26th Volksgrenadier Division

Bundesarchive Bild 183-2016-0331-501, Photo: Etzold

failed, as they did again on the 20th. On the 21st, Bayerlein was directed to leave his Kampfgruppe 901 to aid the 26th Volksgrenadier Division at Bastogne and move the rest of his unit west to the Meuse as quickly as possible.

On December 21, the Advance Detachment reached Tillet, 12 miles due west of Bastogne, where it captured an American supply column of 80 trucks and surrounded two batteries (eight self-propelled howitzers) of the U.S. 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which had been withdrawing from Longvilly after supporting the retreat of CCR, 9th Armored Division on December 19. By the 22nd, the American artillerists had lost all but one of their pieces and scattered in small groups to reach Bastogne and safety.

Back at Bastogne, the 901st teamed up with the 39th Infantry Regiment, 26th Volksgrenadier Division to tighten the ring around the town on December 22. Between December 23 and 24, heavy fighting occurred involving the 901st as it sought to take the town of Marvie just three miles southeast of Bastogne.

While Kampfgruppe 901 slogged it out at Bastogne, the rest of Panzer Lehr reached St. Hubert on December 22, and then Rochefort the next day. Pressure from Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.'s U.S. Third Army, coming up from the south to relieve Bastogne, was already adversely affecting Panzer Lehr's overextended supply lines.

Defending the city was the U.S. 3rd Infantry Battalion, 335th Infantry Regiment, 84th Infantry Division, supported by two platoons of 57mm antitank guns, a platoon of the 309th Combat Engineer Battalion, a platoon of the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and a platoon of the 29th Infantry Regiment.

Unaware that the city was defended, Bayerlein sent his Kampfgruppe 902 through a defile between two towering hills. Receiving enemy fire, Bayerlein withdrew his men, sent a tank unit behind the town to cut it off, and delivered a night attack. After a costly house-to-house battle, the Americans withdrew from Rochefort having done what they set out to do: delay the German advance to the important transportation hub at the town of Marche.

After taking Rochefort, nothing lay between Panzer Lehr and the Meuse except for a battalion of infantry from the 84th Infantry Division stationed in the Lesse River Valley. That unit soon departed from the area on the night of the 23rd. The Meuse at Dinant was only 19 miles away.

By December 23, the 2nd Panzer Division had bypassed Marche to the south and was in danger of being cut off and destroyed by the gathering American forces in the Hotton-Marche area. For the next several days, Panzer Lehr's actions in the Battle of the Bulge were completely guided by the German attempt to succor the 2nd Panzer Division.

On the morning of December 24, the lead elements of the 2nd Panzer Division (nicknamed the Vienna Division for the city in which it was organized), i.e. its reconnaissance battalion, reached the village of Celles just six miles from Dinant.

At about the same time, Combat Command B, U.S. 2nd Armored Division, arrived at Ciney, six miles northeast of Celles. In addition, Combat Command A from the same American armored division moved toward Rochefort, crossing the rear of 2nd Panzer as it did so. By early afternoon, the main body of the 2nd Panzer Division was blocked from moving farther west, while its reconnaissance battalion and one of its kampfgruppen—both within two miles of Celles, but still separated from each other—were cut off from the rest of the division.

Aware that part of 2nd Panzer was cut off, but not cognizant of the presence of the

U.S. 2nd Armored Division, Lüttwitz, still hoping to reach the Meuse, on Christmas Day directed Bayerlein to capture the towns of Humain and Buissonville with his Advance Detachment.

If Bayerlein was successful, 2nd Panzer Division's lines of communications would be restored and the best route to the Meuse would be made available for a continued German advance. Lastly, the bulk of the 2nd Panzer Division could then force its way to its cutoff sub- units near Celles. But it was not to be.

Back at Bastogne, Kampfgruppe 901 of Panzer Lehr held its lines south of the town against American probes while securing the Bastogne-Arlon highway to the south with a few tanks, mines, and downed trees.

On Christmas Day, the 2nd Armored Division initiated a two-pronged attack to annihilate the German 2nd Panzer Division. Supported by a large contingent of air power, the unit's Combat Command B converged on Celles from the southwest, destroying Kampfgruppe Cochenhausen. At the same time, its 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion, aided by the British 29th Tank Brigade, attacked 2nd Panzer's reconnaissance battalion and artillery contingent, eliminating it as a combat force.

As the American tankers gunned down their German counterparts near Celles, Combat Command A, 2nd Armored Division, denied Humain and Buissonville to the Germans. The German defeat in the Celles pocket marked the end of the Fifth Army's drive to the Meuse.

With its attempt to save its sister armored division frustrated, Panzer Lehr on December 26 was removed to the town of Remagne west of Bastogne. No longer strong enough to deliver effective attacks, the unit held a sector of the German ring encircling Bastogne for the next several weeks.

Farther east, around the beleaguered town of Bastogne, the 901st combat group was attached to the 167th Volksgrenadier Infantry Division now responsible for the area south of the Wiltz River. In an unsuccessful December 29 attack to sever the newly opened supply route into Bastogne made by the U.S. 4th Armored Division three days earlier, a panzer company of the 901st was badly mauled.

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ABOVE: A self-propelled U.S. M8 Howitzer Motor Carriage, called the "Scott," passes a disabled Panzer Lehr Panther as it hunts targets. OPPOSITE: German infantrymen in white camouflage smocks on patrol in the Ardennes area, January 4, 1945. Although initially successful, the surprise German assault failed to take Bastogne.

On December 30, 1944, the Americans and Germans simultaneously launched attacks, the former's objective to drive the Germans farther away from Bastogne, the latter hoping to restore a blockade around the town and finally capture it.

Attack and counterattack went on from December 30, 1944, until the Americans were able to reestablish a solid front again connecting the First and Third Armies on January 16, 1945, with the capture of the town of Houffalize, 14 miles northeast of Bastogne. Part of this furious action took place in the zone now held by the 901st battle force: the Wardin-Mageret road.

On January 2, 1945, the GIs attacked in the area but were forced back by a German counterattack made in a snowstorm on the 3rd. On the 6th, the 901st, now only about 100 men strong with five tanks, was ordered out of the lines and moved to rejoin Panzer Lehr's main body, reaching it on January 8.

Meanwhile, starting on January 8, 1945, Hitler allowed a phased withdrawal from the bulge in the American lines created by the surprise Ardennes onslaught. During this entire retrograde movement, which ended with the German Army crossing to the east bank of the Our River, Panzer Lehr played a prominent part as rear guard.

The division's own rearguard unit fell back across the river on January 26, ending its participation in the Ardennes Offensive. Bayerlein was relieved of command of the division and "bumped upstairs" to take charge of LIII Army Corps, a role he maintained until surrendering to the Americans in the Ruhr Pocket on April 19, 1945.

Forced to fall back, Bayerlein's former division, under new commanders, moved into the northern Rhineland area to defend against thrusts by the British Eighth Army, where it continued to face heavy combat and suffer heavy losses. It was then sent to keep American troops from pouring across the Rhine over the Remagen Bridge. By the time the war ended, Panzer Lehr was an exhausted force reduced to just 300 men and 15 tanks. □

DISASTER *at* DUNKIRK

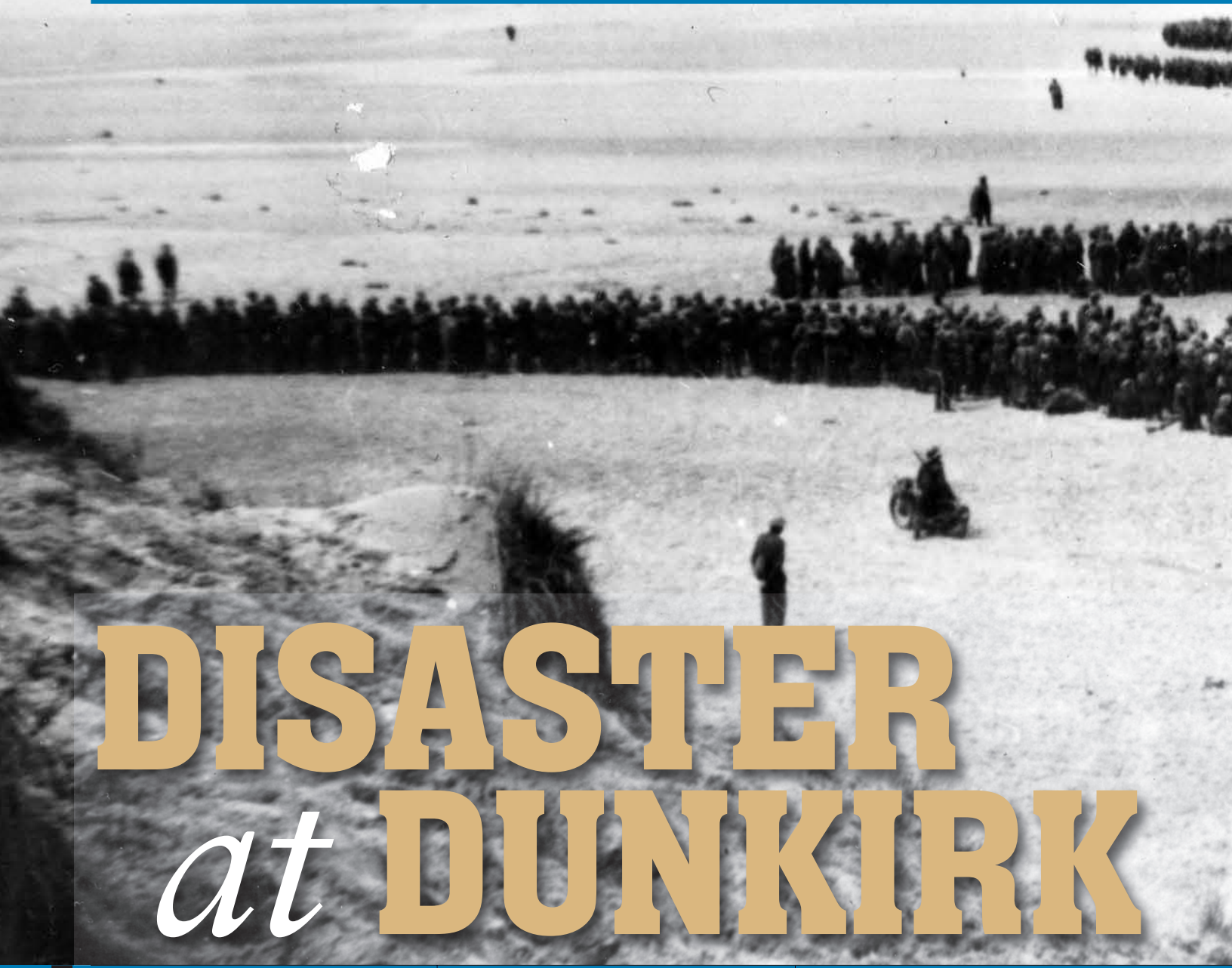
Shoved by the Germans into the English Channel in 1940, British survivors tell a story of heartbreak and heroism.

BY MASON B. WEBB

BACKSTORY: *After Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Hitler's regime. Britain sent the 13-division British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to France and Belgium in anticipation of a German invasion, but for the next eight months there was virtually no fighting—a period known as the "Phony War."*

The war became real on May 9 and 10, 1940, when more than two million German soldiers, accompanied by thousands of panzers and aircraft, plunged violently into France and Belgium and pushed the BEF and some French units to the English Channel coast and the port city of Dunkirk. There, while under constant attack, over 330,000 troops managed to be evacuated back to Britain (Operation Dynamo).

In the early 21st century, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) embarked on a massive project to invite veterans to send in their personal wartime remembrances. There are now 47,000 stories in the WW2 People's War archive. Scores of them detail what happened during the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force and French troops in late May and early June 1941. Here are but a few.



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Bernard Styles joined the Territorial Army (the equivalent of the U.S. Army National Guard) in 1938 at the age of 18 as a member of the 4th East Yorkshire Regiment, which was part of the 150th Brigade of the 50th Northumbrian Division. After war was declared on September 3, 1939, his unit was part of the almost 395,000-man British Expeditionary Force (BEF) that was sent to France in January 1940 to counter an expected German invasion.

Styles said, "On arrival in France, we were moved around and finally finished in a small village called Annoeullin in the area between Arras and Lille. When the German assault started, we moved to form a defensive line north of Arras on the banks of a river. In the following action we lost our Command Sergeant Major and one officer due to mortar fire.

"We then started a staged withdrawal, leapfrogging other units up towards the Belgian frontier. We crossed into Belgium in the area around Roubaix, but before we had been deployed the Belgium government surrendered and we had to change our line of withdrawal. I can still see all the white flags hanging out of house windows as we were left stranded.

"Our withdrawal continued through Menin on the road to Dunkirk. The division was forming part of the eastern defensive lines along with a Guards division, and

Lining up in an orderly fashion, tens of thousands of British and French troops patiently wait on the beach at Dunkirk for ships that, they hope, will take them to safety in Britain, May 1940. More than 338,000 men were evacuated by 800 vessels and lived to fight another day. Some called it the "Miracle of Dunkirk," but Prime Minister Winston Churchill cautioned, "We must be careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory. Wars are not won by evacuations."

Both: Imperial War Museum

the leapfrogging retreat continued.

"We eventually arrived and formed the eastern perimeter of the defense around Dunkirk. On the first of June we were told that if the Guards held the perimeter we could withdraw, and we arrived on the beaches at Bray-Dunes. As daylight broke, we could see the deserted beach with the lines of vehicles that had been driven into the sea to form improvised jetties.

"We slowly moved down the beach to Dunkirk, taking cover when German aircraft appeared to strafe the area. I and several other companions gradually drew nearer to the Eastern mole [concrete pier] of Dunkirk harbor, helping to bring dead bodies out of the sea as they were being washed up.

"We arrived at the mole in the early morning of the 2nd of June and started to walk along it in the 'hope' we might find a boat. We were amazed to suddenly hear a voice shouting out, 'I am not stopping—if you can get aboard, jump!' We looked over the mole and saw a small paddle steamer six to eight feet below slowly reversing out of the harbor. We leapt aboard—in all, I think about 25-30 of us got aboard.

"When we spoke to the captain, he said that he had come over with himself and the chief engineer and no crew, as they were all shattered by their previous visits and would not come again at that time.

"We arrived in Dover and were relieved of our weapons and put aboard a train after being given drinks and food by the civilian helpers together with the postcard to address to our family to inform them of our safety.

"We arrived at Aldershot into a tented camp where we were issued with the standard necessities. After two to three days we were visited by Anthony Eden [former Foreign Secretary, now Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, and future Prime Minister] who gave us a speech about what had happened, and the future. We went on leave, and on our return we formed into small sections to put up tented camps in parts of the south to accommodate the reforming units of the BEF."

After the evacuation, Styles became a

member of the 101st Royal Marine Brigade's code and cipher unit.

Bren gunner **James Bradley** was sent to France near the Belgian border in September 1939. "When we first arrived in France," he said, "it was like peacetime. But then Hitler struck at the Belgians and the Dutch, and we moved forward. We took everything and dashed into Belgium."

But, outnumbered and outgunned, the BEF was quickly driven back. Bradley recalled, "They said that we were to get a rifle and a bayonet and after that we were on our own. We had to get back to Dunkirk. If they'd told us to get back to New York, I couldn't have been more surprised because I didn't know where Dunkirk was. I began to think to myself, I've got to survive—I must survive to fight on in this war.

"Eventually I did get to the coast. When I came to the sand dunes, I could see that Dunkirk was a blazing mass of burning oil and a battle was going on. I moved along the sand hills to Le Panne, a little to the right of Dunkirk, and there were hundreds and hundreds of soldiers on the sand. Ships were coming in, trying to pick up the soldiers.

"I saw the most magnificent bit of British discipline there. They went down in the water, stood in rows of four, and the tide came in and then the tide went out, and then it came back again…. There was the odd guy who left for obvious purposes—to nip back over the sand dunes. Then he'd come back and a hand would go up and someone would say, 'Over here, over here!' It was terribly British. I think I became a man there.

"Unfortunately, the dive bombers were knocking out the ships and terrible things were happening. I saw them hit a destroyer, packed with men on board, and it went on its side. Hundreds of men went into the sea, thrashing about there—many of them couldn't swim, I'm sure. The next morning, there were dead lying about. Nobody could do anything about that, but there were some lads moving around, and some badly wounded.

"A little ship came along—it looked like a Dutch coaster, a real old tub. Those on board stopped, shouted, and waved. I thought this was the time for us to move on, but somebody said, 'No, no, they're waving at us to tell us to stay where we are.' They lowered some small boats down to the sea and rowed inshore. We had to get into one of these little boats, which should have taken about three people but there was about eight of us in it—the waterline was getting near the top.

"They dropped a rope ladder down the ship's side, and we had to climb up that. Some of the chappies were so weak they fell back in the sea. So they threw ropes down and tried to tie them and pull them up.

"A dispatch rider was behind me, and I thought he must be mad because he was wearing a tin hat, a rifle, and all his equipment. If he fell into the water, he wouldn't have stood a chance. He moved around in front of me, and there was no panic. It must be done calmly, I thought. If we're going to get there, let's do it like real men. Then he fell in the water. I shouted to him but he went down. Bubbles were coming up, and he just went down, down. I couldn't do anything."

One soldier, **Reg Gill** of the Royal Army Medical Corps, recalled, "All our faith was in the Maginot Line which, the French said, was impregnable. We had our own army there, small by proportion, but we felt it would probably continue much the same course as World War I—eventually we would win. I mean, Britain always did win, and Britain and France together would surely win, but things were nasty.

"The Germans had broken through in the Ardennes, which is wooded country, hilly, impossible, so people said, for tank warfare. For that reason it had been very lightly defended. The Germans broke through against a division or two of the French territorial army with very little opposition. From then on things got rapidly worse.

"The Germans swept through north-central France, in a wide arc this time, heading not for Paris but the Channel ports, in a circular movement that took them rapidly down to Abbeville and to the coast just north of Rouen. They then proceeded to advance up the coast, which put us in a very difficult position.

"This was only one branch of the German army. The rest of it advanced towards central France, but as far as we, the British army in northern France, were concerned it looked very sinister indeed."

Eric Cottam, 2nd Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, said, "The battalion was allocated 10 Bren gun carriers. All infantry regiments wanted drivers for the carriers and, since I fancied a pair of carrier driver's goggles, I joined the carrier platoon. We were a very happy crowd, and we had great fun before the war, driving across country and through woods—yes, I enjoyed that. We all more or less drifted into the army. Even though war was looming, it didn't seem to worry us. We considered ourselves immortal—as most young people do."

Cottam's unit was sent to France, near the Belgian border. "This was the 'Phony War' period—then, over the winter, it became serious…. My battalion was involved building tank traps and constructing pillboxes. That was hard work, especially in bad weather.

"Our work was wasted. The Germans simply bypassed all the tank traps, which was very unsporting of them, after all the time we'd taken to develop them. I think they also more or less bypassed the Maginot Line when they came through the Ardennes, which was meant to be impassable. Hitler surrounded us, and the retreat started. We were lured into Belgium, and then the Germans closed the trap. We had to get out. The Belgians packed up, and the French on the right collapsed—it was chaos.

"Things were made worse by lack of sleep and lack of food. The cookhouse shop was blown up so we had make do, living off the land. We used to scrounge at deserted farms for chickens and things like that, and we went into houses to find food, even butter that had gone off, and stale bread. We had to boil the water because of the threat of disease, but sometimes we found coffee, which was great.

"We couldn't see a thing in the streets so we didn't know what was going on. We didn't have a radio or anything like that. We were isolated from the battalion, so we were on our own, obeying orders to go here, there, and everywhere. We had to do a lot of travelling at night.

"Then there were the refugees—we couldn't go forward because they were crowding the road. They didn't seem to know where they were going. They were disorientated because the front line was so fluid (modern warfare had come as a surprise to a lot of people). I felt sorry for them because they had been so cheerful when we arrived."

BELOW: The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, in kilts and caubeens (caps), dig a trench in France two months after the United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany. Many thought the coming war would be a repeat of the trench warfare of two decades earlier. OPPOSITE: British infantrymen train with Bren gun carriers in England prior to crossing the Channel to France.

Imperial War Muse-

ABOVE: British troops march for the front while Belgian refugees flee the other way, May 12, 1940. At times the roads were clogged with civilians and military traffic, making easy targets for German gunners and strafing aircraft. OPPOSITE: The Allies were shocked at the speed with which the Germans advanced in their invasion called Fall Gelb (Case Yellow). Here German troops use inflatable boats to cross the Meuse River near Sedan while under fire, May 13, 1940.

Eventually Cottam and his company closed in on Dunkirk after spending several harrowing days on the road being chased by German aircraft. Suddenly, his company was hit by an artillery barrage. "I dived in front of my carrier and landed by the left-hand track. Then I saw a mine. It exploded about 12 inches to my left-hand side…. Most of the explosion went over me, taking the track off my carrier and wrapping it over the top of the cab like silk ribbon. The explosion also took my left foot against the carrier side.

"I sat up when the barrage stopped. My left foot had gone, with my boot on it. There was blood everywhere. My face was a mess, and I thought my eye had gone. I put my right hand over my right eye and I found I could still see out of the left, so that was a relief. It turned out there were slivers of shrapnel in my face. My right leg was also a mess, bloody and shattered, but the foot was still there. Then I realized that the knee joint was turned completely round, which was serious."

Cottam was put into a truck and evacuated to a casualty clearing station, where he received a transfusion and some emergency surgery before being sent on to Calais, which was being shelled. He never made it to Dunkirk but went straight across the Channel to Dover for months of recuperation in hospitals.

Stanley Mewis was a private in the 658th General Construction Company, Royal Engineers. After war was declared, Mewis and his company were sent to France. He said, "Our purpose for going there was a huge landing field which was under construction; this was to bomb Germany from France, but it turned out to be the other way. However, nothing much was happening, and it was called the 'Bore War' until activities started. Belgium at this time was neutral, and as soon as Germany attacked Holland, Belgium withdrew their neutrality and we marched into Belgium, which we all thought was a huge mistake."

The BEF reached Belgium but then was ordered to fall back to Dunkirk. "On the march back from Belgium, all the dikes were flooded, and we were knee high in water. We weren't allowed to rest, and we only kept small packs and our rifles. We were all very exhausted.

"We were amongst the first troops into Dunkirk, and I remember this long line of cars, staff cars, lorries, and cycles stretching to the horizon. They had just come off the boats for delivery, and the order was to smash the lot, and that's exactly what we had to do—destroy the lot of them so the Germans couldn't get hold of them—millions and millions of pounds worth of them.

"The Germans had hit a large oil storage tank at Dunkirk and there was a great cloud of smoke and flames 500 foot high; all the troops were told to make towards the smoke and that's Dunkirk. When we got to the docks, there was a huge boat in the harbor, and we all shuffled forward three at a time. As we got to within 50 yards of the gangplank, it went up because [the ship] was full. I was then back on the beach.

