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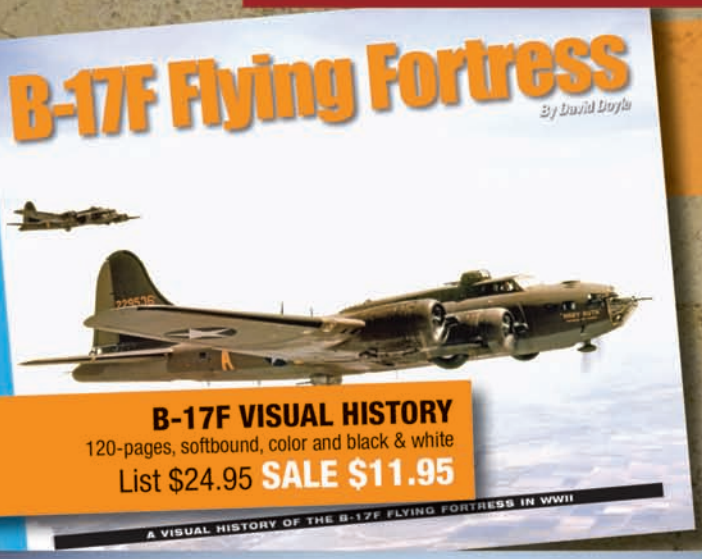

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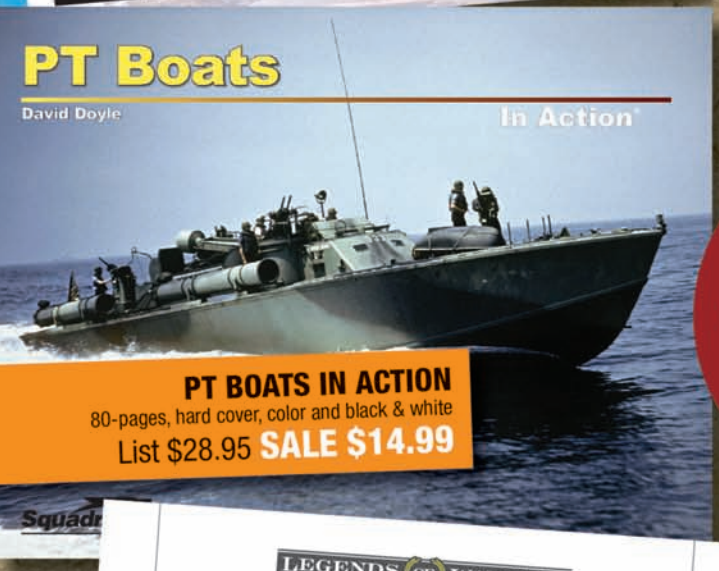

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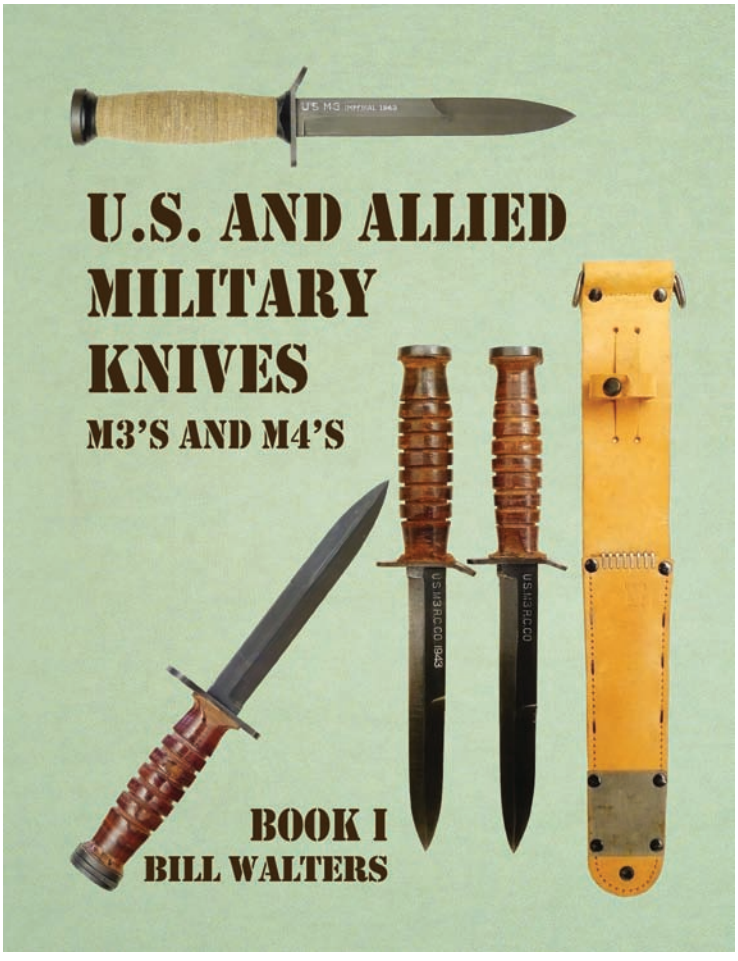