"The Germans constantly came over bombing us. They had realized what was happening so they went on to bomb the docks day and night for eight days. Finally, there was no docks at all, and we had to take to the beach. We were formed in queues up to our neck in water, and we had to keep our cigarettes and matches in our helmets to keep them dry.

"Luckily the seas were calm, and we eventually got away, but not without further drama. The docks had been destroyed, and the larger ships couldn't drop anchor—they had to form a large arc out of the harbor in the bay, so they were sitting ducks for the bombers. They couldn't get any closer in so there were small boats plying between them and us, which was why we had to queue up in the water. When the tide came in, we had to back up, [but] those behind wouldn't back up, so there were some nasty scenes. It was orderly at first and then became very disorderly.

"However, I managed to get a boat 150 feet long…. We got on, but unfortunately the skipper had come in too close and we got stuck on the bottom. There were about 150 of us on the boat. It was an empty shell inside, and we were ordered to run from one side of the boat to another to rock it whilst the skipper reversed the engines. The incoming tide was too much, and we had to abandon ship and jump into the sea. By the next day it was a blazing wreck; the Germans had hit it in the night.

"That was my first attempt. At the second attempt we got on an old British destroyer—HMS *Wakeful*—luckily; I was one of the last on board, and we hadn't got hit up to that time. We were just pulling up anchor, and I remember the sun was going down and a great

cheer went up from the troops on board.

"We went out about three miles when we were hit by a torpedo in the middle of the ship. The ship didn't sink immediately—it just folded up. There were about 850 men below who didn't get out…. I was thrown into the sea and was picked up by a small powerboat and put back on the beach.

"It was the lowest day of my life. I was so depressed to be back where I started on the beach…. I had been there six, seven nights. We were very thirsty and very hungry. Finally this small powerboat came along very close to the shore … and he picked about 15 of us up. Luckily, the Germans weren't interested in the smaller craft, and we came straight across to Dover. There were 92 of us got back out of a total of 600; most were taken prisoner in Belgium."

Another soldier, who identified himself only as "**Fred**," said that while his unit was in Belgium, "The Germans overran us, and we had to retreat. We were sharing the roads with thousands of refugees, people with carts, hand barrows, anything they could use to carry their belongings. The roads were completely blocked by this human tidal wave so that we couldn't get through in our trucks.

"Eventually, it was decided that we should abandon the vehicles and field guns. We went into a field where a senior officer told us we would have to spike the guns so that the Germans wouldn't be able to use them.

"A shell was rammed into the breech, then another shell put in behind it, so that the first would explode inside the gun. We had to stand well back as the shell exploded and shattered the barrel. When we had spiked all the guns, we were told we would have to walk to the coast, to Dunkirk....

"When we arrived at Dunkirk, the Germans were shelling the beaches. The only thing we could do was to dig a hole in the sand and get down as low as possible. It gave a bit of protection from shells exploding on the surface.

"After a couple of hours in these holes, a young subaltern came down the beach. He said, 'Now lads, I'm afraid it's every man for himself. You can either wade out into the water and try to get onto one of those small boats, or you can try to get to La Panne. It's about seven miles along the beach. There are two destroyers there. They will wait for you. If you want to, you can try to get there. The choice is yours.'"

Fred and another man decided to walk. "It was hard going, walking through the soft sand, but at last we reached the pier where the destroyers were berthed. There were some military police at the end of the pier. They were very brave men. They stood there as the shells were dropping all round, directing people, telling them where to go, helping everyone.

"They told me and my mate to stop and to get down behind the breakwater, which was made of stone. They said they would give us the nod when to run, then we should sprint to the end of the pier and get onto one of the ships as fast as we could.

"Eventually, they gave us the nod, so we ran to the end to HMS *Venomous*. A young lad was firing a machine gun at the planes overhead which were dropping bombs. We were still carrying our rifles, so he told us to throw them onboard first. Mine hit the side of the ship and dropped into the water. That was terrible. I could have cried. I had struggled with it through seven miles of soft sand, only to lose it like that."

Fred and his buddy went below, where a young sailor gave them a bottle of brandy, and they had a good drink. "I think we must have slept, because we woke up in Dover."

The British sometimes went to extremes to maintain order on the beach. **Albert Henry Powell**, a lorry driver in the Royal Signals, recalled, "We were marshalled in groups of 50, under an officer or senior non-com-

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Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: After withdrawing from the front in Belgium, British Bren gun carriers head through Louvain's rubble-strewn streets on the way to Dunkirk. OPPOSITE: After pouring out of the Ardennes Forest, German troops, like the ones shown here passing burning British vehicles, head west toward Dunkirk in hopes of stopping the evacuation, named Operation Dynamo.

missioned officer (NCO), and marched down to the water's edge. A beachmaster, who called each group in turn, maintained discipline there. I saw one group run out of line, and the person in charge was promptly shot by the beachmaster."

Douglas Gough, a 20-year-old member of the Royal Artillery, recalled, "Down on the beaches were groups of soldiers just waiting—for what? I didn't know then. Off shore could be seen the wrecks of several small craft and two or three larger vessels and debris lying all around. Off to my left I saw plumes of thick black smoke and the remains of oil tanks burning.

"I made my way down on to the beach, and no sooner had I got there I heard the sound of approaching aircraft. They were back again—the enemy planes flying low over us and bombing and machine-gunning everybody. Everyone dived into the sand, and some began trying to dig themselves deeper into it.

"I ran towards the sand dunes and lay flat. It was terrible. I tried to bury myself, absolutely helpless…. When [the planes] had gone, I got up and had a look around. I saw many wounded and dead lying around. The sounds of men crying and shouting will stay with me for the rest of my life.

"I appeared to be OK. I saw some stretcher bearers appear from the large buildings on the sea front; they took some of the wounded there…. Some officers were trying to organize us into groups of about 50 ready to board whatever vessel arrived at the beach next. Some units had managed to stay complete. I saw no sign of any of my regiment.

"Until I spoke to some of the other lads, I had no idea that we were being taken home to the UK. My impression had been that we were going to be landed at some other part of the coast to fight again. It was May 30th, and I was unaware that by now many thousands were already back in the UK."

Harry Osbourne, a civilian sailor, took part in the rescue by the "Little Ships." He said, "They came from Portsmouth, Newhaven, Sheerness, Tilbury, Gravesend, Ramsgate, from all along England's southern and southeastern coasts, from ports big and small, from shipping towns and yachting harbors.

"Some, from up river, had never been in the open sea before. They were manned by volunteers; men who, without being given the details, had been told that they and their vessels were urgently needed to bring soldiers home from France. Most were experienced sailors—professional or otherwise—but many were fledglings who knew nothing about maritime hazards.

"Our route to Dunkirk was by no means direct as we had to keep to swept channels free of mines. In any case, there were so many craft of all shapes and sizes making for the same destination that we needed only to follow the fleet. My vivid and lasting impression of this stage of the operation is of a calm, flat sea covered with an armada of assorted ships and boats.

"The troops were very well disciplined, just waiting in long columns, hoping to be taken off. They were all dead beat, having had a terrible time fighting their way to the beaches. We were able to get right to the sandy beach and took on board about 30 British soldiers…. We rowed away from the shore and took our 'passengers' to the nearest craft lying offshore that we could find, a tug, a drifter, a trawler, anything that could risk coming in so close.

"We returned to the beach—probably a different section because as soon as we approached, a crowd of French soldiers, with all their equipment, rushed out into the water and climbed on board before we had a chance to turn the boat around to head out to sea. As the tide was falling, we became stuck on the sand. With great difficulty, we persuaded the Frenchman to get out of the boat, and we were then able to turn it round and prevent it broaching—getting broadside onto the sea.

"Through all this time we were so occupied with what we were doing that we were hardly aware of all the other activity going on all around us…. There were aircraft overhead, friend and foe, all the time; continual bombardment of the town, harbor, and of the beaches by the Germans. Ships were being sunk and survivors rescued. All around the town

and harbor of Dunkirk fires were blazing, a heavy pall of smoke hanging over it all. From much further off shore, the British ships were bombarding the German positions.

"We eventually left the beaches just before dawn on Saturday, 1st June. I spent most of the return journey in the engine room of our craft trying to get warm and dry. When we reached England again, we had to lie off shore before being taken to Ramsgate by tenders. Everything was very well organized and, seemingly, under control."

Having retreated from Brussels, **Frederick Barker**, 4th Division, Royal Engineers, said, "The unwritten rule on Dunkirk Beach seemed to be 'first come, first served' as far as evacuation was concerned, and it did nothing to boost our morale knowing we were among the last to arrive. We watched boats arriving, leaving, and occasionally sinking and, with some horror, men making frantic efforts to swim out to the boats, only to drown long before they got anywhere near them, their pathetic water-logged bodies lying face down in the water."

Arthur Turner, a military policeman, jumped from the mole onto a ship, the *Crested Eagle*, with his mates and found the ship crowded with wounded men. The ship had gone only a short distance into the Channel when it was bombed. A motor mechanic was on fire. "He was screaming, screaming, and we said, 'Gor, there's Freddie Lucas … there's Freddie!' We rushed to get a bucket of water and chucked it over him. As we put this bucket down, he was putting his arms in the water, but all his skin came off.

"Then the whole place was on fire. One of our men got a life jacket and pulled Freddie up and fixed the life jacket on him. Me and my mates were holding onto the lattice work where the guide for the wheels was, and everybody was treading on my bloody fingers with big army boots. Then an officer said, 'Come on lads—let's swim for it!' So we dived into the water and started to swim.

"My full pack hit me under the chin as I dived and I smashed a couple of my teeth, but I started to swim and managed to get off my battledress jacket, but I had khaki trousers and braces [suspenders] on and, as I was swimming…. [I] gradually got rid of my trousers, and even my boots. I was a pretty good swimmer, but I tried to touch the bottom and I couldn't—I just sank. With panic I surfaced and then I swam and swam. Then I managed to stand upright and walk to the shore."

A Scotsman, **Douglas Haig Hodge**, and his Royal Artillery unit had evacuated Brussels and were headed for Tournai, where he found the road packed with refugees. German bombers then struck. "When the bombers came down the road, I was lying in a ditch, and it was then that I saw a woman with a little child. What exactly became of them I do not know, but that was the time I began to detest the Germans; I hated the very sound of their name.

Ullstein Bild

"Without our guns, we were now classed as infantry, and I remember reading in the paper at a later date that it was in fact the 9th, our Dundee Battery, which held the line. We were badly mortared outside Dunkirk and took quite a few casualties. Captain Laird, the Battery Commander … marched about like the proper infantry officer in front of his troops. He was a 'real warrior,' and on one occasion when I told him I only had one round left, I asked him what I should do. 'Fix bayonets and charge' was his unhesitating reply.

"We took quite a bit of mortar fire, but you got to the stage where you didn't really care what happened next…. Everyone near me was getting wounded except for Captain Laird, who bore a charmed life. I was so blasé about the whole situation that I didn't realize we were all fighting for our lives.

"We went through some 'flurries'—flights of aircraft attacking us—to get down to the beach at Dunkirk. We had rifles, and we fired volleys at the planes, which actually stopped them in their tracks. We marched to the beach, and I somehow got separated from the rest. We were taking heavy shelling from the Germans, and when those shells landed—oh, my goodness me, what an explosion!

"We got into groups—30 of us, as I recall—and went down to Dunkirk Harbor. This big hospital ship with red stripes on either side came slowly in, and the nurses were waving to us … That ship saved our lives." Hodge made it safely back to Britain.

Men in planes were also in great danger. At about 7:50 AM on Saturday, June 1, 1940, two Blenheims of No. 254 Squadron and two of No. 248 Squadron took off from RAF Detling to fly a three-hour cover patrol of the Dunkirk evacuation shipping route. They were making their last circuit before returning to

National Archives

Detling and were at 8,000 feet approaching Dunkirk, two miles out to sea and flying parallel to the shore when they were attacked by a swarm of Me-109 aircraft diving on them from the south.

Pilot Officer **G.W. Spiers** recalled, "I was sitting in the seat on the right-hand side of the pilot. Looking out to my right, I could see the sand beaches with numerous clusters of troops queueing to embark on small craft. As I looked up, I saw Me-109 German aircraft diving in line astern towards our rear starboard quarter. I managed to count 11 109s, and as I looked downwards I saw our other Blenheim, which had been flying in line astern of us, pass beneath to starboard with both engines on fire."

As soon as Spiers saw the enemy, he yelled to Flying Officer J.W. Baird, the patrol commander, 'Fighters!' "We were slowly picking up speed in a shallow dive, but a cold feeling in the small of my back made me realize we were 'sitting ducks' for fighters."

Spiers shouted to Baird to maneuver the aircraft about. "Whether or not he understood I never found out, as the cockpit suddenly filled with … flying fragments as the dashboard and instruments disintegrated in front of me under a series of violent crashes and flashes.

"The smoke started to clear and I looked back through the armor plate to see what had happened to Roskrow, the gunner. The fuselage down to the turret was a mass of bullet holes which were accentuated by the sun beams that shone through the smoke. All I could see of Roskrow was a bloody green flying suit slumped over the gun controls.

"Turning to Baird, I immediately realized he had been hit although he still held the controls. His head was slumped forward on his chest, and blood ran down his right cheek from a wound in the temple that showed through the side of his helmet. Another wound in his neck had covered him with blood, and it had gushed all over my left shoulder. He looked very peaceful with his eyes shut; I was sure he was dead. It was miraculous that I had survived that burst of gunfire into the cockpit."

Spiers then realized that he would have to crash-land the plane on the water. Spotting an armed trawler some miles off to port, he leaned over Baird's lifeless body and grabbed the controls. "I pulled back the throttles as the engines were still at full power and were vibrating excessively. Yellow flames from the port engine were beating against the front and side windows and, standing at the side of Baird, I was about to level the aircraft to prevent the vicious sideslip that was causing the flames to play on the cockpit when, suddenly, the windscreen shattered.

"I felt a hot, searing wind on my face [and] felt my cheeks, nose, throat, and mouth shriveling under the heat, but have no recollection of any pain. As soon as the aircraft righted, the cockpit cleared of fire and smoke, and a noticeable peace descended as the cut-back engines purred and the wind gently whined through the shattered glass.

"As the aircraft was now at 5,000 feet, I thought I could glide to the ship without having to open up the engines. As I lost height, the speed of the sea passing beneath magnified alarmingly, and although the thought of using the flaps and lowering the undercarriage to reduce speed occurred to me, I realized that I could not take my eyes off the sea for the impending ditching.

"The trawler was now only a quarter of a mile off and closing fast, and I was only slightly higher than masthead height. I concentrated to keep the wings parallel to the water as I realized the danger of dipping a wing tip. The ripples on the calm sea closed nearer and nearer until there was suddenly a most violent jolt. Although the impact took only a fraction of a second, it seemed like a slow-motion film to me.

"I can still visualise the water bounding in through the nose like a dam which had burst; I remember turning my back to the barrage and gently cushioning on it. The silent cockpit was now full of blood-colored sea, and I struggled to reach the normal entry sliding hatch above Baird's head.

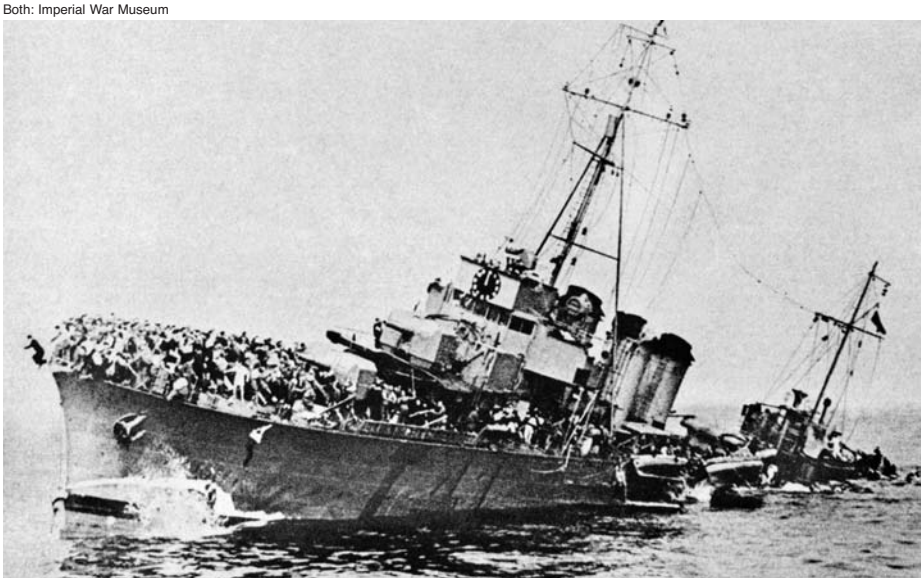
"As I held my breath, many of those past happinesses which had occurred during my life passed through my mind as I realized I would not escape. I had never prayed to God with such agony or earnestness. I tried to suck water into my lungs to hasten the end, but I was unsuccessful and only swallowed it. My lungs were bursting, and my pulse pounded in my ear drums, brilliant flashes and yellow spots appeared in front of my eyes; I thought of the sea bed—its creatures and crabs."

Suddenly Spiers realized that there was no floor under him, so he made his way out of the sinking aircraft, swimming to the surface and emerging "about five yards away from the starboard side of the aircraft. To my surprise, it was not lying horizontal below the surface of the water but the stub end of the fuselage was pointing upwards at 80 degrees with a jagged scar from which the turret and tail had been torn off. The steep angle was the reason why I could not reach the normal exit hatch.

"I think that I had been trapped inside the fuselage for over three minutes. My parachute floated in front of me, and this I quickly discarded. My burned face now started to sting, and I carefully abandoned my flying helmet."

During this time, Spiers could see the trawler steaming toward him. He inflated his Mae West life preserver and started to swim away toward the ship. The seamen stretched out a pole, passed it down to Spiers, and pulled him aboard. After dodging an attack by German aircraft, the trawler made contact with a tugboat, which delivered Spiers to Ramsgate, on the northeast corner of the Dover peninsula.

Both: Imperial War Museum



ABOVE: The French destroyer *Bourrasque*, loaded with 800 soldiers evacuated from Dunkirk, lists heavily after striking a mine, May 30, 1940; 600 survivors were rescued by another French destroyer, the *Branlebas*, but 200 died. TOP: British troops wade toward a Royal Navy ship that has come as close to shore as the shallow water will allow. OPPOSITE: Although pinned down on the beach at Dunkirk, British soldiers fire at German planes attacking them. Veteran Douglas Haig Hodge recalled the rifle fire drove some German fighters away.

Arthur Davey and his unit, the 7th Military Ambulance Company, had been ordered back to Dunkirk from their location in southwest Holland—45 miles away. During the drive, the drivers constantly scanned the skies at the German warplanes that circled above. Everywhere, it seemed, towns and villages were on fire from the bombings, and the road was badly cratered. Davey's unit took to the back roads to avoid the traffic jams and lines of refugees that were clogging the main roads.

After darkness fell, the German pilots dropped parachute flares to illuminate the landscape. "Every moment we thought that they would spot our vehicles, and the tension was unbearable," said Davey.

The next dawn, Davey recalled, "We could see shell-bursts in the sky, heard AA gunfire, and realized that our dream of a secure haven [at Dunkirk] was entirely false. A huge cloud, dense black, hung over the town and sea, swirling and eddying, the smoke from the huge oil storage drums on the quayside, bombed a day previously. Soon we could see and hear the roaring flames, too, and the nightmare welcomed us."

The quayside itself was crowded and in chaos. The ship that was supposed to take the ambulance company to England was not due in until the following day. Dive

bombers swooped in, strafing and bombing everything.

When Davey's unit reached the quay late in the day, it was a scene he never forgot. Everywhere there were ambulances, hundreds of them, all waiting their turn to unload their wounded passengers onto a ship that was standing by. The wait was agonizing, as everyone expected to be attacked at any moment.

That evening, the Luftwaffe came over and plastered the town again. Orders came down for Davey and the 7th MAC to head for a park three miles west of town and spend the night under the trees. The next day Davey noted that the oil tanks were still blazing away and black smoke covered the waterfront; half of Dunkirk, too, appeared to be ablaze. Trying to make their patients as comfortable as possible, the ambulance drivers gave them tea and some food while they waited nervously for another aerial attack.

Late that day the 7th MAC was ordered to return to the quay, although the air raids were increasing in ferocity. A hospital ship was expected to arrive, and the Royal Air Force was to provide protection while the wounded soldiers were transferred from shore to ship.

Davey recalled, "Jerry was systematically 'blitzing' Dunkirk, and not missing much. Along the canal bank, soldiers were marching, dirty, bandaged, worn-looking in single file towards the docks, and we realized this was no strategic retirement but a decided withdrawal from northern France and Belgium.

"We drove through the shambles that was a town but a few days before. The roads were strewn with debris, rocks, masonry, girders; full of craters, here a dead horse, there an overturned ambulance, a couple of lorries blazing away fiercely." Everywhere houses were on fire, with firemen vainly trying to stanch the flames.

Finally reaching the quayside, the 7th MAC learned that the hospital ship would not arrive for another few hours; meanwhile, 30 German planes dived onto the scene, sending Davey and everyone else scrambling for shelter. There was no sign of

ABOVE: Abandoned vehicles and dead British soldiers litter the sands at Dunkirk. More than 50,000 British troops were unable to escape; of these, 11,000 were killed and most of the remainder were taken prisoner. OPPOSITE: Unable to be evacuated, a large number of British and French were taken prisoner. Here thousands who have surrendered await instructions from their German captors at Dunkirk.

the RAF, and Davey said, "The promised air protection was merely a 'nerve tonic.'"

There was little protection to be had on the ground, so the British—both the walking wounded and the sound, such as Davey—sprinted for the dock and leaped into whatever boat, dinghy, or steamer was close by. Davey said, "It seemed safer on the boats somehow, while bullets and shrapnel rained on the decks and quayside, and the earth and sea alike vibrated with the concussion of the bombs.

"The planes were dive-bombing and the scream of their engines, then the whistle of their bombs, would be followed by the noise of the anti-aircraft guns." As quickly as it had begun, the raid was over. Ten minutes later, a new raid took place, and the whole mad event repeated itself.

At about 8:30 PM, a British destroyer appeared and began peppering the sky with AA fire in hopes of driving off the Luftwaffe. The AA fire heartened the men on the beach and dock, and the transfer of the wounded recommenced. "The neatest, swiftest handling of stretchers that I have seen followed," Davies said. The ship made it safely back to Dover.

Ron Bouverat was a lance corporal in the 48th Division when his unit fell back to Dunkirk. He was driving a lorry full of rations and recalled, "The road on either side of us was littered, of course, with abandoned vehicles and things upside down…. I wandered around the beach, and it was like Blackpool on a bank holiday. That was at Bray-Dunes; it wasn't actually at Dunkirk.

"I looked around and saw a Messerschmitt coming down, machine gunning, so I did the 100 yards very fast into the sand hills and got a large sand hill in between myself and the Messerschmitt, which seemed sensible. People were scattering all over the place." The next morning he saw "a paddle boat—no, a big ferry—and the Germans had dropped a bomb down the funnel and it was on fire; it was beached."

Later, Bouverat and a few other BEF men found a bullet-riddled lifeboat on the beach and decided to take their chances in it. Pushing it into the water, they rowed out to a British ship that was about to depart the scene; everyone in the little boat was saved and taken back to Dover.

Stan Rowley, a member of the 1st/9th Manchester Regiment, had been wounded in the leg when the Germans invaded France and was being taken to Dunkirk for evacuation. He said,

"The field ambulance was full of the wounded (really bad wounded). It took us 50 miles to Dunkirk. It took all night (about 12 hours). We went straight to the beach by a wall (on the beach were the wounded). This Major (from Manchester) kept giving us hot sweet tea. Not many bombers got through to shoot at us—the RAF did a wonderful job.

"A bomber that did get through killed my mates that I went to school with and went to the pictures with. It was a pleasure steamer that they were on—I think it was the Gracie Fields. There were a lot from Manchester on the ship that was bombed.

"On the third night we were to be taken to the mole. They were trying to get a hospital ship in. They took us on the mole (loads of wounded), and four of us were lying inside a wall of cotton bales for protection from the shelling. We looked round the corner of the cotton to see little dots of ships. The white one was the hospital ship (the Newhaven) being escorted by about 10 destroyers. Jerries were flying over causing pandemonium!

"We could see the ship coming in, and then, when it got to the mole, it turned around and moved away. We thought it was going because of the shelling. There was an uproar of men shouting. Anyway, he backed up (the boat used to be a ferry), and he moved back to the mole very quickly.

"Boards were put down, and people walked onto the boat. I crawled on because I couldn't walk. I got on my backside and slid down about a dozen stairs onto the boat. At the bottom of the stairs two blokes were stacking you to clear the entrance to the boat.

"Stretchers were put on board and 200 wounded were taken back. We arrived at Newhaven, then went on a train to Hendon, and we got sandwiches and a cup of tea … at Hendon. Civilians arrived at the station with gifts of food and cigarettes—I could have opened a shop with the cigarettes!"

Another of the wounded men at Dunkirk was **Albert George Heath** of 361 (5th London) Battery, 91 (4th London) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. He had been seriously wounded near Lille on May 21, necessitating the amputation of his right leg.

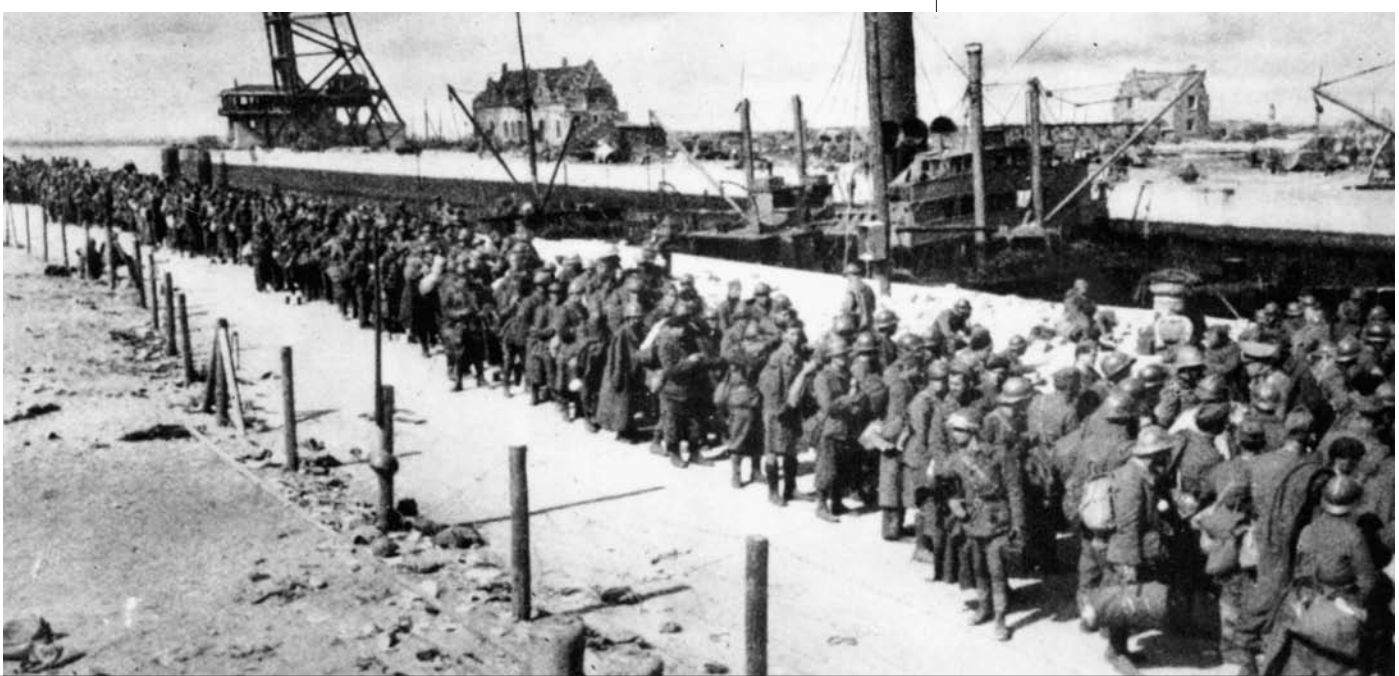
"I eventually arrived at Dunkirk," he said. "Whilst in the ambulance on the quayside, a bomb exploded nearby. Shrapnel ripped into the ambulance, severing my right arm, and the ambulance then caught fire! French sailors pulled me from the burning ambulance, but I suffered burns to my head and face. As I was embarked onto the SS *Canterbury*, another bomb exploded in the water beside the boat, which pitched, and I ended up in the harbor. This time the crew pulled me out!"

Heath's son later said, "During the next five years, Dad underwent 31 major operations on both his arm and leg. Until his death in 1985 at the age of 75, Dad must, at times, have been in terrible pain from these injuries, but he never let the real pain show. He worked up to retirement at 65 and led as active a life as his disability would allow. He was a very brave man."

James Bradley reflected back on that time: "Dunkirk changed my character completely. It changed my thinking about soldiering and actually about killing—accepting it as a part of your day, which you would never do otherwise. You fight back the fear, you put a lid on it—it's a way of life that takes over because you want to survive. The feeling for survival is a wonderful thing."

During the nine days of evacuation, more than 338,226 British and French troops were evacuated to Britain, where they would have to begin building a new army from scratch.

These are just a few of the over 200 Dunkirk stories. To read more, go to http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar.



Both: National Archives

ON Monday evening, April 27, 1942, Kathleen Stainer and her family readied themselves for sleep in the English countryside. Having walked about a half mile away from their home in the city of Bath, they found a spot just off the road where they could finally throw down their bedding.

The distance seemed safe enough, but before they fell asleep—and this assuming they slept at all—they made sure to cover their faces. No one knew for sure whether the Luftwaffe was returning that night, but Kathleen and many others had already heard the stories of German machine gunners in low-flying bombers shooting at anything that stood out in the dark, whether a poorly blacked-out window or a recognizably human form.

Over the past two nights, fights had broken out over whether or not it was safe to even light a cigarette. Who knows how their upturned faces may have looked against the dark ground? Others, scattered throughout the countryside around Bath—whether out in the open or down in nearby mines—no doubt asked themselves the same questions. In retaliation for the RAF bombings of Lübeck and Cologne, the Germans had attacked Bath three times in the previous two nights.

The city had been a vacation spot as far back as the Romans, who had taken an already pagan association with the local hot springs to build a spa complex and religious center

After RAF bombings of historic German cities, the Luftwaffe descended on Britain's "Cathedral Cities" in April and May 1942. The hardest hit was the ancient city of Bath.

THE BLITZ Comes to Bath

BY TIM MILLER

Citizens of Bath view the destruction of a residential area following two Luftwaffe air raids in April 1942. The historical and cultural targets in Britain were reputedly chosen because they had been awarded three stars by the influential German travel guide published by Baedeker and not because they had any military or industrial value.

that still stands today. By 1942, the Roman remains had themselves become surrounded by more than 2,000 years of history—from its medieval abbey to its famous Georgian architecture, which culminated in the great Royal Crescent, built in the late 18th century.

Bath was also supposed to be relatively safe from German attack, having very little by way of an industrial center. Awful as it was, it at least made some strategic sense that places like Manchester or London or Coventry were bombed. And indeed, during the Blitz many locals in Bath—and many in London who could not afford it—resented the more well off, who had fled the capital for places like Bath to wait out the attacks there. Early in the war, more than 4,000 civil servants had been relocated to Bath from London for their own safety, again earning the ire of almost everyone else.

Little could Bath have guessed, though, that it would be targeted precisely for its cultural and historical—rather than military—significance. Alongside other ancient cities like Exeter, Canterbury, Norwich, and York, Bath would take its place in the history of the war as one of the "Cathedral Cities" sought out by the Luftwaffe. These were the "Baedeker

Top Foto / The Image Works

National Archives

Much of Cologne lies in ruins after being hit by 1,000 Royal Air Force bombers on the night of May 30/31, 1942. The raid was partly in retaliation for Germany's raids on British cities a month earlier. Cologne was bombed 262 separate times.

Raids," named after the red-covered travel guides found all over Europe during the first half of the 20th century.

After the raids began, German Baron Gustav Braun von Stumm, Deputy Head of Information and the Press Division of the Foreign Office, remarked to reporters, "Now the Luftwaffe will go for every building which is marked with three stars in Baedeker." Ever since the end of the war, similar remarks have also been attributed to Hitler, though there is no evidence he ever said them.

Much to the consternation of Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, von Stumm had not only told the truth, but did so in a way that Goebbels must have known would stick. Until this point, the bombing of civilians had always been explained away by stating the military objective of the attack, however slight and disingenuous it might be. No such remark, for instance, was ever made publicly about the German bombings of Warsaw and Rotterdam, which in propaganda terms became legitimate targets simply by refusing to surrender.

Yet von Stumm's accidental slip into the truth revealed a reality that had been coming for some time: that the pulverizing of civilian morale was now a legitimate means of seeking victory. If the men and women far from the front lines could be made to feel that the front lines had come to them, they might become so fed up with the government that a continuation of hostilities would be impossible.

This conclusion was also the result of necessity rather than ruthlessness, as the inferior technology used in early bombing raids shows; initially, many British bombers sent on daylight raids were unable to find their target city, let alone attack the industrial centers with any precision. As late as the Baedeker Raids, some German planes never found Exeter. Even the bombing of legitimate targets resulted in unintended civilian deaths, as the RAF bombing only a month before Bath showed, killing more than 300 French civilians in their raid on a Renault factory outside Paris, now being used by the Germans.

But, by and large, the Baedeker Raids were something different, as were the British attacks on Lübeck and Cologne that prompted them. In short, accidental civilian deaths due to technological limitations had transformed, in response to a heightening of atrocity and escalation of violence elsewhere in the war, into the need for better technology and the intentional killing of civilians.

Alongside Britain's decoding of Germany's Enigma machines, by 1942 technological advances on both sides—in everything from better aircraft (and signaling devices to guide them to the target) as well as better radio communications and early radar (but also a greater ability to intercept or jam all of these)—bombing missions could be undertaken with even greater skill than ever before. Should the target city be properly protected, it could also better defend itself—but Bath was not one of these cities, lacking entirely in either searchlights or antiaircraft guns, facts the Germans must well have known.

Nowhere is the changing mindset on the necessity of civilian bombing better illustrated than in two remarks made by President Franklin Roosevelt, separated by a few years: on September 1, 1939, he could speak of the "ruthless bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population … which has resulted in the maiming and in the death of thousands of defenseless men, women, and children, has sickened the hearts of every civilized man and woman, and has profoundly shocked the conscience of humanity."

Yet he came to later admit, "We must face the fact that modern warfare as conducted in the Nazi manner is a dirty business. We don't like it—we didn't want to get in it—but we are in it and we're going to fight it with everything we've got."

While the British did not slip up like Baron von Stumm, their tactics by this time were clear. What von Stumm had chosen to state in public, the British only made clear in their private directives. One, issued in February 1942, said, "The primary object of your operations should now be focused on the morale of the enemy civil population, and in particular on the industrial workers."

In choosing to bomb Lübeck on March 28-29, Bomber Command had indeed chosen a city whose industries were important to the German war effort, since its position on the Baltic allowed it to resupply the German Army in the east, as well as receive iron ore from Sweden.

But more important even than these was Lübeck's city center. For, while it was far from its industrial works, it was also, in the words of the new head of Bomber Command, Arthur Harris, "built more like a fire-lighter than a human habitation."

The area, essentially an island linked to the surrounding area by bridges, was packed with buildings three and four and five centuries old. By the time the RAF was through, more than 200 acres had been destroyed by fire, and 15,000 people were homeless, 300 dead, and nearly 60 percent of the buildings in the city either damaged or completely destroyed.

Back in December 1940, Harris had witnessed the worst of the Blitz in London, including the incredible sight of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral "standing out in the midst of an ocean of fire." Turning to a friend, he remarked of the Germans, "Well, they are sowing the wind." (See *WWII Quarterly,* Fall 2016.)

With Lübeck, the Germans were now reaping the whirlwind, and the incendiary bombs that had been used on the English city of Coventry were now dealt back to them. For the month following Lübeck, Cologne and Essen were attacked three times, Hamburg and Dortmund twice, and Rostock four nights in a row, beginning on April 23-24.

The German response began the very first night of the Rostock bombings, when they hit the city of Exeter. On the two nights of April 25-26 and the morning of the April 27, the Luftwaffe came to Bath. German directives issued 10 days earlier clearly stated that, when choosing targets, "preference is to be given to those where attacks are likely to have the greatest possible effect on civilian life."

ABOVE: The British government supplied poor families with prefabricated backyard bomb shelters known as Anderson shelters. This one appears to have taken a direct hit. LEFT: Some 400 Bath citizens died during the German raids. Both the Germans and the Allies expected that targeting cities would undermine civilian morale.

The first flares were seen over the city around 11 PM on Saturday, April 25, as approximately 90 German planes descended upon Bath. The night was the kind that cities all over England and Germany had begun to fear: clear and illuminated by a full moon.

The Luftwaffe began by attacking the gas works on the west of the city, whose explosions would be a guide for later bombers. As the attack began, those still on the street in Bath were so ill prepared to recognize the signs of a bombing raid—and the unlikelihood of Bath being attacked no doubt overlapped and encouraged that ignorance—that they assumed the nearby city of Bristol, a frequent victim of such raids, was being attacked again. After the warning siren was sounded and the local fire brigade dispatched for Bristol, the real situation began to dawn on the city as one fireman rode past his own house already in flames.

With telephone lines down, the situation quickly became confused. Since the 1937 Air Raid Precautions Act (ARP), some form of organized civil defense had become a priority in British life; but as such preparations were costly, time consuming, and looked forward to attacks which, at the time, were only possibilities, the ARP arrangements for many cities were improvised at best, and few cities thought it worthwhile to pool information to discover which measures might work best. Many small measures, however, had been undertaken, such as removing the railings from the disused St. Mary's Churchyard and melting them down for munitions.

When the war began in earnest, it can only be imagined that if fire wardens in London sometimes found themselves bored, by 1942 fire wardens in Bath must have been completely disinterested, still waiting in their foxholes for a charge that never came. And indeed, on the night of the first bombing only some of the fire wardens slated for duty had shown up, and many of the initial residents whose houses had been bombed refused to remain on the scene to help put out the flames. One member of the civil defense who did appear for duty, not wanting to abandon his wife at their home, left her at the home of his sister and was never seen again.

Thankfully, one area where Bath had been prepared was in the construction of a handful of public shelters strewn throughout the

city, and it was to these places that many people fled. Others retreated to their cellars, or to the private shelters installed early in the war on one's premises—such as Anderson shelters, which occupied the underground of many a home's back garden.

One woman, Annie Marks, recalled gathering up her mother and was going downstairs with another elderly woman in her building when a window exploded in their faces. The house next to hers had been destroyed, and inside a mother and her six children had all been killed, the father away in the army.

Many people, however, were just unsure of what to do and, whether in a desire to be in a crowd, or not wishing to take the chance that their home might collapse on top of them, scores of people filled the streets in a desperate run for the public shelters few probably thought they would ever have to use. One woman recalled the bombers flying so low she could see one of the crewmen's faces in the glassed nose of the plane.

Others recalled the same unnerving sight of the bombers flying so low they could see the men inside; for such people the bombing became personal, and they emerged with the feeling that the bombers had been seeking them out specifically.

When the first all-clear sounded shortly after midnight (to be followed by another after 1 AM), the residents of Bath found themselves engaged in a very London activity—as if the destruction weren't real, or was at least happening to someone else's home or someone else's street, many emerged from wherever they had been, curious, and were drawn to watching all the fires.

One group, among them a family now homeless, had tea in the house of strangers at around three in the morning. Many who had not had the time—or nerve—in the midst of the bombing to seek a public shelter now did so, while many of those already ensconced in public shelters decided to remain there for further instructions.

One story is told of the Poole family, a mother and father with their visiting son and daughter-in-law. While remaining at the parents' home during the raid, after the all-clear the young couple decided to seek out a public shelter on Stanley Road. Once there, and just as the daughter-in-law and her husband were about to leave for their own home, the shelter exploded.

Another of the cities hit during the Baedeker Raids was York, bombed on April 29. The city was targeted on several other occasions; 84 civilians were killed and another 98 wounded.

Among many others, Mr. Poole was killed instantly, and his wife soon died of her injuries. The son survived, but not his wife. As it turned out, more than half of the Luftwaffe force that had just attacked Bath had been refueled and rearmed and immediately sent back from their bases in northern France. At 4:35 AM, the warning sounded again, and the fires from the previous attack now acted as the most natural beacon for the Luftwaffe to follow.

In another shelter, a farmer who had left his family to quickly go home and check on the status of the pigs, returned to find his entire family killed. More than 30 people died at that shelter, on Rosebery Road. Had they stayed at home, they might have survived, but then the opposite was true for those who lived on Victoria Road, where upward of 40 to 60 houses were destroyed. These houses, however, were empty, and dozens of lives were saved because they sought out a public shelter rather than stay at home.

The senselessness of war, the fog and cruelty of chance and of seemingly random decisions that quickly revealed themselves to have meant life or death for so many—such situations, to which the ordinary soldier became inured and sometimes even indifferent, were now thrust upon the people of Bath, who had little preparation for it. Defenseless as the city was, about all anyone could do to help was save the lives of others and try to put out the fires.

As morning dawned and a strange new Sunday began, the people of Bath took a lesson from other cities and tried to keep busy. Yet everything pointed to the evening, since it seemed a foregone conclusion that the Luftwaffe would return once again. Throughout the day and into the night, some 10,000 residents left the city for the outskirts and surrounding hills, to sleep in the open countryside. Others hid out in caves, mines, or railway tunnels.

But by midnight there was nothing, and one group of people decided the risk was worth taking and went back home, where it was at least warm. Only a few minutes later, shortly after 1 AM, the siren sounded and they were out the door again, running and finding cover in the first ditch they could find.

Owing to a greater reliance on incendiary bombs, the fires on Sunday night were even worse than the night before, and many buildings that had merely been torn through on Saturday were now ablaze.

One of these was among the most beautiful Georgian buildings in the city, the historic Assembly Rooms, which since the 18th century had been frequented by statesmen and artists alike, including Jane Austen and Charles Dickens.

The pride that people took in their history and architecture comes out in the words of Harvey Wood, only a few days after the attack: "My family and I have lost our home in the blitz, but I at least lost far more. Words cannot express my sense of loss. I loved the Rooms."

The neighboring Regina Hotel also took a hit; 20 people were killed. While the Assembly Rooms were later rebuilt, others buildings, like St. Andrew's Church, were so badly damaged that they had to be torn down. Somehow Bath Abbey (whose oldest sections dated to the early 12th century) and the Roman Baths emerged intact, although the former did have one of its stained-glass windows blown out.

The all-clear sounded at 2:45 AM, and as the days progressed it was determined that the damage had mostly been to residential areas, with more than 15,000 houses damaged, a thousand of which could no longer be lived in, and more than 300 destroyed completely. With a few exceptions, Bath's business center and historical buildings—and even those sites deemed military targets—survived.

Despite German claims of more than 6,000 dead, only around 400 people actually died over the two nights—and using the word "only" shows how easy it was to dismiss what they had gone through. The London Blitz, spread out over months as it was, killed nearly 30,000 total.

Upon hearing of the Baedeker Raids, a survivor of London coldly remarked, "I think it was about time they had something to make them realize there's a war on."

Pedestrians pick their way through the rubble in the city of Exeter. It was first targeted during the Baedeker Raids on April 29, 1942, and again in May.

But it was just because Bath wasn't a city like London or Dresden or Tokyo that the damage inflicted was actually far greater than anything that could be tallied. Bath never had the "luxury" that Londoners did, who banded together and found new rhythms and habits of daily life through the extended weeks and months of the Blitz.

There and elsewhere, many people were bored, or, after a lull in the bombing, found themselves "relieved" when the attacks started up again. Home Intelligence Reports are filled with observations like these: "Complacency in some districts because anticipated German attack has not materialized."

Indeed, the more attacks there were, the less people were afraid of them; as one writer remembered it, while giving a poetry reading in London Edith Sitwell stopped as the sound of a bomb neared and passed by, and then "merely lifted her eyes to the ceiling for a moment and, giving her voice a little more volume to counter the racket in the sky, read on."

Spared the widespread destruction and huge death toll of the London Blitz, Bath's citizens seem to have experienced the worst of it in concentrated form, over the course of only two nights.

As one traveler who came to the city soon after the attack recalled, "When we arrived in the town, the general impression we obtained was that it had more or less ceased to function as a town in the normal sense. The mass of the people had become quite detached from their normal routine, and had not yet found any place in the new situation; their only outlet was in wandering around the streets or to the various aid bureaus, or seeking some means of getting out of the town…. They seem faintly nervous and agitated; there is a tendency to repetition of the same story. They obviously have not settled themselves down or become adapted to bombing."

The story of another survivor is also indicative. Florence Delve had been able to escape with her husband and two children

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TAKING TINIAN

BY RICHARD CAMP (COLONEL, USMC, RET.)

A squabble between a general and an admiral led to "the most perfect amphibious operation of the Pacific War."

THE ISLAND OF TINIAN is located in the Northern Marianas, three miles southwest of Saipan, 100 miles north of Guam, and 1,500 miles from mainland Japan. A tropical paradise of just 39 square miles, it had been ruled over the centuries by the Spanish and then the Germans. In 1914, the Japanese took it over for agricultural purposes and, in the closing stages of the war, once they realized that it had potential importance as an American air base for the long-range Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers, they began to fortify it.

Today, Tinian is probably best known as the launching site for the American atomic aerial attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But back in July 1944, Tinian was the latest in a string of Pacific islands that formed the American stepping stones to the Japanese home islands.

With the invasion and capture of Saipan well underway, Lt. Gen. Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith, commander of the Expeditionary Force troops, turned his attention to the capture of Tinian.

Garrisoned by 9,000 Japanese troops, Tinian was destined to become, according to Smith, "the most perfect amphibious operation of the Pacific War." However, the operation would not be without controversy. A long and fractious argument broke out among the senior American leaders concerning which landing beaches should be used.

Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly "Terrible" Turner, Joint Expeditionary Force commander, favored landing on Yellow Beach, along the northeast coast. "Howlin' Mad" Smith, Rear Admiral Harry W. "Handsome Harry" Hill, head of the Northern Attack Force, and Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt, commanding the Northern Troops and Landing Force, disagreed with Turner's choice of Yellow Beach and strongly recommended instead two more lightly defended beaches (White 1 and White 2) on the northern end of the island, even though they were both less than 200 yards wide.

Amphibious doctrine called for a beach of no less than 1,000 yards wide to accommodate a division-sized landing. Planners estimated that White Beach 1 would permit eight amphibious tractors to land simultaneously, while White Beach 2 could take 16 at once.

Admiral Hill left the meeting with Turner exasperated. He wrote that Turner "simply would not listen, and again ordered me in very positive terms to stop all White Beach planning and to issue my plan for the Tinian Town landing."

Marines dismount from an LVT (Landing Vehicle, Tracked) at one of the Tinian invasion beaches, July 24, 1944. The capture of Tinian by the Marines allowed the island to be used as an air base from which the Americans could bomb Japan—including the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

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Terrible Turner's stance set up a showdown with Howlin' Mad Smith, who recalled, "Our session on board the [USS] *Rocky Mount* [ACG-3] generated considerable unprintable language."

At the heated meeting, Turner roared, "Holland, you are not going to land on the White Beaches. I won't land you there."

Smith thundered back, "Oh, yes you will! You'll land me any goddamned place I tell you to! I'm the one who makes the tactical plans around here! All you have to do is tell me whether or not you can put my troops ashore there!"

Turner was adamant: "I'm telling you now, it can't be done. It's absolutely impossible. You can't possibly land two divisions on those beaches."

"How do you know it's impossible?" Smith shot back. "You're just so goddamned scared that some of your boats will be hurt."

The argument went on for hours, according to Smith, as each man tried to convince the other of the soundness of his views. Turner contended, "The only feasible beaches are at Tinian Town, and that's where we are going to land."

Smith countered forcefully, "If we go ashore at Tinian Town, we'll have another Tarawa. Sure as hell! The Japs will murder us."

Smith brought up the Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion's forthcoming recon of the landing beaches. It was like waving a red flag in front of a maddened bull. Turner responded, "They don't know what to look for. They're just a bunch of Marines.... People will laugh at you if you keep talking about [the idea]. They'll think you're a stupid old bastard."

Just as fired up, Smith shouted back, "You know goddamned well that it's my business and none of yours to say where we'll land. If you say you won't put us ashore, I'll fight you all the way.... I'll take it up with [Admiral Raymond A.] Spruance [commanding the Fifth Fleet], and if necessary with [Admiral Chester] Nimitz [commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet]. Now just put that down in your goddamned book!"

By feinting an attack at Tinian Town, the invasion force drew many Japanese to the south of the island and made the main force's task at White Beach in the north much easier.

Hill later wrote, "I never saw Kelly [Turner] when he was so mean and cantankerous as on that occasion. He must have been a bit under the weather."

The meeting finally ended when Smith extracted a promise from Turner to defer a decision on the landing beach until the results of the reconnaissance were in.

Despite the heated argument, Admiral Turner later remarked, "I consider Holland Smith a very fine tactical general and able administrator, and I consider him one of my very best friends."

General Smith was not so magnanimous. "My plans were challenged by a naval officer who had never commanded troops ashore and failed to understand the principles of land warfare.... Kelly Turner is aggressive, a mass of energy and a relentless taskmaster. The punctilious exterior hides a terrific determination. He can be plain ornery. He wasn't called 'Terrible Turner' without reason."

Settling the argument would be the Amphibious Reconnaissance Company. It was formed at Camp Elliott, California, in January 1943 under the command of Captain James L. Jones, the father of the future 32nd Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen-

eral James L. Jones, Jr. In August 1943, the company was redesignated Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, V Amphibious Corps (VAC), Pacific Fleet. At the instigation of Lt. Gen. Smith, the company was expanded into a two-company battalion on April 14, 1944, and designated VAC Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion, Amphibious Corps, Pacific Fleet.

The VAC Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion, under the command of recently promoted Major James L. Jones, in conjunction with Underwater Demolition Teams 5 and 7, was tasked with performing a night reconnaissance of the Tinian beaches. Their mission was multifaceted. They were to locate obstacles on the beach; determine the height and characteristics of the cliffs and the vegetation behind the beaches; determine the depth of the water and characteristics of the off-lying reef; determine the types of landing craft that could be landed on each particular beach; determine the types of vehicles that could cross the reef and move inland; and estimate whether the infantry could climb the cliffs without using ladders or cargo nets.

Captain Merwin H. "Silver" Silverthorn, Jr.'s Company A and a detachment of "frogmen" from Navy Underwater Demolition Team 7 were assigned to Yellow Beach while 1st Lt. Leo B. Shinn's Company B and 12 swimmers from Underwater Demolition Team 5, led by the famed frogman Lt. Cmdr. Draper L. Kauffman, were assigned the two White Beaches.

On July 8, the battalion officers and selected noncommissioned officers (NCOs) went aboard USS *Gilmer* (APD-11), a converted World War I four-stack destroyer transport, and cruised along the west coast of Tinian.

"The purpose of the cruise was to enable us to study the beaches through binoculars and to become familiar with the horizontal silhouette of the island," Shinn explained, "in order to facilitate our direction during the subsequent reconnaissance."

The following night, both recon companies, along with swimmers from UDT 7, conducted a rehearsal off the Purple Beaches on Magicienne Bay, Saipan. Shinn said, "It was jointly decided that the UDT would accomplish the hydrographic reconnaissance while the Marines would reconnoiter and secure the information pertaining to the beach proper and the terrain."

At midnight, the APD stood 3,000 yards offshore and launched 10 black neoprene rubber landing craft (LCRs), which were towed by the ship's landing craft to a point 1,500 yards off the beach.

"From this point," Shinn noted, "the LCRs were cautiously paddled to a point 500 yards from shore, at which time the swimmers went into the water." Each swimmer was equipped with an inflatable CO2 rubber life belt, a flashlight, and a packet of aviator's yellow emergency dye. "The rehearsal was executed as planned," Shinn said, "and was completed at about 0500 the following morning.

"The actual reconnaissance of Tinian beaches was ordered for the night of 10-11 July," Shinn continued. "The entire day was spent in planning the reconnaissance, familiarizing the troops with the plan, and holding debarkation drills and rehearsals. Exhaustive studies were made … of all available aerial photographs, maps, etc., of the beaches."

The plans called for USS *Gilmer* and USS *Stringham* (APD-6) to transport the recon Marines and frogmen to the objective area some 3,000 yards off the beach where they would launch 10-man rubber boats. Ships' landing craft, with muffled exhausts, would tow the boats approximately 500 yards off their respective beaches. At that point, the boats would be paddled to a point just outside the surf zone.

Admiral Turner was concerned about alerting the Japanese and commented,

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ABOVE: Admiral Richard K. Turner peers at Tinian Island through captured Japanese binoculars on Saipan prior to the Marines' July 24 Tinian landings. A smiling Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, commanding the Fleet Marine Force Pacific (right), awaits his turn at the binoculars. RIGHT: A Navy underwater demolition man in training. The "frogmen" were essential to the success of the invasion.

"The first series of reconnaissances were made as secretly as possible; and, in order to avoid the disclosure of landing intention, positive orders were issued that any mines and obstacles found there were under no circumstances to be disturbed."

Captain Silverthorn selected 20 swimmers from Company A and eight from Lieutenant Richard F. Burke's UDT-7 to make the Yellow Beach reconnaissance. At 10:45 PM, under a cloudy sky that obscured the moon, the teams started for the beach.

"When the rubber boats were approximately 500 yards off shore, two sharp reports resembling rifle fire and showing flashes were heard off the south end of the main Yellow Beach," Major Jones said. "These were followed by two dull reports resembling the noise of mortars." Under orders to remain covert, Jones ordered the boats to move north "and attempt to obtain hydrographic information from the reef."

UDT-7 found floating mines in the approaches to the beach and a number of underwater boulders and potholes. On the flanks of the 125-yard-wide beach, swimmers observed almost insurmountable cliffs that were 20 to 25 feet high.

On the beach itself, Marines led by 2nd Lt. Donald F. Neff discovered that the Japanese had strung double-aproned barbed wire. Neff left his men at the high-water mark and, armed only with a knife, he worked his way through the wire to 30 yards inland to locate exit routes. As he crawled along, he could hear nearby Japanese work crews.

At one point, he saw three Japanese sentries peering down from a cliff overlooking the beach. They occasionally shined flashlights onto the beach but failed to spot the Marine officer. Neff found that the Japanese were preparing defenses sited directly at the proposed landing site. After a harrowing time ashore, he returned to his men and swam back to the rubber boat. Neff was later awarded the Silver Star for leading Company A's recon team that night.

Based on the reconnaissance, the commander of Task Force 52 stated: "Yellow Beach was found to have fairly heavy surf, and [was] unsuitable for a large body of troops because of the steep cliffs and narrow exits." The landing, it was decided, would come only at White Beaches 1 and 2. Shinn split his company into two teams, one for White Beach 1 (the northernmost beach) and the other team for White Beach 2.

"The beaches were about 60 yards and 160 yards," recalled Brig. Gen. Russell E. Corey, who was a lieutenant at the time. The two were separated by 1,000 yards of rocky coast. At 11:30 PM, the two Marine teams disembarked from Gilmer.

"Debarkation went well until the LCRs were cast off from their tows," Shinn said. A strong tidal current carried both teams north. The White Beach 1 team landed on a coral outcropping about 800 yards north of Tinian and never got ashore. If not for the coral outcrop, they would have been carried even farther into the Saipan Channel.

The White Beach 2 team landed on White Beach 1 and made a hasty reconnaissance of the beach and its approaches. Meanwhile, the UDT swimmers scanned the water offshore, but did not find anything that would interfere with a landing.

One group of frogmen, led by Lieutenant (j.g.) George Suhrland, crawled onto the beach above the high-water mark to check out a report that mines had been planted, but he found no explosives.

During the recovery, the northerly current, plus low scudding clouds and a light fog, made it extremely difficult to locate the rubber boats. Gunnery Sergeant Sam Lanford, Pfc. John Sebern, and Lt. Cmdr. Kauffman, the UDT commander, missed the recovery and were swept into the channel that separated Tinian from Saipan. They had to tread water for several hours before finally being rescued by USS *Dickerson* (APD-21), a picket boat patrolling the channel. Fortunately, the men had stuffed flotation bladders in their jackets, which helped keep them afloat.

With only half the mission accomplished, Jones assigned Silverthorn's Company A to recon White Beach 2 the next night. "Arrangements were made to use the USS *Stringham* to land the troops and to use the USS *Gilmer* to pick them up," Jones explained. "Five rubber boats with swimmers and paddlers and one drone rubber boat carrying a mounted tripod wrapped with wire mesh were towed to a point 1,900 yards off White Beach 2."

Jones blamed "the failure on the first

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A TBM-1C Avenger torpedo bomber of Squadron VT-28 prepares to take off from the light carrier USS *Monterey* (CVL-26) to soften up targets on Tinian, June 12, 1944.

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ABOVE: The white wakes of LVTs and LCVPs (Higgins boats) point the way to the landing beach while several others, having debarked their Marines, head back to their mother ships. LEFT: Sixteen-inch naval guns provided the Marines with heavy suppressing firepower.

night to a lack of surface radar on the *Gilmer* to guide the boats to the beach," thus the improvised radar reflector. Company B furnished and manned the boats while Silverthorn supplied six two-man swimmer teams of one officer and one senior staff NCO. Twelve UDT swimmers also accompanied the recon team.

"At 1,900 yards," Jones said, "the rubber boats cast off and the ship guided them by radio. All the men in the LCRs had steel helmets and, together with the wire-mesh tripod, enabled the ship to guide the boats to a point 400 yards to seaward and 100 yards south of White Beach 2."

At that point, all the swimmer teams slipped into the water and made their way toward the beach, using either the sidestroke or the breaststroke to keep from splashing or making noise. They were almost invisible; only their heads were above water, and they had darkened their faces and necks with camouflage paint. The water over the reef was deep enough for the men to traverse without exposing themselves to observation, although several swimmers were cut by the sharp coral.

Once ashore, the recon Marines quickly determined that there were no obstacles on the beach, nor any evidence of Japanese activity. While the Marines worked the beach, the UDT scanned the water and the reef fronting the shoreline. At one point, a Japanese sentry almost stepped on two team members as they lay exposed on the sand, but they were not discovered.

Silverthorn noted, "A very thorough reconnaissance of the surf conditions, reef, beach, and flanks was done." The teams completed their assignments and returned to the recovery ships on time. Silverthorn then briefed Rear Admiral Hill on the results of the reconnaissance: "Admiral, the beaches are narrow [but] there are no mines, no coral heads, no boulders, no wire, no boat obstacles, and no offshore reefs. The beaches are as flat as a billiard table!"

That sold Hill. He acknowledged, "You have convinced me." For his leadership, Silverthorn was also awarded the Silver Star.

The landing force operations officer summarized the work and results of the amphibious reconnaissance: "This was an extremely difficult operation that was almost perfectly executed, and the perfection of the execution is due both to the high competence of the reconnaissance battalion and the underwater demolition team…."

Rear Admiral Hill, having been forcefully rebuffed by Vice Admiral Turner, kicked the beach decision up to Admiral Spruance, who called a meeting of the primary commanders on the afternoon of July 12. Lt. Gen. Smith and Rear Admiral Hill strongly argued the case for the White Beaches. At the conclusion of the presentation, Turner calmly and nonchalantly announced that he would accept the plan.

A participant later wrote, "We were all surprised at the unexpected rapidity and ease with which the plan was presented and accepted." Hill noted, "What a great relief that was for us all." Turner remarked, "Before the reconnaissance … I had tentatively decided to accept the White Beaches unless the reconnaissance reports were decidedly unfavorable."

Turner shrugged off criticism of his early intransigence. "I merely insisted that full study and consideration be given, before decision, to all possible landing places … all of them difficult for more than one reason. And, in accordance with an invariable custom, I refused to give a decision until such studies had been made, and also until the main features of the landing plan had been developed."

On July 24, the assault elements of Maj. Gen. Clifton Cates' 4th Marine Division landed successfully across the White Beaches with minimum casualties by mid-afternoon. The next day, the 2nd Marine

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ABOVE: Men of the 2nd Marine Division appear to be relaxed as they head to Tinian in an amphibious DUKW, commonly called a "duck." OPPOSITE: LVTs (sometimes called "amtracs," "buffalos," or "alligators") head through the surf to a crowded beachhead. Fortunately, enemy fire was light and ineffective.

Division came ashore over the same beaches. Both divisions had suffered heavy casualties during the Saipan operation and were not eager for another slugging match.

The 2nd Marine Division had been especially hard hit over the last 18 months, beginning with Guadalcanal where it had suffered 1,000 casualties, while an additional 12,000 men had come down with malaria. Nine months later, the division had gone through hell at Tarawa, where it had lost 3,200 men, including nearly 1,000 dead. A third island invasion—at Saipan in June and July 1944—ended in victory but also with another 1,300 Marines killed and 5,000 wounded. About 29,000 Japanese troops died.

The 4th Marine Division was relatively new but had been blooded at Roi-Namur in the Marshall Islands in January and February 1944, where it suffered moderate casualties—fewer than 800 men. During the Battle of Saipan, it lost 6,000, including about 1,000 dead. The Tinian landing would be its third in a little over six months and would be the first under a new divisional commander—Maj. Gen. Cates.

The 4th Division's battalions were seriously understrength; they had been depleted at Saipan, and their average strength was now down from 880 men to just 565 men—a drop of more than 35 percent.

Writing in the official history of the battle, Major Carl W. Hoffman noted, "The morale of the troops committed to the Tinian operation was generally high. This fact takes on significance only when it is recalled that the Marines involved had just survived a bitter 25-day struggle and that, with only a fortnight lapse (as distinguished from a fortnight rest), they were again to assault enemy-held shores…. [Their] spirit … was revealed more in a philosophical shrug, accompanied with a 'here-we-go-again' remark, than in a resentful complaint [at] being called upon again so soon."

Admiral Turner said he wanted the Marines to secure the island in two weeks. Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt, who relieved Lt. Gen. Holland Smith as V Amphibious Corps commander, said he would get it done within 10 days. It would actually take only nine.

To lessen the anxiety of the Marines going ashore and to confuse the Japanese as to the actual location of the landings, Rear Admiral Hill divided the island into five fire support sectors and ordered a heavy naval bombardment for each one.

Tinian Town was hit the hardest. Doing the damage were the battleships *California, Tennessee* (both damaged at Pearl Harbor), and *Colorado,* along with the cruisers *Cleveland* and *Louisville* and seven destroyers. The *Colorado*'s 16-inch guns knocked out two 6-inch coastal defense guns at Faibus San Hilo Point that could have disrupted the landing on White 1 and 2 Beaches. The Japanese fired back, hitting the *Colorado* 22 times and killing 43 sailors and wounding 198. The Tennessee came in later to finish off the coastal defenses.

Naval barrages were suspended three times on J-day (Jig being the equivalent of D-day for the Tinian operation) to allow American air power to pound roads, railroad junctions, pillboxes, gun emplacements, and the beaches at Tinian Town. More than 350 Navy and Army planes took part, dropping 500 bombs, 200 rockets, 42 incendiary clusters, and 34 napalm bombs.

After the softening up had ended, the 4th Marine Division transferred to 37 LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) at anchor off Saipan. They were issued rations for three days, water, medical supplies, and ammunition; vehicles and other equipment had been preloaded, beginning on July 15. As one historian wrote, "The troops were going to travel light: a spoon, a pair of socks, insect repellant, and emergency supplies in their pockets, and no pack on their backs."

On Jig Day—July 24—the 4th Marine Division, designated the assault division, headed for Tinian. Because the beaches were not wide enough to accommodate battalions landing abreast, the assault troops would land by columns—squads, platoons, and companies.

Two regiments of Maj. Gen. Thomas E. ("Terrible Tommy") Watson's 2nd Marine

Division made a diversionary feint against Tinian Town, hoping to tie down Japanese forces there, before it made the actual landing, along with the third regiment, on the lightly defended northwestern beaches.

The feint, made by Marines in 22 LCVPs (Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel) served to freeze in place around Tinian Town a whole battalion of the Japanese 50th Infantry Regiment and various elements of the 56th Naval Guard Force. The Japanese commander, Colonel Kiyochi Ogata, was convinced that he had repelled an invasion, and he sent a message to Tokyo that his forces had turned back 100 landing barges.

While he was bragging about his accomplishment, however, the 24th Marine Regiment was hitting White Beach 1 in two dozen LVTs (Landing Vehicle, Tracked—sometimes called "amtracs" or "alligators"), while the 25th Marine Regiment was coming ashore at White Beach 2. By 8:20 AM, the 24th's entire 2nd Battalion was ashore. On the 26-minute run-in to the beaches, the troop-laden LVTs took scattered and ineffectual rifle and machine-gun fire while support craft saturated the beaches with rockets and cannon fire.

At White Beach 1, the first wave of 24th Marines to land was taken under fire by a small detachment of defenders holed up in caves and crevices, but these enemy troops were quickly silenced. Within an hour, the entire 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 24th were ashore on White 1 and were preparing to move inland. Although sporadic artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire hit the 2nd Battalion, it did not stop the advance, and the unit reached the western edge of Airfield No. 3 and cut the main road linking Airfield No. 1 with the east coast and southern Tinian by 4 PM.

On the left of the 2nd Battalion, the 1st Battalion ran into heavier resistance, with defenders firing from caves. Flame-throwing tanks were called up, but the stubborn Japanese refused to yield. To fill a gap that developed between the 1st and 2nd Battalions, the 24th's 3rd Battalion, in reserve at the beach, was brought up.

At White Beach 2, the 25th Marine Regiment landed in the midst of a thick minefield that had gone undetected; three LVTs and a jeep were blown up. It took six hours to neutralize the mines. The defenders had also cleverly booby-trapped cases of beer and other "souvenirs" with explosives that killed or maimed unwary Marines.

As they pushed farther inland, the Marines also encountered 50th Regiment troops—well entrenched in caves, pillboxes, and ravines—who fought back with machine guns, mortars, and antitank and antiboat guns. The Marines decided to bypass them and leave them for later waves to eliminate. Harassing fire was also coming from Japanese artillery on Mount Lasso, two-and-a-half miles away, where Ogata had his headquarters.

The 3d Battalion/25th Marines' commander, Lt. Col. Justice M. "Jumping Joe" Chambers, recalled considerable confusion on the beach, "the confusion you [always] get when you land, of getting the organization together again."

By sundown, the two regiments had formed a crescent-shaped beachhead 3,000 yards wide at the shoreline and bulging inland 1,500 yards, digging in to see what the enemy would throw at them during the night.

The 23rd Marine Regiment, in 4th Divi-

THE JAPANESE WERE NOT KNOWN FOR GIVING UP EVEN WHEN FACED WITH IMPOSSIBLE ODDS. THE AMERICAN COMMANDERS KNEW THEY WERE IN FOR A FIGHT.

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sion reserve, had the hardest time on Jig Day, but not from the enemy. After being held for most of the day on LSTs, they were finally ordered to climb into landing craft and head for shore, landing at 2 PM. The regimental commander, Colonel Louis R. Jones, ran into serious communication problems and found himself out of contact with his division and his battalions for hours. To compound his problems, the engine of the LVT in which he was riding malfunctioned, and it took him and his staff seven hours to get ashore.

Otherwise, the operation had gone off relatively smoothly. More than 15,000 Marines were ashore plus four battalions of artillery, two dozen half-tracks mounting 75mm guns, 48 medium Sherman tanks, and 15 flame-throwing tanks. Although some battalions had failed to reach their first-day objectives, the beachhead extended nearly a mile inland. Marine casualties had been light—15 dead, 225 wounded—while the Japanese had lost 438. On the whole, as one historian put it, "It had not been a bad day's work."

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An underwater mine has flipped this LVT and killed the Marines inside.

Occupying the northern half of the defensive crescent were the 24th Marines, backed up by the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. The 25th and a battalion of the 23nd occupied the southern half, with the remainder of the 23rd in reserve. On the beaches in the rear, artillery battalions from the 10th and 14th Marines, engineer battalions, and other special troops were on alert.

And alert they needed to be. The Japanese were not known for giving up even when faced with impossible odds. The American commanders knew they were in for a fight. And it would begin after dark at the end of Jig Day.

True to form, the Japanese were preparing to strike back. Because the American bombardment had destroyed his ability to communicate with his units, Colonel Ogata counted on each unit on Tinian to be responsible for its own counterattack. In case of such an American landing, he had given an order the previous month to "destroy the enemy on the beaches with one blow, especially where time prevents quick movement of forces within the island."

Outnumbered, and without hope of reinforcement or evacuation, Ogata's forces probably knew they were doomed. But they vowed that they would give a good account of themselves before they were killed. The Emperor would be proud of them.

The counterattack began at 10:30 PM when the Japanese Mobile Counterattack Force, a 900-man battalion of the 135th Infantry Regiment equipped with rifles and demolition charges, began probing the center of the Marine line where the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 24th Marines were dug in.

When the presence of the advance elements was detected, the Marines called in the artillery. Lt. Col. Chambers, the 3rd Battalion/25th Marines' commander, later wrote, "There was a big gully that ran from the southeast to northwest and right into the western edge of our area. Anybody in their right mind could have figured that if there was to be any counterattack, that gully would be used.

"During the night … my men were reporting that they were hearing a lot of Japanese chattering down in the gully…. They hit us about midnight in K Company's area. They hauled by hand a couple of 75mm howitzers with them and when they got them up to where they could fire at us, they hit us very hard. I think K Company did a pretty damn good job but … about 150-200 Japs managed to push through [the 1,500 yards] to the beach area….

"When the Japs hit the rear areas, all the artillery and machine guns started shooting like hell. Their fire was coming from the rear and grazing right up over our heads…. In the meantime, the enemy that hit L Company was putting up a hell of a fight within 75 yards of where I was and there wasn't a damn thing I could do about it."

Chambers continued, "Over in K Company's area was where the attack really developed. That's where [Lieutenant] Mickey McGuire had his 37mm guns on the left flank and was firing canister [antipersonnel shells filled with large pellets for close-in fighting]. Two of my men [Corporal Alfred J. Daigle and Pfc. Orville H. Showers] were manning a machine gun…. These two lads laid out in front of their machine gun a cone of Jap bodies. There was a dead Jap officer in with them. Both of the boys were dead."

In describing this action, a Marine combat correspondent wrote, "[Showers and Daigle] held their fire until the Japanese were 100 yards away, then opened up. The Japanese charged, screaming, 'Banzai,' firing light machine guns and throwing hand grenades. It seemed impossible that the two Marines—far ahead of their own lines—

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ABOVE: The barrel of a 6-inch Japanese artillery piece protrudes from its emplacement on Tinian. The guns of the battery inflicted damage on the battleship USS *Colorado* and the destroyer *Norman Scott* during the landings. BELOW: Marine Corps vehicles come ashore at White Beach, July 24, 1944. The large scoops on the Sherman tank named "Corsair" are deep wading air intake and exhaust stacks.

could hold on…. The next morning they were found slumped over their weapons, dead. No less than 251 Japanese bodies were piled in front of them." The Navy Cross was awarded posthumously to Daigle and the Silver Star posthumously to Showers.

Just before daybreak, two tank companies, commanded by Major Robert I. Neiman, showed up, itching for a fight; Lt. Col. Chambers sent them off to an area held by Companies K and L. Neiman returned a half hour later and said, "You don't need tanks. You need undertakers. I never saw so many dead Japs."

The 75mm pack howitzer gunners of Battery D, 14th Marines also did their part to break up the enemy attacks, and the .50-caliber machine guns of Batteries E and F "literally tore the Japanese … to pieces," according to one report. Altogether, about 600 Japanese were killed in their attack on the center of the Marine line.

On the left flank about 600 Special Naval Landing Force troops from the Ushi Point airfields attacked the 1st Battalion, 24th Marines at 2 AM. Company A was hit so hard that it had only 30 men still capable of fighting and was forced to draw reinforcements from engineers, corpsmen, communicators, and members of the shore party. Illumination flares lit up the battlefield, allowing the Marines to mow down the attackers with 37mm canister shells, machine guns, rifles, and mortars.

Still, the fight went on until, at dawn, Shermans from the 4th Tank Battalion arrived to sweep the enemy from the field. At dawn, 476 Japanese bodies were found sprawled, most of them in front of Company A's position. Realizing their cause was lost, many Japanese began using their grenades to commit suicide.

The Japanese had only 12 tanks on Tinian, and they used half that force in an attack beginning at 3:30 AM on the 25th. Trying to dislodge the 23rd Marines north of Tinian Town, they rolled into a storm of lead and steel from massed Marine artillery, antitank guns, bazookas, machine guns, and rifles and were turned into smoldering junk.

A reporter recounted, "The three lead tanks broke through our wall of fire. One began to glow blood-red, turned crazily on its tracks, and careened into a ditch. A second, mortally wounded, turned its machine guns on its tormentors, firing into the ditches in a last desperate effort to fight its way free. One hundred yards more and it stopped dead in its tracks. The third tried frantically to turn and then retreat, but our men closed in, literally blasting it apart….

"Bazookas knocked out a fourth tank with a direct hit which killed the driver. The rest of the crew piled out of the turret screaming. The fifth tank, completely sur-

rounded, attempted to flee. Bazookas made short work of it. Another hit set it afire and its crew was cremated." The sixth tank was able to flee the scene.

Although their tank support was gone, elements of the 50th Regiment continued to attack the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines, but were torn to pieces by 37mm antitank guns using canister shot. Still, the battle raged on, with small groups continuing to desperately throw themselves against Marine positions without success.

When dawn broke on July 25, a total of 1,241 Japanese bodies carpeted the battlefield, and it is believed that hundreds more were carried away by their comrades; fewer than 100 Marines were wounded or killed. Although it was only the second day since the landings, the Japanese defense was essentially broken. Without communications, Colonel Ogata had lost control of his forces—and, hence, the battle. Now it was just a matter of time before Tinian was secured. Scattered pockets of resistance, however, would still have to be overcome.

A Marine historian wrote, "Now and again during the next seven days, small groups took advantage of the darkness to [launch night attacks], but for the most part they simply withdrew in no particular order until there remained nowhere to withdraw."

From White Beaches 1 and 2, the two Marine divisions pressed steadily southward, crushing enemy positions, pushing the Japanese before them, and standing fast whenever a group of Ogata's men launched a suicidal banzai attack or tried to infiltrate Marine positions in the dark.

The 4th Division's intelligence officer, Lt. Col. Gooderham McCormick, said his division still expected a massive, coordinated counterattack: "We still believed the enemy capable of a harder fight … and from day to day during our advance expected a bitter fight that never materialized."

Lieutenant Colonel William W. Buchanan was the assistant naval gunfire officer for the 4th Division at Tinian. He recalled, "We used the same tactics on Tinian that we did on Saipan: that is, a hand-holding, linear operation, like a bunch of

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Japanese troops who made a banzai charge against Marine positions lie dead in a sugar cane field. Only about 400 of the island's 9,000 defenders survived the battle.

brush-beaters, people shooting grouse or something, the idea being to flush out every man consistently as we go down, rather than driving down the main road…. But this was the easiest thing and the safest thing to do. And who can criticize it? It was successful. Here, again, what little resistance was left was pushed into the end of the island … and quickly collapsed."

The "brush beating" or "grouse hunting" was anything but easy. The oppressive heat and humidity and drenching monsoon rains exhausted the Marines, and there was the ever-present danger of mines, booby traps, a sniper in a tree, or a sudden ambush from out of the jungle.

To assist the 4th Division in the mopping-up operation, Maj. Gen. Watson's 2nd Marine Division moved in. On July 26, the 2nd captured the Ushi Point airfields in the north then turned south. Two days later the Seabees had the Ushi Point fields in operation for Army P-47 Thunderbolt fighters. Also on the 26th, the 4th Division climbed Mount Maga in the center of the island and forced Colonel Ogata and his staff to abandon their command post on Mount Lasso, which fell to the Marines with barely a shot being fired.

With the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions in a skirmish line of divisions abreast from one side of the island to the other, the sweep southward began on July 27. Little resistance was encountered, and casualties were light. The next day the Gurguan Point airfield fell to the advancing Marines' 4th Tank Battalion.

After the battle, Maj. Gen. Cates was asked how he spurred on his 4th Division troops. He said he told them, "Now, look here men, the [Hawaiian] island of Maui is waiting for us. See those ships out there? The quicker you get this over with, the quicker we'll be back there.' They almost ran over that island."

The southward drive was picking up steam. In fact, the usual preparatory artillery barrages fired from guns on Saipan were canceled to save the diminishing stocks of ammunition. It was pointless to waste ammunition on areas that had been abandoned by the enemy.

By nightfall on the 29th, the Marines controlled the northern half of the island. As the 4th Marine Division closed in on Tinian Town, more determined pockets of resistance were encountered, and torrential rain came down in sheets. Japanese mortars and artillery also rained down, accompanied by an enemy ground probe against the 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines; it was beaten back.

The next day, Colonel Franklin A. Hart's 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division was given the task of taking Tinian Town. They were assisted by the division's

artillery battalions plus the offshore fire of cruisers and destroyers. When the supporting fires lifted, the 24th's 1st Battalion moved out, only to be hit by heavy fire coming from caves along the town's north coast. This was quickly squelched by flame-throwing tanks. Engineers then sealed the mouths of the caves with explosives.

Tinian Town was mostly a rubble-filled ghost town by the time the 24th Marine Regiment entered it shortly after 2 PM on the 30th. About this same time, the 25th Marines, after swatting away some pesky small-arms fire, were busy seizing Airfield Number 4 on the town's eastern edge; a lone Zero fighter was found parked on the crushed coral airstrip. That night the 24th Marines were relieved by units of the 23rd Marines and the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines.

To the east, the 2nd Marine Division was making good progress until it ran into some opposition. This was soon overcome when elements of the division chased an enemy force into a large cave where, with the help of a flame-throwing tank, 89 Japanese died and four machine guns were destroyed. By 6:30 PM, the 2nd Marines had achieved their day's objectives and buttoned up for the night. About 80 percent of the island was now in American hands. It was time for the final push.

Major General Schmidt, commander of the Marine force on Tinian, issued an order late on the afternoon of July 30 calling on the two divisions to drive all the way to the southeast coastline, seize all territory remaining in enemy hands, and "annihilate the opposing Japanese." It was an order easier to give than execute. Waiting in caves and on rugged terrain of cliffs and a plateau were about 500 troops of the 56th Naval Guard Force and up to 1,800 troops of the 50th Infantry Regiment in the southeastern corner of the island. They were ready and willing to die for their emperor in their last redoubt.

To soften up the enemy before the assault, the Marines called upon all their artillery on the island, plus the XXIV Corps Artillery on southern Saipan, to bombard the enemy positions throughout the night of July 30-31. The next morning, the battleships *Tennessee* and *California* and the cruisers *Louisville, Montpelier,* and *Birmingham* added their voices for a 75-minute bombardment, pausing long enough to allow a 40-minute strike on the enemy's positions by 126 P-47s, B-25 bombers, and carrier-based TBF Avenger torpedo bombers.

A Marine historian noted, "The planes dropped 69 tons of explosives before the offshore gunfire resumed for another 35 minutes. All told, the battleships and cruisers fired approximately 615 tons of shells at their targets. Artillerymen of the 10th Marines fired about 5,000 rounds during the night; 14th Marines gunners fired 2,000. The effect, one prisoner said, was 'almost unbearable.'"

The Japanese defensive position was almost ideal. As Marines tried to scale the cliffs and steep slopes of the plateau, they were met by concentrated small-arms and mortar fire. Tanks had trouble negotiating the thick vegetation and minefields and could not climb the trackless slopes. To suppress enemy fire along the beach, the guns of armored amphibians patrolling the coastline were brought into play. At about 10 AM, a platoon-sized Japanese beach unit launched a suicidal counterattack against the 1st Battalion, 24th Marines and was annihilated.

The 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines also ran into stubborn opposition, including a hidden, high-caliber weapon that forced them to ground. Sherman tanks were brought up and quickly dispatched the weapon. A

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ABOVE: Major General Thomas E. Watson (left), CG of the 2nd Marine Division, and Maj. Gen. Clifton B. Cates (second from left), commanding the 4th Marine Division, examine operations maps and discuss strategy on Tinian. LEFT: Marine mortar crews stack ammunition in preparation for firing a barrage on Tinian, July 30, 1944.

National Archives

well-camouflaged concrete bunker was also discovered, and the 20 troops inside were all killed.

In another section of the battlefield, the Japanese seized a disabled Sherman and used it as an armored machine-gun nest until another American tank destroyed it.

Late in the afternoon, the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines and a company from the 2nd Battalion finally managed to reach the top of the plateau as other battalions surrounded the base and began scaling the sides. The 1st Battalion, 8th Marines made it to the top by late afternoon, followed by elements of the 2nd Battalion. There they stayed for the night.

Captain Carl W. Hoffman, a company commander, recalled his experiences on top of the plateau the night of July 31: "By the time we got up there … there wasn't enough daylight left to get ourselves properly barbed-wired in, to get our fields of fire established, to site our interlocking bands of machine gun fire—all the things that should be done in preparing a good defense.

"By dusk, the enemy commenced a series of probing attacks. Some Japanese intruded into our positions. It was a completely black night. So, with Japanese moving around in our positions, our troops became very edgy and were challenging everybody in sight. We didn't have any unfortunate incidents of Marines firing on Marines … [because they] were well-seasoned by this point….

"As the night wore on, the intensity of enemy attacks started to build and build and build. They finally launched a full-scale banzai attack against [our] battalion…. The strange thing the Japanese did here was that they executed one wave of attack after another against a 37mm position firing canister ammunition….

"That gun just stacked up dead Japanese…. As soon as one Marine gunner would drop, another would take his place. Soon we were nearly shoulder-high with dead Japanese in front of that weapon…. By morning we had defeated the enemy. Around us were lots of dead ones, hundreds of them as a matter of fact."

KEEPING HIS PROMISE TO HIS MEN, MAJ. GEN. CATES' **ENTIRE 4TH MARINE DIVISION SAILED ON AUGUST 14 TO ITS** BASE CAMP ON MAUI. DURING THE TINIAN OPERATION, IT HAD **SUFFERED MORE THAN 1,100 CASUALTIES, INCLUDING** 212 KILLED; ITS NEXT ASSIGNMENT WOULD BE IWO JIMA.

National Archives

Captain Hoffman was a trumpet player and had carried his horn with him throughout the Pacific War. When the fighting died down on top of the plateau, he took the instrument out and began playing some tunes to soothe everyone's nerves. "My Marines were shouting in requests: 'Oh, You Beautiful Doll' and 'Pretty Baby' and others.

"While I was playing these tunes, all of a sudden we heard this scream of 'Banzai!' An individual Japanese soldier was charging right toward me and right toward the barbed wire. The Marines had their weapons ready and he must have been hit from 14 different directions at once. He didn't get to throw [his] grenade…. I've always cited him as the individual who didn't like my music. He was no supporter of my trumpet playing. But … I even continued my little concert after we had accounted for him."

For the next two days, the Japanese continued to mount attacks against the Marines, and although they managed to inflict some casualties, they were slaughtered en masse in the effort. At 6:55 PM on August 1 (the day Ogata committed suicide), General Schmidt declared Tinian "secured," but a few of the Japanese holdouts didn't get the word. For the next few months, isolated pockets of the enemy continued to charge the American lines or refused to come out of their hiding places. In fact, the last holdout on Tinian, Murata Susumu, was not discovered until 1953. He was not a soldier but a Japanese civilian working for NKK, the largest sugar company in the Marianas.

It wasn't only the Japanese who were hiding in caves. As many as 10,000 of the island's civilians had also sought shelter in them to avoid the fighting and were now beginning to emerge, uncertain of what would happen to them. It is estimated that about 4,000 civilians had been killed in the battle for Tinian.

On nearby Saipan, Marines had watched in helpless horror as civilians, fearful that the Marines would torture and kill them, threw themselves off cliffs. Fortunately, such mass suicides were rare on Tinian, but some civilians were accidently shot dead when they wandered into Marine lines at night. The remaining Japanese also attached explosive charges to groups of civilians and forced them to run at the Americans. Japanese soldiers also pushed some civilians off cliffs.

Keeping his promise to his men, Maj. Gen. Cates' entire 4th Marine Division sailed on August 14 to its base camp on Maui. During the Tinian operation, it had suffered more than 1,100 casualties, including 212 killed; its next assignment would be Iwo Jima. The 2nd Marine Division, which counted 105 killed and 655 wounded, would remain in the Marianas until the war's end. It is estimated that virtually all of the 9,000 Japanese soldiers who had defended Tinian were killed, with fewer than 400 being taken prisoner.

Thanks to the work of the Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion, 42,000 men and their equipment had been landed across the narrow White Beaches in what Admiral Spruance declared was "the most brilliantly conceived and executed amphibious operation in World War II." Smith echoed that sentiment, calling it, "the perfect amphibious operation."

With the capture of Tinian, the Marianas provided the bases the Army Air Forces needed for the bombing of Japan. As a historian wrote, "They were located 1,200 nautical miles from the home islands of Japan—a distance ideal for the B-29 with its range of 2,800 miles. Tinian became the home for two wings of the Twentieth Air Force. Three months after the conquest of Tinian, B-29s were hitting the Japanese mainland. Over the next year, according to numbers supplied by the Air Force … B-29s flew 29,000 missions out of the Marianas, dropped 157,000 tons of explosives which, by Japanese estimates, killed 260,000 people, left 9,200,000 homeless, and demolished or burned 2,210,000 homes.

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ABOVE: A Marine gently rescues a small girl from the debris of a shelter in which she and her father had been hiding for weeks, circa August 1944. OPPOSITE: Marines cautiously advance toward Tinian Town during the last phase of the operation, August 1, 1944.

"Tinian's place in the history of warfare was insured by the flight of *Enola Gay* on 6 August 1945. It dropped a nuclear weapon on Hiroshima. Two days later a second nuclear weapon was dropped on Nagasaki. The next day, the Japanese government surrendered."

In his official history of the 2nd Marine Division, Richard W. Johnston records the reaction when news of the surrender reached the division: "They looked at Tinian's clean and rocky coast, at the coral boulders where they had gone ashore, and they thought of the forbidding coasts of Japan—the coasts that awaited them in the fall. 'That Tinian was a pretty good investment, I guess,' one Marine finally said." □

THE FEW, THE PROUD,

Faced with racial discrimination at home and in the Corps, African American Marines proved themselves at Iwo Jima and elsewhere.

BY STEPHEN D. LUTZ

Prior to the summer of 1941, the United States Marine Corps did not want them. The Navy barely tolerated them in restricted capacities as cooks, waiters, servants for officers, and dockside stevedores. The Army, too, thought they were only good enough to tackle menial duties and perform manual labor.

On June 25, 1941, after black labor activist A. Philip Randolph threatened to embarrass President Franklin D. Roosevelt with a massive march on Washington to protest the military's policy of racial segregation, America's commander-in-chief (with his wife's urging), signed Executive Order #8802 mandating that all services accept qualified African American enlistees-draftees. For the first time in 167 years, the U.S. Marine Corps would be receiving black Americans.

In 1936, 57-year-old, four-star general Thomas Holcomb became the Corps' 17th commandant, beginning his seven-year reign over all things Marine Corps. Like most white officers, Holcomb rigidly insisted that blacks had no place in his Corps as they tried to "break into a club that doesn't want them." As the Corps frowned upon the U.S. Army as an inferior, poorly trained, lesser-motivated service (but one that was accepting black draftees and enlistees in segregated units), Holcomb declared, "The Negro race has every opportunity now to satisfy its aspirations for combat in the Army."

With the Corps responding as an offshoot to Navy authority, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox agreed. Attempting to integrate African Americans became an overwhelming challenge for the Marine Corps' Division of Plans and Policies as part of its Personnel Services branch. In charge of those affairs was a University of Southern California graduate, Colonel Ray Albert Robinson, a resident of Los Angeles, California.

Considering his background, Robinson had little acquaintance with Jim Crow laws that had dominated America's southern states since Reconstruction. He had to follow the traditions of his era when Jim Crow spoke aloud with timeworn prejudices. Robinson said, "It [integration] just scared us to death; we've never had any [black recruits]. We didn't know how to handle them. We were afraid of them."

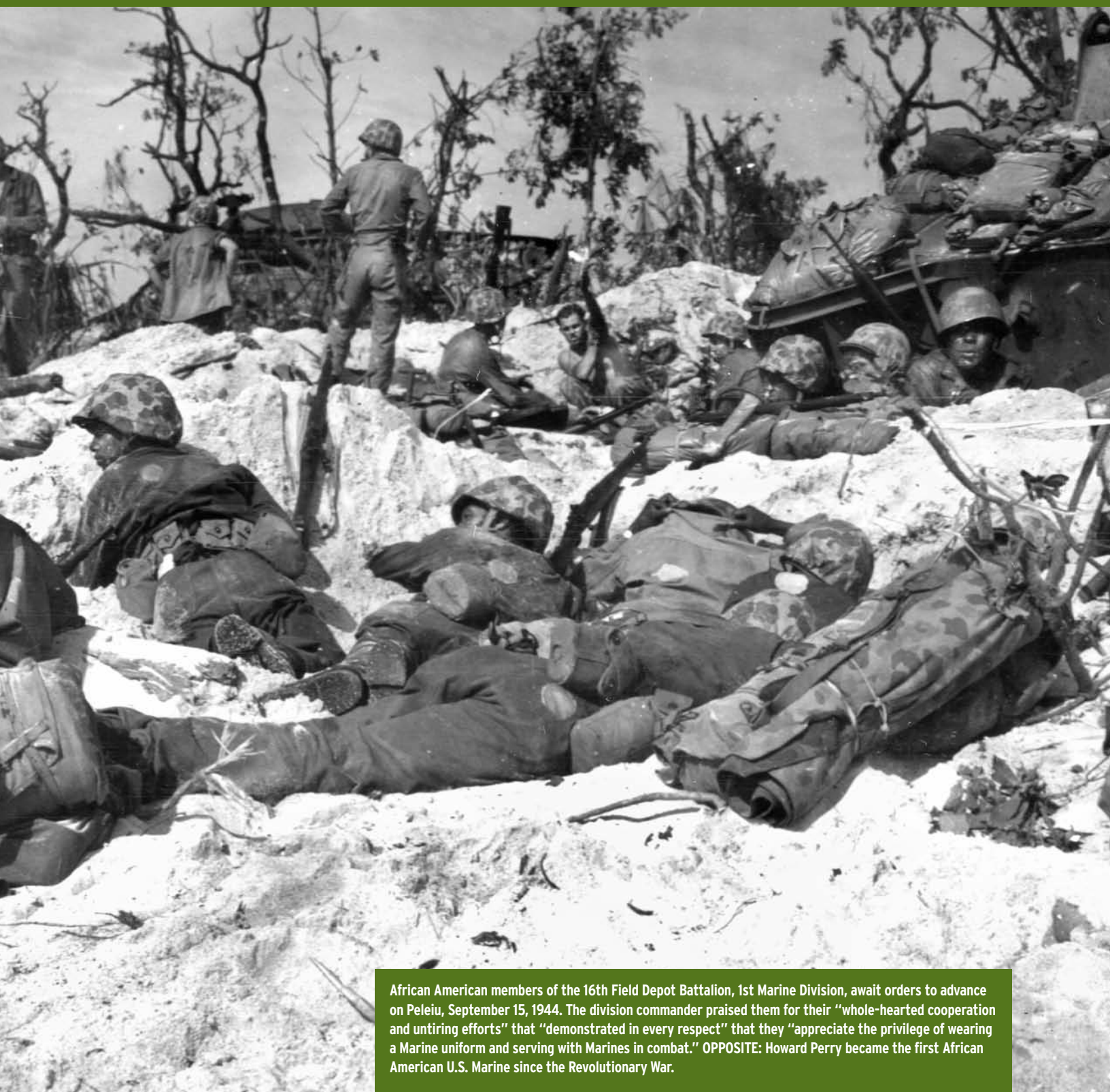
The bottom line from Robinson was, "Eleanor [Roosevelt] says we gotta take in Negroes." Succumbing to pressure from on high, Holcomb made his own preparations for their admittance with his March 1943 "Letter of Instructions #421," in which he made it clear no African American Marine would ever become an officer, nor would any black Marine outrank any white Marine.

If a black buck-sergeant came upon a white private first class, that private would not have to do a thing that sergeant told him. African American noncommissioned officers could only direct African American Marines, and black Marines had to follow all orders of any NCO outranking them.

One Marine senior commander had his own viewpoint on these racial issues as the Pacific

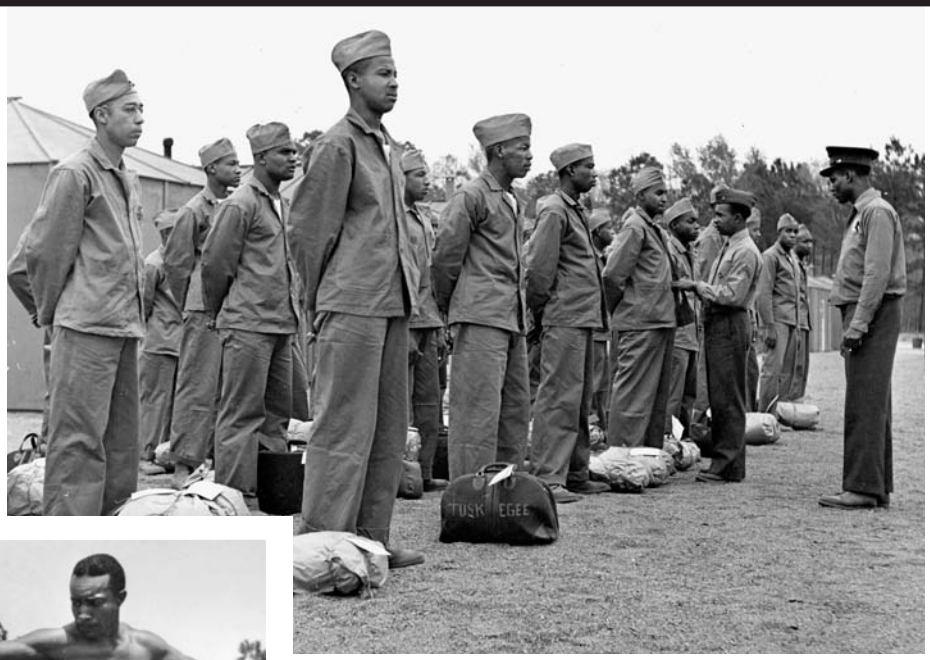
Both: National Archives

THE BLACK MARINES



African American members of the 16th Field Depot Battalion, 1st Marine Division, await orders to advance on Peleiu, September 15, 1944. The division commander praised them for their "whole-hearted cooperation and untiring efforts" that "demonstrated in every respect" that they "appreciate the privilege of wearing a Marine uniform and serving with Marines in combat." OPPOSITE: Howard Perry became the first African American U.S. Marine since the Revolutionary War.

Both: National Archives



ABOVE: New recruits form ranks for inspection at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. They would be kept separate from white Marines and would not be given advanced infantry training. LEFT: Excluded from combat training, Arvin L. "Tony" Ghazlo uses his jiu jitsu skills to show a fellow member of the 51st Defense Battalion, the Corps' first black unit, how to disarm a rifleman with a bayonet. OPPOSITE: Three black recruits leap over an obstacle during training at Montford Point, part of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. They were kept segregated from white Marines.

War widened. Maj. Gen. Charles Fredrick Berthold Price graduated from Pennsylvania Military College and became a Marine in 1906. When notified that an African American unit was bound for his area, Price flat out refused to accept it. In spite of that, in October 1943, a ship carrying two African American ammunition companies pulled into port. Price refused to allow them to disembark, keeping them aboard ship for two days before sending them away. Price's prejudices raised the legitimate question: Who would fight and perhaps die in a war for a country under those conditions?

But the wheels of at least partial integration had been set in motion.

With war on the horizon, in September 1941 the government began constructing a new training facility for an expected increase in Marine recruits; it would be another year before Marine Barracks, New River, North Carolina, would become known as Camp Lejeune (named for the World War I Lt. Gen. John A. Lejeune, the Corps' 13th commandant).

Camp Lejeune became the home for the Corps' future 10,000 African American recruits. Although at least a dozen black Marines had served with the Marines during the Revolutionary War, the Corps went lily white from 1798 until August 26, 1942, when Howard P. Perry of Charlotte, North Carolina, appeared at Camp Lejeune's gates, quickly followed by 12 others. (The Marines in World War II did accept some Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans—the "Code Talkers.")

As more African American Marine recruits arrived and climbed down from trains and buses, much of the site was still a construction zone, in the process of expanding from its original 110,000 acres of land to today's 244 square miles.

Instead of proper barracks, though, the original group of future black Marines found tents, then shanties—virtually so cheap that many said the building material must have been prefabricated cardboard; some men found it easy to poke bayonets through the walls. Eventually, corrugated steel Quonset huts came; more brick-and-concrete buildings followed.

At the north-central point of the camp sat a spit of land jutting out into Stones Bay that was surrounded by water on three sides. This five-square-mile peninsula became known as Camp Montford (today's Camp Johnson).

At the time, it was more swamp and marsh than dry soil and was inhabited by venomous and nonvenomous snakes, as well as panthers, alligators, and any other swamp creature that could survive such an environment.

In the six months after Pearl Harbor, African American recruits came into military service as high school graduates and as high school dropouts. Some came as college graduates and others as college dropouts. Some had exposure to ROTC training, while others had gone no farther than the Boy Scouts. A vast number were skilled tradesmen—carpenters, electricians, plumbers, professionals, shop owners, etc. One had a civilian pilot license.

Just as many were illiterate, unemployed, and looking for a steady paying job. Some joined for the attraction of the Marine Corps' fancy dress blue uniform, while others claimed it was the patriotic thing to do in wartime. A few followed in their fathers' or grandfathers' footsteps who were veterans of the Spanish-American War or World War I. Some, no doubt, believed that they would be better treated after they returned to civilian life if they could claim the title of having been a United States Marine.

On the whole, their birth years ranged from 1923-1925. The youngest enlistee, at age 16, passed himself off as 18. Some came as prior-service Army or Navy. Those who came from north of the Mason-Dixon Line knew about the segregated South and had themselves been discriminated against but had not experienced the full force of "Jim Crow

laws." Those from the South knew exactly what those laws meant: discrimination, isolation, belittlement, harassment, humiliation—and sometimes death.

Many African Americans shared their stories after the war. When Herman Darden, Jr., walked into a Marine recruiting station in Washington, D.C., it took the recruiting sergeant nearly 10 minutes to look up and acknowledge his presence; it was intentionally done.

Recruit Obie Hall started his Marine career from Boston north of that invisible but very real wall of segregation: the Mason-Dixon Line. His free train ride included a sleeping berth—until he reached Washington, D.C. There an African American conductor evicted him from that car's comfort, insisting that Hall join the rear car(s) that were restricted to Negroes—cars that were more congested and less accommodating. (Hall encountered a more compassionate conductor who found him an open berth.)

A year later, John R. Griffin started out from Chicago with the same comforts Hall had. Once crossing the invisible line, though, he lost his berth and wouldn't get it back.

Another recruit came out of New Jersey where he was one of three African Americans in a well-integrated high school; he knew nothing of Jim Crow. Upon crossing that line, he found a drinking fountain labeled "Colored." He stood there turning the water on and off, waiting to see what colors would come out. Eventually, a sergeant explained the realities of life in the segregated South. Wherever they originated, the first 600 black recruits reached Marine Barracks, New River, North Carolina, during the summer of 1942.

National Archives

Camp Montford was 12 to 14 miles from the pristine beaches of the main base, where the Corps practiced beach-landing assaults. When not engaged in that activity, white Marines found ample opportunities to lounge about the sunny beaches as if on vacation. Those African Americans assigned to Camp Montford, however, were restricted from the beaches for anything other than official training exercises. In effect, for recreational purposes those beaches became "Whites Only."

One exceptional missing factor was medical services. Going into World War II, the standing rule was established by Jim Crow—and then upheld by all military authorities—that only black medics, nurses, and doctors could treat/attend to black military personnel, while only white medics, nurses, and doctors could treat/attend to white patients. It would be months before the Navy even started accepting African Americans into corpsman classes.

It was discovered that many succeeded in passing their induction physicals while infested with hookworms, venereal disease, and other lingering ailments that intensified at Camp Montford. Without proper medical inspections, health and welfare conditions surrounding sanitation of food services, latrines, showers, and living quarters became a petri dish of staphylococcus and salmonella. Changes took place after July 20, 1943, when the Navy finally started training African Americans as corpsmen.

As growing numbers of black recruits began their 180 days of basic and advanced training, there were things the Corps did not tell them. Regardless of how their ranks swelled, in the end there would be no all-black combat units, and no African American Marines were assigned to white combat units. The Corps deliberately found—even created—special jobs/positions/units intended to keep African Americans out of combat.

The theory was that blacks, as a whole, were cowards and were intellectually inferior to whites and that, if faced with the reality of combat, they would fail in their duties. The theory also meant that the Corps would not have to invest heavily in their advanced infantry combat training. The black troops would get the basics, of course, but the advanced individual training would be minimized, allowing only white Marines to push forward and carry the burden of the war effort—and accrue the glory and medals that were their birthright.

Being an unknown factor, these black recruits were forced to enhance their experiences themselves. For those assigned to the 51st Defense Battalion, the Corps' first black unit, they supplemented their training on their own. Arvin L. "Tony" Ghazlo imparted his acquired jiu jitsu skills; another black Marine, Ernest Jones, taught his comrades his mastery of judo. Those with higher educational skills tutored comrades struggling to read and comprehend training manuals.

The Corps did everything it could think of to keep weapons out of the hands of African American Marines and away from the fighting. This extended to defense battalions defending naval bases and airfields with 155mm cannons for long-range targets off shore, 90mm, 40mm and 20mm guns for antiaircraft artillery, then a wide array of small arms and machine guns.

At the war's beginning, the Corps had 18 Defense Battalions designated 1st through

National Archives

18th, but it was decided that two more were needed; they were designated the 51st and 52nd Defense Battalions on August 18, 1942, and December 15, 1943, respectively, and were staffed by black Marines led by white officers.

Although deployed to the Pacific, neither would ever see combat. The two battalions spent the war sitting on the captured islands/atolls of the Ellice Islands in the Gilberts, Funafuti-Nukufetau, Nanomea, Eniwetok, Majuro, Roi, and Kwajalein. Each battalion had only a single alert: the 51st of a suspected enemy submarine and the 52nd of in-bound airplanes. Both warnings proved false. Both battalions came home after the war without ever firing a shot against the enemy.

As the Pacific War expanded, another need came to light. As one island was approached, battled over, then claimed, that entire process demanded an unending flow of supplies. Handling those supplies—loading ships at the docks and offloading them where the supplies were needed—became an inefficient affair, for combat battalions would have to be pulled off the front lines and rotated to the rear to perform the task. The black Marines seemed to be an ideal source of cheap labor for just such a purpose, and thousands of them were assigned as stevedores to load and unload ships on docks in the United States and the Pacific.

A job as easy as that, the Corps figured, could be taught within three or four weeks. Over time, 49 Marine depot companies would be formed, sequenced 1st through 49th Depot Companies. Each company was comprised of 150-170 black Marines.

Although such supply activities were essential for the war effort, the fact that they were used as little more than beasts of burden rankled many black Marines. They had joined to fight a war, not haul crates or drive forklifts.

A glitch arose with the fragile handling of ammunition, shells, explosives, white phosphorus, timers, fuses, etc. Such material was too delicate a matter to entrust to anyone ill prepared to handle it. So, the Corps created its third African American entity: the Ammunition Companies.

Completely separate from the depot companies, the ammunition companies consisted of 250-260 Marines each; by war's end they would be numbered 1st through the 12th. All had three white officers with African American NCOs and lower ranks. Due to the delicate (and potentially deadly) nature of their work, the ammunition companies had a more intensive advance training schedule that lasted up to eight weeks.

Although not trained for combat, these depot companies often found themselves under fire when they were required to land on islands held by the enemy, and all of them participated in combat whether the Corps intended it or not. That would be done by direct face-offs with the enemy on Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

On June 15, 1944, the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions stormed ashore on Saipan; assisting the 2nd was the 19th Depot Company, while the 4th was supported by the 18th and 20th Depot Companies. More than 75,000 Marines took part in this battle, with 800 being African Americans.

The depot companies had no vehicles of their own; they were required to use the motorpool vehicles of the units they supported, but the ammunition companies did have their own trucks, jeeps, and trailers. During the initial two hours of the landing on Saipan, the 19th Depot Company was ashore and setting up its supply distribution point within range of Japanese snipers and mortar crews.

As the white Marines fought their way inland to create a solidified front line, the 19th was as much in the midst of the shooting as any other Marine unit, firing furiously at the enemy whenever they came close. When not fighting, the black Marines were unloading supplies, bringing them forward, then carrying the wounded back—only to repeat the entire process.

For many of these white Marines at the front, this was their first time seeing a black Marine—or even knowing they existed. After aiding in the removal of wounded, those of the 19th formed antisniper reaction teams—one man to spot the shooter, and the other to pick him off.

One of the companies handling the forwarding of supplies on Saipan was led by Captain William C. Adams. His orderly, Private Kenneth J. Tibbs, became the first African American killed in action in the Pacific Theater—on the day of the landing. The next day Pfc. LeRoy Seals died from wounds incurred on the beach.

On that day, the 3rd Ammunition Company came ashore in an interesting manner. Its amphibious craft had pontoon-bridging material lashed to the craft's outer side. Upon disembarking, they unleashed those planks and made a roadway to drive their own vehicles straight onto the beachhead instead of lugging their loads by hand.

The fighting on Saipan was vicious in the extreme, with no quarter asked and none

given. Faced with the reality of losing their island fortress, the Japanese orchestrated a massive, late-night, do-or-die attack on July 7. This attacking force may have reached more than 3,000 dedicated soldiers—along with another thousand civilians—ready to die for the Emperor; almost everyone died. Although their 15-hour attack failed, the attackers inflicted 1,000 casualties on the Americans. And the depot companies were in the thick of the fighting.

The fight for Saipan officially ended on July 9, 1944, but there were still plenty of Japanese holdouts. Black Leathernecks Fred Ash and Turner Blount spent as much time as many others tracking down these holdouts, bringing them in, and guarding them as prisoners of war. In addition, the men of the 19th Depot Company partnered with demolition specialists to find and neutralize booby traps and mines.

Lieutenant General Alexander Vandegrift, who had replaced Holcomb as commandant of the Marine Corps in January 1944, was impressed by the courage and fighting spirit of the black Marines. "The Negro Marines are no longer on trial," he declared. "They are Marines—period."

The third week of July 1944 brought two more significant events. The conquest of Tinian took only eight days to accomplish, and taking part was the 3rd Ammunition Company from July 24-August 1, 1944, along with the 4th Marine Division. Within days, the 18th, 19th, and 20th Depot Companies were present. Between Saipan and Tinian, these four units received the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon.

Simultaneously there was Guam from July 21, 1944—when the Corps' 3rd Division arrived to reclaim it—to August 8, 1944. They had the help of three platoons of the 2nd Ammunition Company on the north beach while the Corps' 1st Provisional Marine Brigade had the fourth platoon and the 4th Ammunition Company on the south beach. It was all an open invitation for sniper fire and bomb-laden, suicide sapper attacks. In one such satchel-laden attack by Japanese infiltrators, the 4th Ammo Company stopped a dozen attackers dead in their tracks. Even though the island was labeled as "secured," an estimated 1,000 enemy holdouts remained hidden away on the island that would have to be ferreted out.

Private First Class Luther Woodward made himself a legend with his tracking abilities. On at least three occasions he discovered footprints on trails and followed them to their source before engaging the enemy. In one event, he led a handful of fellow Marines up to a cave knowing that an unknown number of enemy troops were inside. Woodward tossed in a grenade that chased one occupant out, making that an easy kill for Woodward. He then took his Ka-Bar knife, entered the cave, and killed a second soldier.

National Archives

One trail-track discovery may have been an enemy scouting party sizing up the 4th Ammunition Company and preparing for a night raid. In the official records for August 8, 1944, Brig. Gen. Lemuel C. Sheppard, commanding the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, proclaimed that the 4th Ammunition Company "contributed in large [part] to the successful and rapid movement of combat supplies in this amphibious operation."

The Marine Corps' biggest mistake in the Pacific came on September 15, 1944: Peleliu. The Corps' high command thought it would be a three- to five-day operation against the small island's 10,000 defenders; it would not end until the final days of November and cost the Marines 1,800 men killed and 8,000 wounded—at 40 percent the highest casualty rate of any amphibi-

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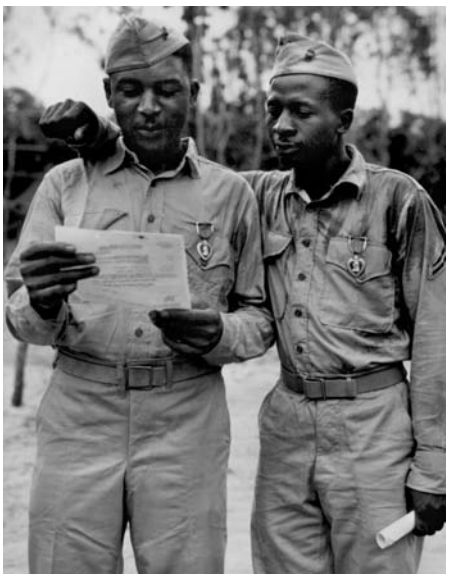


ABOVE: Staff Sergeant Timerlate Kirven (left) and Corporal Samuel J. Love, Sr., were the first African-American Marines to be awarded Purple Heart medals. They served with the 2nd Marine Division on Saipan. LEFT: Although they weren't used as combat troops, black Marines on Saipan in the Marianas come ashore armed with rifles and carbines and used them against the Japanese. OPPOSITE: In full combat gear, a black Marine platoon—likely from an ammunition or depot company—waits on its transport to go ashore during the invasion of an island somewhere in the Pacific. No black Marines were assigned to combat units.

ous assault in American military history

The six-mile-long, two-mile-wide island had more than 500 natural caves that 10,000 Japanese soldiers had fortified, digging tunnels connecting many of them. This included an incredible number of ravines, crevices, and gullies that became deep foxholes in which to hide.

It would be the job of 16, 000 Marines of the Corps' 1st Division, along with the 11th Depot and 7th Ammunition Companies, to pacify the island. Luckily for the 7th Ammunition Company, they had time to learn the jungle on Guadalcanal during precombat training sessions.

Lee Douglas, Jr., was with the 7th

Ammunition Company, but getting ashore at Peleliu was impossible. The problem was the number of corpses floating in the water and covering the shore, preventing the landing craft from reaching the beach. The 7th spent two days on landing craft, throwing out nets and pulling them back in—filled with dead bodies—before an opening could be made for beach landings. Even then, he said, "We went in, we went with our rifles blazing."

Lawrence Diggs was 19 years old when he landed on Peleliu with the 7th Ammo Company attached to the 1st Division's 3rd Battalion. Diggs said the enemy had placed their mortars on tracks that could wheel in and out of cover. Because so many caves riddled the island, ferreting out the enemy became a concerted effort. One team would discover an occupied cave and fire into it. Getting no response to that, either a tank came up or a flamethrower was put in use.

Quite often the enemy moved along their tunnels just to pop out behind the Marines. Diggs said that, once everybody believed the island was secured enough, pup tents were delivered that accommodated three sleepers. By this time, hundreds of Japanese still hid out across the island.

One source of sustenance for these Japanese soldiers became their stealthy stealing of Marine rations at night. One night, while Diggs was in a tent with two others, he recalled a fellow black Marine named "Oliver" from North Carolina. That night a Japanese forager stumbled into their tent, and Oliver wrapped his hands around the intruder's throat until he died. It took "a shot" for Oliver to release his death grip.

Diggs heard about another Marine on Saipan who spoke Japanese well enough to follow limited conversations. He would venture out on his own, creeping up on Japanese positions and listening in on their conversations. He would note their morale, how often they ate, what they ate, where they ate. He picked up on various positions as aid stations, watchpoints, and command points, and if any talk indicated a night attack. He then brought all of those conversations back with him.

On one return trip, he found an abandoned bicycle that he toted back to his lines. When close enough to be safe, he rode the bicycle back in. A famous picture exists of him on this bike in front of three comrades where the bike straddles a rail. Reuben McNair was on Peleliu, also delivering ammunition. He was also told to go out and bring back the dead, but those of the 7th refused to do that; they brought back the wounded instead. McNair's routine became the hauling of ammunition, joining his white comrades, shoulder-to-shoulder, in a firefight, carrying away the wounded, then returning with ammunition and fighting again.

At one point the white Marines he fought alongside were rotated out, with McNair saying proudly, "We had a group of white Marines, they was very happy, and as they returned back, they stated to [other white Marines], as what happened. They said 'the Black Angels saved us.'"

When Peleliu was finally secured, the 11th Depot Company had suffered 17 wounded. That would be the highest number of casualties of any black unit across the Pacific Theater. In recognition of their service, Maj. Gen. William H. Rupertus, commanding the 1st Marine Division, officially noted how smaller "unit commanders have repeatedly brought to my attention the whole-hearted cooperation and untiring efforts exhibited by each individual" of the 11th Depot Company and 7th Ammunition Company.

The assault on Iwo Jima began on February 19, 1945. The plan called for the Corps' 5th Division to come ashore first, then the 8th Ammunition Company, with the Corps' 3rd Division coming in last. The 33rd, 34th, and 36th Depot Companies were there as well, but the 8th Ammunition Company would engage in far more direct combat than the whole 3rd Division.

By D-day + 3, all four depot companies were ashore. They would spend 32 days on

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: Members of the 3rd Ammunition Company, part of the 2nd Marine Division, relax with a captured bicycle during the Battle of Saipan, June 1944. OPPOSITE: A group of black Marines on Peleiu receives instructions from a white officer or NCO (right) before heading out to bring in casualties.

the sulfuric island. Getting there included standard operating procedures instituted by all the military services throughout the war. Sections of each troop transport ship hauling black soldiers and Marines had improvised segregated compartments of "white-" and "colored-only" designations. Compartments were roped off as separate mess hall, latrines, and sleeping areas.

Many of the African American Marines found it more comfortable sleeping topside on an open deck than in cramped quarters below. While shipping over, they found themselves doing the vast majority of swabbing the decks, cleaning latrines, and KP than any white unit. Even if confined to restricted areas, it could not be helped if one Marine mingled in conversation with another Marine. One African American Marine spoke often and formed a bond with a Native American Marine—both of them being outcasts in white society.

Roland Durden gave his final perspective on such prejudices from the days of his training for Iwo Jima. When the 33rd and 34th Depot Companies were being shipped via rail from North Carolina to California, their train paused in New Orleans. This stop offered a Red Cross Doughnut & Coffee break. Attached to the train were two carloads of German and Italian prisoners of war. Durden said his captain was so racist that he ordered the Red Cross nurses to serve the prisoners first before the black Marines of the 33rd and 34th. The nurses flat out said "no" and that they would "serve our boys first."

Then, on Iwo, Durden took a break from the intensity of the fighting with three black comrades. The fourth person was a white Marine who told them, "I was taught differently, but now I see you people; I have respect for you."

Since Steven Robinson could not make it into the Tuskegee Airman program, even though he had a civilian pilot license, he ended up a Marine. Coming out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he was that city's second African American to join the Marine Corps. On the boat ride toward Iwo, he met one Native American Marine and had numerous conversations with him. Robinson said this Marine's name was Ira Hayes.

Of all he saw and did on Iwo, Robinson recalled two specific incidents—one being the second flag going up on Mount Suribachi; whether he knew Ira Hayes was involved in it or not is unclear.

The other took place while an enemy force made a night attack. In the darkness, neither side could distinguish friend from foe. All they could do was point their weapons at muzzle flashes in front of them and fire. In this instance, as with many others, the battle devolved into hand-to-hand combat.

At other times, Marines fired blindly into the inky darkness as a source of comfort. On one pitch-black night, Robinson held the job of "sergeant of the guard," being the on-the-spot supervisor for a number of outposts. He was summoned to Post #3 to see what a shooting incident was about. Stationed at that post was one of his Marine buddies named Booker James, holding a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). He had fired off a series of rounds. Upon his arrival, James told Robinson that there had been movement in front of him and swore it was enemy induced.

Robinson felt it was his responsibility to venture forth and determine what there may have been to shoot at. Robinson went forward on all fours, finding nothing alarming. Returning cautiously and walking upright, he tripped over a foot connected to a body. Closer inspection showed it being a dead Marine whom he left in place until daylight. Moving on, he stumbled over a second body of a dead Marine hidden by the darkness. Both had similar wounds being shot in the back.

At that point Robinson heard moans and groans of somebody severely injured. He found a third Marine barely alive, showing the same wounds the other two had: bullet holes in their backs. Booker James had unknowingly shot three Marines in the back; he would be forever convinced they were Japanese.

After reaching James, Robinson wanted him to go out so the two of them could bring in the wounded Marine. James refused, swearing that they were the enemy who was still prowling about. With great effort and many promptings, James finally went out, and the injured Marine was brought back in. He and the other dead Marines were white.

Eighteen days after the shooting ceased, according to the Corps, Robinson was driving a jeep on an errand. He came upon eight white Marines, many armed with pis-

National Archives

Black and white Marines together fight a potentially disasterous fire in an Iwo Jima ammo dump caused by an enemy mortar.

tols, indicating them to be either officers or noncommissioned officers. Others carried BARs and Thompson submachine guns.

Robinson halted to watch while the eight finished what they were engaged in. They surrounded a former enemy bunker that had caved in from relentless shelling. A handful of enemy soldiers emerged wearing nothing more than loincloths. It was plain to Robinson how malnourished, dehydrated, and weakened they were. He said they may have weighed 100 pounds at the most. There was no evidence of them retaining weapons. They were openly and willingly surrendering.

Once they were gathered and the eight Marines assured nobody else was coming out, all those surrendering were shot dead on the spot. With that done, all that Robinson could do was drive on his way.

Gene Doughty started out from Stamford, Connecticut, with a detour to New York City before reaching Camp Montford, then Iwo Jima. In their final desperation to inflict as much harm upon Americans of any color, a night banzai attack was launched virtually at the feet of the Marines. But it was a ragged, beaten force that emerged yelling from a series of undiscovered caves and tunnels. Many had no firearms; they attacked the Americans with homemade spears or clubs.

Archibald Mosley told about the youngest African American of any outfit in the Pacific Theater—a Marine everyone called "Babyface" for his youthful looks and exuberant attitude. And he was young; he had enlisted at age 16, and probably was not yet 17 when he landed with the 36th Depot Company on Iwo Jima, where he became the youngest black Marine to die in action.

Mosley recalled the night that the Japanese swarmed out of their caves and tunnels and attacked the 36th Depot Company in a suicidal banzai charge, badly wounding "Babyface." Because the religious Mosley had ended each night with prayers, the members of his unit asked him to pray for the youngster whom everyone loved and tried to protect. But his prayers did no good.

Twenty-one-year-old Thomas Haywood McPhatter was halfway through Johnson C. Smith University—a historically black college—in Charlotte, North Carolina, when he dropped out in 1943 to join the Corps. His education and intelligence got him assigned to the 8th Ammunition Company, where he was a platoon sergeant and handled the complexities of explosives, fuses, detonators, and all things ammunition. His firm, no-nonsense leadership style earned him the nickname "Sergeant Steelhead."

On February 19, McPhatter and his men were roaring into Blue Beach, plowing through surf that was coated with blood and the floating corpses of dead Marines. He recalled, "There were bodies bobbing up all around, all these dead men. Then we were crawling on our bellies and moving up the beach. I jumped in a foxhole and there was this young white Marine holding his family pictures. He had been hit by shrapnel, he was bleeding from the ears, nose, and mouth." All McPhatter could do was lie there and repeat the Lord's Prayer over and over.

Recovering from his shock, he organized his men and helped set up their ammunition depot at the base of Mount Suribachi in a depression that had been scooped out by the bulldozers of a Seabees unit. The site was easily in view of the enemy and well within range of rifle and mortar fire.

Direct hits by enemy mortars destroyed many of the caches of ammunition, setting them ablaze and exploding, killing black Marines and risking the lives of those who worked frantically to extinguish the flames. Ammunition shortages soon developed, and from time to time airdrops were required to replenish the supplies lost. There was always a high demand for hand grenades.

One such drop landed in the middle of no man's land, so McPhatter led a squad out to recover what was dropped. Repeatedly the squad went and came back intact with all their personnel and misplaced ammunition.

On February 23, 1945, a group of six Marines from the 2nd Battalion, 28th Marines, passed by the 8th Ammunition Company with one member carrying a small American flag and heading in the direction of Mount Suribachi. Realizing what was about to happen and seeing that the group had no pole on which to hoist the flag, McPhatter quickly rummaged through a nearby scrap pile to find a suitable pipe or pole and gave it to the flag-bearing Marines.

Unfortunately, most history books make little mention of how this flagpole was found. The usual story is that the Marines passed by a rain-filled cistern and yanked loose a length of rusty pipe for their flagpole. Wherever the pole came from, 900 African American Marines—and almost every other Marine on Iwo Jima—saw their

country's flag go up that day.

The six men proceeded up the slopes of the 560-foot-high volcano—the highest point on the island—with flag and pole. The flag went up, but it was too small; a Marine battalion commander wanted a bigger flag put up for all to see across the island. The raising of that second flag by a different squad was filmed, and Joe Rosenthal's photograph became the iconic symbol of Marine Corps history, as well as of American victory in World War II.

Photos do exist as the smaller flag was raised, came down, and the larger flag went up. What may be lost to history is the question of this first flagpole. Was it the pole McPhatter said he provided? Or was a second pole found, as some sources claim, and yanked from a rain-filled cistern? The historical record is unclear.

As for the rest of his tenure on Iwo Jima, McPhatter saw white Marines willing to provide their own blood directly, via blood transfusion, to wounded Japanese prisoners, while no one ever asked an African American to give blood—either to white or Japanese wounded. McPhatter was also perturbed that almost every time a combat photographer wandered by he turned his camera away from the black units, sharing their blood and sweat with their white comrades, and blatantly refusing to film their activities. Only a few shots exist of black Marines on Iwo Jima.

After the war, McPhatter became a Navy chaplain and served during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, retiring with the rank of captain. He died in 2009.

The last land campaign of the Pacific War for these Marines was the invasion of the 466-square-mile island of Okinawa on April 1, 1945. Okinawa became Japan's final death match, where the largest collection of African American Marines and sailors saw their last battle of the war.

From the Corps came the 1st, 3rd, and 12th Ammunition Companies. The 5th, 9th, 10th, 18th, 37th, and 38th Depot Companies began arriving on May 21, 1945. In a futile, desperate attempt to throw back the invaders, over half a dozen Japanese "Betty" bombers flew over Yontan Airfield on May 24, 1945. It seemed each plane carried at least 78 banzai-crazed Japanese looking to land in the midst of an American airstrip and destroy the planes. Most were shot out of the sky. One or two flew off and were unaccounted for. One plane made a wheels-down landing on the strip.

Unfortunately for the Japanese, the 10th Depot Company never shirked their military duty as an airstrip security force. In a major standoff, the Japanese got as far as destroying eight planes, damaging 24 others, and burning up 70,000 gallons of aviation fuel before being stopped by the 10th Depot Company; 69 dead Japanese were collected across the airstrip.

Fighting in the Pacific came to an official end on August 14, when the Japanese agreed to unconditional surrender following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the official surrender documents were signed aboard the battleship USS *Missouri* on September 2, 1945.

Although they had been segregated, abused, disrespected, discriminated against, and used as common laborers because they were thought to be incapable of combat, the black Marines proved otherwise. They had broken the longstanding military color barrier, and life in the Marine Corps—and throughout the rest of the U.S. armed forces—would never be the same. African American soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen would distinguish themselves in all of America's upcoming wars.

Although there were no black Marines in the two groups that hoisted the flags above Iwo Jima, their fingerprints were on the pole used to fly the first flag. And they will always be there. □

ABOVE: Three Marine Corps pioneers: Turner Blount, Lawrence Diggs, and Reuben McNair. Like most of their fellow African American Marines, they were frustrated by the segregation and predjudice they experienced during the war but remain proud of their service in the Corps. BELOW: A black Marine prepares to advance across the volcanic sand of Iwo Jima after his amphibious DUKW was destroyed. Many white Marines were impressed with the courage displayed by their fellow black Marines.

National Archives

Eleanor Roosevelt risked her life to visit American boys fighting on far-flung fronts—and won over Admiral "Bull" Halsey.

THE FIRST LADY and THE ADMIRAL

BY JOHN WUKOVITS

Prim, proper, and lacking any trace of braggadocio, the first lady of the United States, Eleanor Roosevelt, preferred placid pastimes and exchanging letters with close friends. She had gained the respect of her nation during the dark Depression days, when her perky spirit and concern for the suffering of her nation buttressed the steps her husband, Franklin D. Roosevelt, implemented to yank people from misery and back to the mainstream.

At the opposite end of the spectrum stood Admiral William F. Halsey. The man loved action, the more intense and desperate the better. Like the first lady he, too, had earned the devotion of his country, but not for being sweet. During the war's initial months, when the Japanese amassed triumph after triumph in the Pacific against a seemingly helpless United States, Admiral Halsey stood amid the shambles and illuminated the way to victory.

Interspersing a combination of bold actions and profane declarations Halsey, like Franklin Roosevelt, lifted a nation from despair. His command in numerous operations, including raids against Japanese-held islands, the Doolittle Tokyo Raid in early 1942, and his dramatic turnaround of American fortunes at Guadalcanal in late 1942, placed the "Bull's" image on magazine covers and his photograph in every major newspaper.

The two would be brought together in late 1943 when Eleanor Roosevelt traveled to the Pacific to visit troops stationed in Australia and on tiny islands sprinkled across the South Pacific. Some of those islands, the scenes of bitter combat from August 1942 and into 1943, lay in Halsey's domain, and the last thing the dogged warrior wanted was to be distracted from his chores by a visit from a high-ranking dignitary. As far as Halsey was concerned, she wanted nothing more than to make political capital, and with men fighting and dying throughout the South Pacific he had no time for political gamesmanship from the wife of his commander-in-chief.

The president first brought up the notion of the Pacific trip. Eleanor had already visited Great Britain, and Franklin felt that similar recognition should be accorded to the people of distant Australia and New Zealand. Those countries had been under the threat of Japanese attack since Pearl Harbor, placing their leadership and citizens under enormous pressure, to which they had nobly responded.

They had also hosted thousands of U.S. servicemen who passed through both places on their way to Pacific battlefields. In addition, Eleanor had received scores of letters from women in Australia and New Zealand asking her to travel to their countries and witness the significant contributions the local women had made to the war effort.

Eleanor agreed but asked her husband if she could include Guadalcanal and other South Pacific areas on her itinerary. The president demurred, but Eleanor claimed that her trip to Australia and New Zealand would lose meaning "if, when I was to be in the Pacific area anyway, I were not permitted to visit the places where these men had left their health or received their injuries."

FDR faced a dilemma. He wanted Eleanor to visit the Pacific but not be a problem for his top commanders in their efforts to defeat the enemy. In an effort to pass the buck, he sent letters to General Douglas MacArthur and Halsey expressing that while the final decision on the itinerary was theirs, "I would not have you let her go to any place which would interfere in any way with current military or naval operations—in other words, the war comes first."

To prepare for her trip, Eleanor visited Norman Davis, chairman of the American Red Cross, to ask if she might examine the different Red Cross installations along the trip. She believed that doing so might make the trip more meaningful, as well as provide mate-

Eleanor Roosevelt, wearing her trademark Red Cross uniform, chats with Lt. Gen. Millard F. Harmon, Jr. (left), commander of the Army Air Forces in the South Pacific Area, and Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey at an American base in New Caledonia, September 16, 1943. From the big grin on his face, the First Lady seems to have already won over the crusty admiral who initially thought her planned visit was just a "political publicity stunt." The plane beneath which they stand is named "Our Eleanor."

All Photos: National Archives

rial with which to counter critics who contended that the trip was nothing more than a public relations move for the White House or that she would occupy valuable space on aircraft. Davis, who had been thinking of sending a representative on an inspection tour of the Pacific, happily agreed and urged Mrs. Roosevelt to don a Red Cross uniform during her journeys. Eleanor liked Davis's suggestions. A uniform would negate the need to pack multiple outfits, thereby saving cargo space on aircraft, and she admitted she would feel more comfortable visiting hospitals and service clubs if she were in uniform like the personnel about her.

Her sons, all in the military, offered advice as well. They urged her to avoid eating only with officers and to share repasts with enlisted personnel whenever possible, even if it meant rising earlier in the day when the privates and corporals sat down for a meal.

On August 23 Eleanor departed San Francisco in an unheated four-engine Army B-24 Liberator bomber, sharing space with military personnel and sacks of mail from home. She confided in her newspaper column, "My Day," that she hoped to bring to readers, particularly mothers, "a feeling that they have visited the places where I go, and that they know more about the lives their boys are leading."

After a lengthy flight, Eleanor landed at Pearl Harbor on August 23, where she was driven to the home of Brig. Gen. Walter Ryan to enjoy fresh pineapple and other fruits from Ryan's garden. From Pearl Harbor she flew 1,400 miles south to her first stop along what her husband called "the islands for guarding the supply route"—Christmas Island. After supper on the island, Eleanor retired to her room for the night but found the floor nearly covered with bugs. After stamping her foot a few times, the bugs disappeared through cracks in the floor.

Following an all too brief sleep, which became common for her during the trip, Eleanor inspected installations and visited hospital wards. She stopped at each bed to briefly chat with the recovering soldiers and sailors and asked for the names and addresses of family back home so she could write a note to them. She drove 40 miles to visit one isolated camp, where she enjoyed a warm welcome. One correspondent wrote that Mrs. Roosevelt reminded the soldiers more "of some boy's mother back home than the wife of the President of the United States—and we all loved it."

The flight to her next stop—Cook and Samoa Islands 1,600 miles to the southwest—tested the ability of the pilot and navigator to locate such tiny plots of land amid the vast ocean. An impressed Eleanor wrote in her newspaper column, "Our navigator seemed to me nothing short of a miracle worker, for how he hit these little dots without any deviation in course I wouldn't understand. Nothing but waves and small fleecy clouds would be in sight, and then someone would point and there would be the island."

Her routine for each stop seldom varied. She visited the military installations and hospitals as soon as possible and usually joined the troops for the nightly movie before retiring to her quarters to finish a newspaper column. "I was introduced again and we saw a good movie. The movie industry is certainly doing well in supplying the troops with films. I did a little typing after I returned to quarters, then packed, chased away some disagreeable and very large red bugs that came up through the floor boards, and went to bed."

In the Fijis, the first lady used her brief time to inspect the facilities, visit with the troops,

ABOVE: The First Lady shares a meal with men of the 32nd Infantry Division in the Gilbert Islands. Her sons encouraged her to dine often with enlisted men and not just the officers. OPPOSITE: Mrs. Roosevelt is greeted by officials in New Zealand on August 26, 1943. During her month-long whirlwind tour, she visited New Zealand, Australia, 17 Pacific islands, was seen by 400,000 servicemen and women, and toured scores of field hospitals.

and see what help she might offer. She concluded that the men stationed in the Fijis needed more recreation equipment, and when told that four soldiers recently died from drinking distilled shellac she urged that the men be allowed beer and wine.

Following suggestions from her sons, she arose early each morning so that she could eat breakfast with the enlisted men and gain insight into their attitudes and needs, and whenever she spoke to an assembled unit she kept her remarks brief so they would not suffer in the blinding sun.

She did not have to strain to discern their opinion about the enemy. "No one out here has any pity for the Japanese," she wrote during the trip. "They have seen them do too many things which we consider beyond the pale of civilized practice. Human life to a Japanese seems to have no value."

Eleanor became so enamored with the men that she chafed whenever a commanding officer surrounded her with guards. She once complained to her husband that the generals and admirals assign so many guards that "I remind myself of you," but she could also not help but notice that her presence presented a problem to commanders who had to disrupt their daily schedules to arrange for her welfare and protection.

The visits to the hospitals, where she talked with men suffering from ghastly wounds, posed severe challenges to her ever present cheerfulness. She hoped to bring a bit of joy into their lives but feared that men who had been too long away from female companionship would prefer a Hollywood beauty or pinup girl.

She eventually realized that her appearances were an elixir to the troops. Her beauty may not have matched that of Betty Grable or Lana Turner, but she provided something far deeper—a sense of home and mom. "Over here she was something," said one soldier after her visit, "none of us had seen in over a year, an American mother."

After the Fijis, an aircraft whisked Eleanor to Noumea and her first wartime encounter with Admiral Halsey. To that point Eleanor believed she had accomplished some good with the battle-scarred troops. Would that continue once she was in the company of the nation's most revered Navy officer?

She had a right to be concerned, as the crusty Halsey considered her visit to be a waste of his valuable time. Even though he had met Eleanor Roosevelt before and admired her, he was now busy fighting a war, and the last thing he wanted was to be wrenched from that task to babysit the first lady. He chafed that he had to divert aircraft from the Solomons fighting to escort her plane to Noumea and that he would have to "play the gracious, solicitous host. I had no time for such folderol, yet I'd have to take time."

Eleanor arrived in Noumea wearing the Red Cross uniform that became a trademark of her visit to the war zone. She and the admiral politely greeted each other, and when Eleanor asked Halsey's advice on which locations she ought to visit the admiral suggested she spend two days in Noumea, leave to tour New Zealand and Australia, and return for another two-day visit in Noumea before heading back to the United States.

Mrs. Roosevelt then handed Halsey a letter from the president asking that, if the admiral considered it safe, could the first lady be permitted to visit Guadalcanal, the scene of savage fighting in late 1942 and early 1943. When Halsey answered, "Guadalcanal is no place for you, Ma'am!" Eleanor replied, "I'm perfectly willing to take my chances. I'll be entirely responsible for anything that happens to me."

Halsey explained that he needed every fighter plane he had in the combat zone, and a trip to Guadalcanal would force him to divert aircraft from where they were most needed to escort her to the island. He did add, however, that after she returned from Australia he would reevaluate the issue, a comment that lifted Eleanor's spirits.

The next morning Eleanor embarked on a full day of visits. She cheered men with horrid head wounds or with an arm or leg missing and was uplifted by the soldiers' positive outlooks. One man who had lost his right arm in combat boasted to the first lady that he could already tie his shoes with his left hand, and other hideously wounded soldiers were more concerned for their families and their military comrades than they were for themselves.

She pinned the Navy Cross on Navy Lieutenant Hugh Barr Miller who, after his ship was sunk, evaded patrols on a Japanese-held island for 39 days. At one hospital, she stopped by the bed of a boy whose stomach was so gruesomely shot up that doctors doubted he would survive. Eleanor leaned over and kissed him gently before

leaving, and to the surprise of all he started to improve.

Halsey's reticence over Eleanor's visit softened the more he learned of and observed the effect she had on the men. He admired her nonstop pace, and "When I say that she inspected those hospitals" Halsey wrote, "I don't mean that she shook hands with the chief medical officer, glanced into a sun-parlor, and left. I mean that she went into every ward, stopped at every bed, and spoke to every patient: What was his name? How did he feel? Was there anything he needed? Could she take a message home for him? I marveled at her

hardihood, both physical and mental; she walked for miles, and she saw patients who were grievously and gruesomely wounded. But I marveled most at their expressions as she leaned over them. It was a sight I will never forget."

Halsey was not the only military commander the first lady impressed. Maj. Gen. Alexander A. Vandegrift, a Medal of Honor recipient for his able command skills that guided the defense of American positions on Guadalcanal and helped turn the tide, knew something about weariness from observing his fatigued Marines during the Guadalcanal fighting.

After watching Mrs. Roosevelt make repeated stops to wounded soldiers despite being exhausted from the long flight to Noumea, he called her "a remarkable woman" who "spent the bulk of her time in New Caledonia visiting our sick and wounded, talking to them by the hundreds. In each case she took the man's home address and upon her return to America wrote his family."

From Noumea Mrs. Roosevelt flew to New Zealand, accompanied by Commander H.D. Moulton, one of Halsey's aides, and by Maria Coletta Ryan, a top Red Cross official. Sir Cyril Newall, the governor general marshal of the Royal Air Force, Mrs. Fraser, wife of the prime minister, and other officials waited for them at the Auckland airport, where Eleanor broadcast a brief radio speech before speaking to a throng of newspaper reporters.

Her dawn-to-dusk schedule in New Zealand mirrored that of previous stops. Hospitals, Red Cross clubs, and camps became her domain, and she drove hundreds of miles across the country to speak to soldiers and Marines in training camps. She attended official receptions, including a tea at the home of the governor general, and gave dozens of speeches to crowds large and small. She especially enjoyed her tours of war factories, where hundreds of female workers labored alongside men to produce the weaponry needed to defeat the Japanese.

After most exhausting days, she typed her 400-word column, "My Day," that appeared in stateside newspapers. "The outstanding thing to me is how such a small number of American Red Cross personnel with New Zealand volunteers ever has done the work and met the needs of the great number of men in this area," she wrote for her column that appeared on September 3.

Each day, Eleanor saw examples of the toughness of American youth, especially those lying in hospitals with grievous wounds. "Every now and then I have to smile when I think of people who thought that a younger generation was growing up at home and, in fact, in many countries, which could not meet physical hardships," she wrote from Auckland in one of her columns.

"Let me assure you that no pioneers ever were sturdier than this generation. In addition, I must pay tribute to their fortitude in pain and discomfort. Invariably a sick boy will say, 'I'm getting on fine.'" She stated that soldiers often brought up their girlfriends with her and reminded them of the impact their letters had upon young soldiers so far from home and family.

She took her husband's advice and focused on bringing good cheer and encouragement to every soldier and Marine she encountered. Her exuberance and decency quickly dissolved any doubts that men may have had about her. After listening to one speech, a soldier remarked, "Her sincerity permeated every word. I can tell you that after a year of listening to nothing but bassooning top sergeants and officers, it was good to hear a kind lady saying nice things."

Time magazine enhanced the praise for the first lady in its September 13 issue, telling home front readers that Mrs. Roosevelt charmed everyone she met. "If Franklin Roosevelt was looking for a U.S. ambassador of good will, he could have made no better selection. Indefatigable Eleanor Roosevelt attended receptions, teas, dinners, visited U.S. servicemen in hospitals and clubs, saw noted Pohutu Geyser at Rotorua, N.Z., autographed a wounded Marine's leg bandage, got christened 'Queen of the Great Democracy' by Maori chieftains, won friends and influenced people everywhere by her untiring kindness."

The magazine added, "She was a forthright, energetic, middle-aged lady and she was

ABOVE: The First Lady visits a wounded African American soldier. A champion of desegregation, she wrote, "There seems to be no trouble anywhere out here between the white and colored. They lie in beds in the same wards, go to the same movies, and sit side by side and work side by side, but I don't think I've seen them mess together." BELOW: With four sons in uniform, the First Lady was especially concerned about the health and welfare of the wounded men she encountered during her visits to field hospitals, also giving them an encouraging word and even telephoning and writing personal notes to their families. OPPOSITE: Mrs. Roosevelt leaves a hospital tent in the Fiji Islands. Such visits always exposed her to men suffering from terrible wounds, forcing her to remain upbeat and cheerful for their sake.

more exciting than anything the antipodes had seen in many a down-under moon."

After sweeping New Zealand by storm, Eleanor Roosevelt boarded a transport for the flight to her next stop—Australia and the controversial commander, General Douglas MacArthur.

Any worries that she may have harbored about meeting General MacArthur were allayed on September 3, 1943, when she arrived to a warm reception at Mascot Field near Sydney. The previous month, MacArthur had told one of his top commanders, Lt. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger, to arrange the greeting and itinerary for Mrs. Roosevelt's visit to Australia, while MacArthur remained in New Guinea.

Although MacArthur gave the excuse that he was needed closer to the front during a key part of his campaign against the Japanese, most observers believed he ducked out of meeting the first lady due to his political antipathy toward her husband. Eichelberger wasted little time executing his task, "But I viewed my assignment with apprehension. Commanding a corps seemed easier."

Thousands of Australian civilians jammed the airfield to welcome Mrs. Roosevelt. People tossed flowers and cheered as she made her way from the plane to the terminal.

Another whirlwind schedule awaited. Her event-packed days included frequent stops at hospitals and military recreation centers, Red Cross installations, and receptions. She visited three major cities in five days, often driving through streets lined with cheering Australians and children waving American flags.

Soldiers handed her photographs and asked Mrs. Roosevelt if she would relay them to their families; at a stop at one hospital, a wounded soldier asked if she would call his girlfriend when she returned to the United States to let her know he was all right.

One time in Queensland, Mrs. Roosevelt spotted a convoy of Army trucks loaded with troops. When Eichelberger told her that the soldiers were leaving Australia for the combat zone, she asked the driver to catch up to the convoy so she could wish them good luck. When she reached the convoy, she stopped at each truck and spoke to each soldier.

Two aspects bothered Eleanor. She believed that the heavy escort that accompanied her throughout her Australian visits kept her from meeting as many ordinary citizens and enlisted men as she wanted. She wanted to step over to crowds more frequently, but General Eichelberger was under strict orders from MacArthur in New Guinea to keep her safe. She wrote

to a friend that everyone treated her "like a frail flower and won't let me approach any danger."

That led to her second disappointment—MacArthur's veto of her desire to travel north to New Guinea, the scene of fierce combat throughout 1942 and into 1943. MacArthur's denial surprised Eleanor, who worried that soldiers would incorrectly assume she avoided New Guinea out of fear. "The boys last night all asked if I wasn't coming to New Guinea," she added to her friend, "and I feel more strongly than ever about their restrictions."

MacArthur claimed he denied Mrs. Roosevelt's request because New Guinea was too dangerous, but a bit of home front politics shaded the matter. The 1944 presidential campaign approached, and with a burgeoning movement back home to nominate MacArthur as the Republican candidate gaining momentum, the general preferred not to be photographed with Mrs. Roosevelt. As a substitute, on September 13 Mrs. Jean MacArthur, the general's wife, hosted a lavish dinner for Eleanor.

As her visit in Australia neared an end, Mrs. Roosevelt fretted that she had accomplished little good, but she was unable to distance herself from her actions and see the positive impact she made on everyone at each stop.

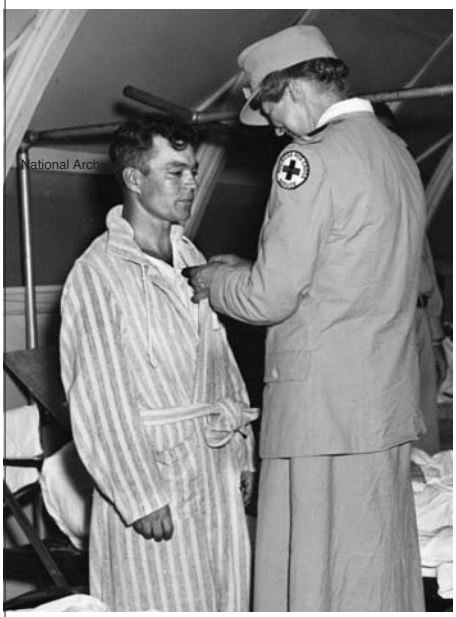
MacArthur aide Captain Robert M. White, who was assigned to accompany Mrs. Roosevelt, was at first perturbed that he had to leave headquarters to escort the first lady. He wanted to fight the enemy, not escort dignitaries, but he altered his opinion. He later wrote, "Wherever Mrs. Roosevelt went, she wanted to see the things a mother would see. She looked at kitchens and saw how food was prepared. When she chatted with the men, she said things mothers say, little things men never think of and couldn't put into words if they did. Her voice was like a mother's, too.

General Vandegrift needed no more convincing: "I had dreaded her coming, but I knew when she departed that she had been the most valuable VIP who had ever come to Australia. Her simplicity and lack of side endeared her to the troops; her graciousness endeared her to the Australians; and her visit stored up a reserve of good will that was like a family bank account."

When she returned to Halsey's Noumea headquarters after her visits to New Zealand and Australia, she held little hope that the admiral would approve a trip to Guadalcanal. Even though the bitterest fighting had moved to islands to the north, the Japanese still occasionally bombed Guadalcanal. However, reports of Mrs. Roosevelt's positive impact on the military altered Halsey's opinion, and though he still had his doubts, he agreed to the trip.

"When I saw her off," Halsey later wrote of watching the first lady's airplane lift off toward the island, "I told her that it was impossible for me to express my appreciation of what she had done, and was doing, for my men. I was ashamed of my original surliness. She alone had accomplished more good than any other person, or any group of civilians, who had passed through my area."

Her plane stopped first at Efate in the New Hebrides, northeast of Noumea. After visiting the wounded—"It seemed as though I walked through miles of hospital wards," she wrote—she reboarded the aircraft for the hop north to Espiritu Santo, the northernmost island of the New Hebrides, about halfway from Noumea to Guadalcanal. "There are thought to be some Japs still on the other side of the island and there are still air raids," Eleanor later noted.



When she arrived at Guadalcanal, she shared breakfast with General Nathan Twining, the commanding officer of the Thirteenth Air Force. As Army trucks whisked her away to hospitals, she passed vehicles loaded with Seabees and waved to them. "Gosh, there's Eleanor," said a startled Seabee.

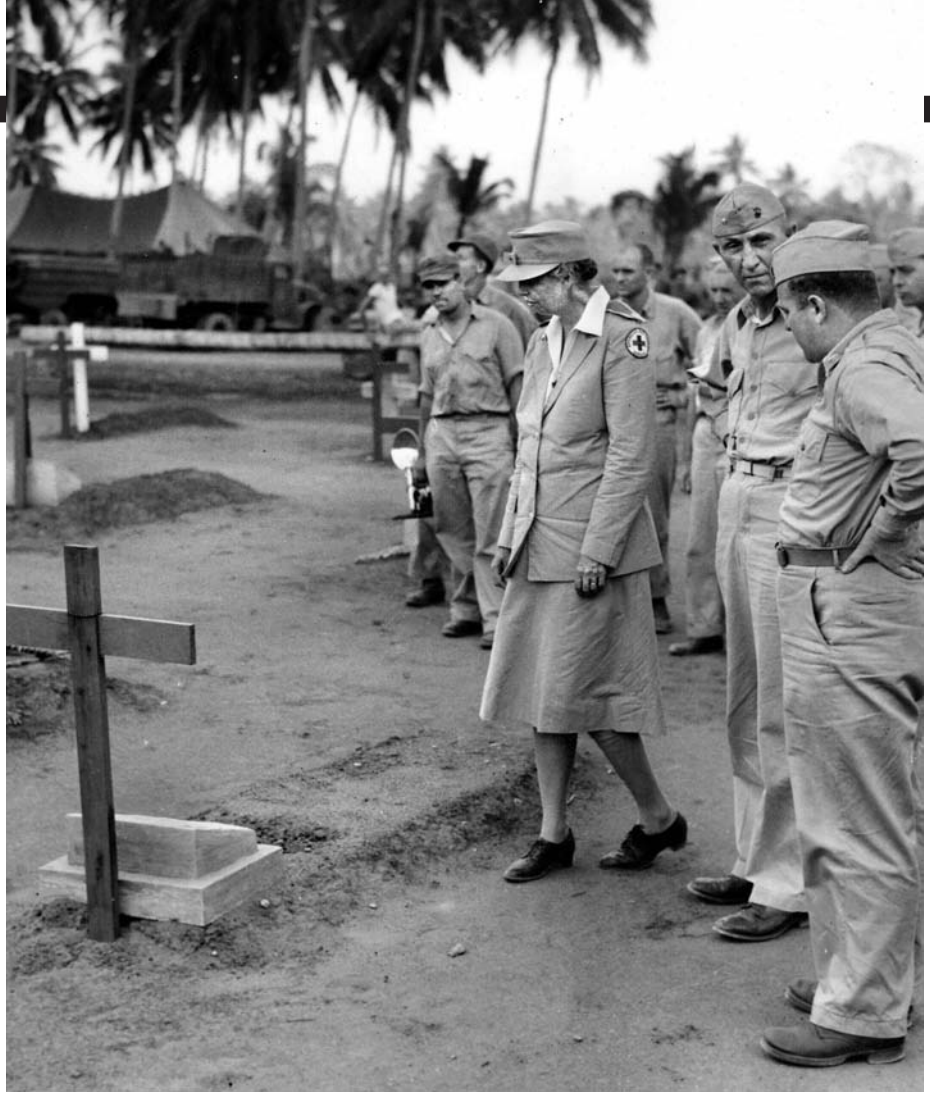
More somber moments overshadowed the fleeting joviality. Like every other civilian back home, Eleanor had been insulated from the realities of combat. A list of casualties printed in a newspaper was one matter, but the mangled products of battle at first hand in the tents of Guadalcanal personalized the battle. She no longer perused a casualty list, but sat with young soldiers missing arms or legs and blinded sailors who would never again see their loved ones.

"It is unbelievable how young some of these boys are," she scribbled in a diary she kept of her visit to Guadalcanal. Openly moved by their stoic acceptance of their wounds, she added, "but the responsibility of war matures them quickly."

She marveled at their humility and at their denial that they were heroes. She chatted with men who had risked life and limb to rescue a wounded buddy and, to a man, each claimed they had done nothing more than what any other soldier would do. Instead of talking about heroics, the wounded preferred to discuss home, girlfriends, movies, sports, and parents.

"Over and over again on this trip, I wished I could be the mother, wife or sweetheart whom the boy really longed to see," she wrote shortly after touring Guadalcanal. "Since that was not possible, I hope that someone who came from home, who often knew and could remember something about the particular place that was home to him, brought the people and the country which he loves a little nearer."

As she did at every stop, she made certain to ask if any of the boys had messages she



ABOVE: The First Lady pays a solemn visit to a cemetery on Guadalcanal. She wrote in her newspaper column, "On the island there is a cemetery and, as you look at the crosses row on row, you think of the women's hearts buried here as well." OPPOSITE: Mrs. Roosevelt pins the Purple Heart medal on a recuperating soldier at a field hospital on Espiritu Santo, September 13, 1943.

could deliver to loved ones once she returned to the United States.

What most remained with her, however, were the images gathered in the many hospitals and the solemnity that emanated from the makeshift cemeteries she too often came across. Helmets hung from rough-hewn wooden crosses marked many graves, and printed words—"He was a grand guy" or "Best buddy ever"—showed that other soldiers grieved his passing.

She wrote, "As you look at the crosses row on row, you think of the women's hearts buried here as well and are grateful for signs everywhere that show the boys are surrounded by affection."

After what could only be deemed a successful sweep through the South Pacific, Eleanor Roosevelt started on the long journey back to the United States. During a stop in Hawaii, she made a deal with one severely injured soldier that if he promised to try his hardest to recover she would visit his mother upon her return home. Eleanor subsequently saw his mother, and the soldier recovered from his wounds.

The exhausted first lady—she lost 30 pounds during her travels—could look back on a triumphant trip. She had traveled almost 26,000 miles since beginning her voyage on August 17, almost six weeks earlier, had visited 17 islands and nations, including 11 days in Australia and eight in New Zealand, and had toured military installations at Hawaii, Guadalcanal, New Caledonia, and other important locations along the United States military pipeline.

She had seen an estimated 400,000 men in different hospitals and camps. She admitted that she was exhausted "emotionally as well as physically," but that she left the South Pacific with "a sense of pride in the young people of this generation which I can never express and a sense of obligation which I feel I can never discharge."

She kept every promise made to soldiers to visit or telephone their families, often receiving incredulous reactions before a family member realized the caller was, indeed, the first lady. When Miss Helen Carl, a government secretary, received a phone call stating that it was the White House calling, she assumed it was a joke until she recognized Mrs. Roosevelt's voice. "I met your boyfriend, Sergeant Al Lewis, in Australia and he asked me to call and say hello!" said the first lady to a speechless Miss Carl.

Mrs. Roosevelt was determined to do much more than simply contact families, for she had seen too much to remain silent about the future. Claiming that the nation had an obligation to think of the postwar period and the welfare of the soldiers once they returned home, she wrote that the true memorial for those who perished in the conflict "must be built where we live by the way in which we make our lives count. We must build up the kind of world for which these men died."

She added, "Long ago a man told me the big thing men got out of a war was the sense of shared comradeship and loyalty to each other. Perhaps that is what we must develop at home to build the world for which our men are dying."

The two principal characters in the tour—the first lady and Admiral Halsey—emerged with elevated opinions of their counterpart. Halsey made it a point to praise the courage and stamina Mrs. Roosevelt displayed at each stop and said her appearance instantly bolstered the morale of every wounded man, whose expressions brightened as the first lady approached their cots.

A pair that had once considered each other as nuisances had, through personal contact, become mutual admirers. □

Recording History

Continued from page 11

Tennessee-class battleship USS *California*.

As he continued panning, Hickam's flagpole entered the frame with the field's distinctive 171-foot tall octagonal water tower in the background beyond it. After sweeping past the airfield's hospital building, the well-known 3,200-man barracks nicknamed the "Hickam Hilton" came into view. Oberg's shot even captured bomb damage to the building's roof.

From that spot, smoke from burning drums of aviation fuel could be seen rising skyward just to the west of Hangar Number 3, and as the camera swept past Hangar Number 5, Douglas B-18 Bolo medium bombers could be seen parked on the tarmac in the distance near Hangar Number 13.

Oberg's shot eventually even captured the severed fuselage of B-17C #40-2074—a B-17 Flying Fortress from the 38th Reconnaissance Squadron that had been piloted by Captain Raymond T. Swenson earlier that morning. As one of 12 B-17s scheduled to land at Hickam on December 7, Swenson's #2074 arrived over Oahu with no ammunition and low on fuel in the middle of the air raid just after 8 AM.

During final approach to land, two Japanese Mitsubishi A6M2 "Zero" fighters strafed the aircraft, setting off a box of flares that eventually burned the aircraft's empennage to the point that the weakened structure buckled and broke away while taxiing.

Sergeant Oberg then moved from the roof of the Operations Building down to ground level and filmed #2074 from the grass next to the building. Honolulu photographer Tai Sing Loo later captured the wreckage of Swenson's B-17C in one of the most memorable images taken in the aftermath of the attack.

Together Eda and Harold Oberg had captured color footage of one of the most important days in American history—Sunday, December 7, 1941—but their story and their footage did not end there. They remained separated in the days that followed the Japanese attack with her at the University of Hawaii and him on duty at Hickam.

TOP: In this frame from the footage, Eda Oberg can be seen packing away her civilian gas mask in front of the air raid shelter across 16th Street from the apartment. ABOVE: Eda took over operating the camera to film Harold fastening the chinstraps of his M1917A1 helmet.

On December 17, after the newspaper published a list of where the spouses of service members were staying on Oahu, Harold drove to the university with Staff Sergeant Honour and Staff Sergeant Dean V. Norris, another resident of the apartment building on 16th Street. When the three couples were reunited on campus right in front of Hemenway Hall, an Army

photographer snapped a shot just as Dean and Dorothy Norris embraced.

A few days after that, Eda and Harold broke out their movie camera again to film an underground air raid shelter that was dug in an open courtyard across 16th Street from their quarters.

In the first shot, Harold filmed Eda as she emerged from the bomb shelter wearing HBT coveralls, a civilian gas mask, and an M1917A1 helmet. The camera then changed hands, and Eda filmed Harold fastening the chinstraps of his M1917A1 helmet. Harold then filmed Eda and Kay Honour in the front yard of their quarters with 16th Street behind them and closed out the film reel with a well-composed and especially poignant shot of a 48-star American flag.

One month later, as the spouses and dependents of service members were being evacuated from the Territory of Hawaii, Eda returned to California—but not by sea. Fully aware of the misery created by her intense seasickness, the family chipped in and purchased a one-way ticket to San Francisco for her on Pan Am's Honolulu Clipper.

Harold returned to California several months later and brought the Revere 88 motion picture camera with him—along with the reel of color 8mm film with its images of the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941.

Harold died on New Years Day, 1963, of a heart attack, and Eda eventually remarried and moved back to San Pedro—her hometown. In the mid-1980s, she donated all of her memorabilia from December 1941 to the Fort MacArthur Museum, including a scrapbook of photographs, the Revere Model 88 camera, and the reel of color film that had captured one of the most infamous moments in American history. These items are currently on display there in the Battery Osgood-Farley Historic Site.

Eda passed away in 1995, but she left behind a legacy in this remarkable story. Although it may not be a particularly well-known chapter in Pearl Harbor history, that story is nevertheless preserved by Fort MacArthur and, because of that, it will not be forgotten. □

Blitz at Bath

Continued from page 63

on Saturday, even as their home was destroyed. When a neighbor was pulled from the rubble of another house and died in Florence's arms, she went into shock and was unable to nurse her baby.

A tense Sunday evening was spent in a stupor, trying to care for her children. She then walked with her husband and children to Bristol, some 12 miles away, so she could catch a train to South Wales, where her mother received her—still covered in the debris of the attacks, her clothes dusted in plaster.

Of those who remained in the city, many walked out into the countryside again on Monday night, in case the attacks continued—after all, a German reconnaissance plane was seen over the city that afternoon, and many assumed it a prelude for more that night. A rumor also spread that an evacuation of the city was being ordered for the evening, and although this wasn't true, many fled however they could; as it got darker, those waiting in line for a bus out of town began to panic again.

As it turned out, and despite the new antiaircraft guns that also dotted the surrounding hills, the Luftwaffe did not return. They had other appointments in Norwich and York and Canterbury—and in the last of these, learning the lesson of von Stumm, the Germans lamely claimed that the military target there had been the Archbishop and his apparently egregious "incitement campaign against Germany."

As early as April 29, 1942, the question of intentionally bombing civilians came up in the House of Commons. When one Member of Parliament (MP) wondered aloud whether the recent RAF targets in Germany had been primarily military, the repeated response was, "What about Bath?"

Another MP asked, "Has the Honorable Member not heard of the pictures we have of the damage of our great cities, and does he know how the morale of our people is inspired when they see that something similar is being done elsewhere?"

Another MP, nearly seeming to admit what was going on but justifying it as an expediency, said, "The best way to prevent this destruction is to win the war as quickly as possible."

The simple ability to name an act of war regrettable but also necessary only seemed possible in private; Robert Oppenheimer, the "father of the atomic bomb," recalled the American Secretary of War Henry Stimson being appalled "that there should be no protest over the air raids which we were conducting against Japan, which in the case of Tokyo led to such extraordinary heavy loss of life. He didn't say that the air strikes shouldn't be carried on, but he did think there was something wrong with a country where no one questioned that."

Hitler claimed it was the British who had first determined to bomb civilians and threatened "a reply that will bring great grief." But, by and large, this reply never came, and in fact the reply was unleashed on the Germans in the firebombing, most notably, of Dresden in early 1945, which killed more than 30,000 people and left a quarter million homeless. Advances in technology were put to their most complete use in the fire bombings (and finally atomic bombings) of Japanese cities.

One of the few historians of the Baedeker Blitz—and indeed it is a neglected corner of the war—has written recently of how few plaques or memorials to the bombing have been put up in Bath or the other cathedral cities. The uneasiness of civilians coming under fire is still too difficult for many to deal with, since it means that at some point any of us might be put in such a position.

However, mention should be made of the Remembrance Book kept in Bath Abbey. Housed under glass and looking like an illuminated manuscript a thousand years older than it actually is—including historiated initials, twisting green and orange leaves climbing the margins, and the names and addresses of the dead in black and red ink—those who died over the two nights of bombing are listed alongside the locals who died in battle elsewhere.

That seems the most appropriate remembrance of all, since despite being far from the front lines, they died in battle too. □

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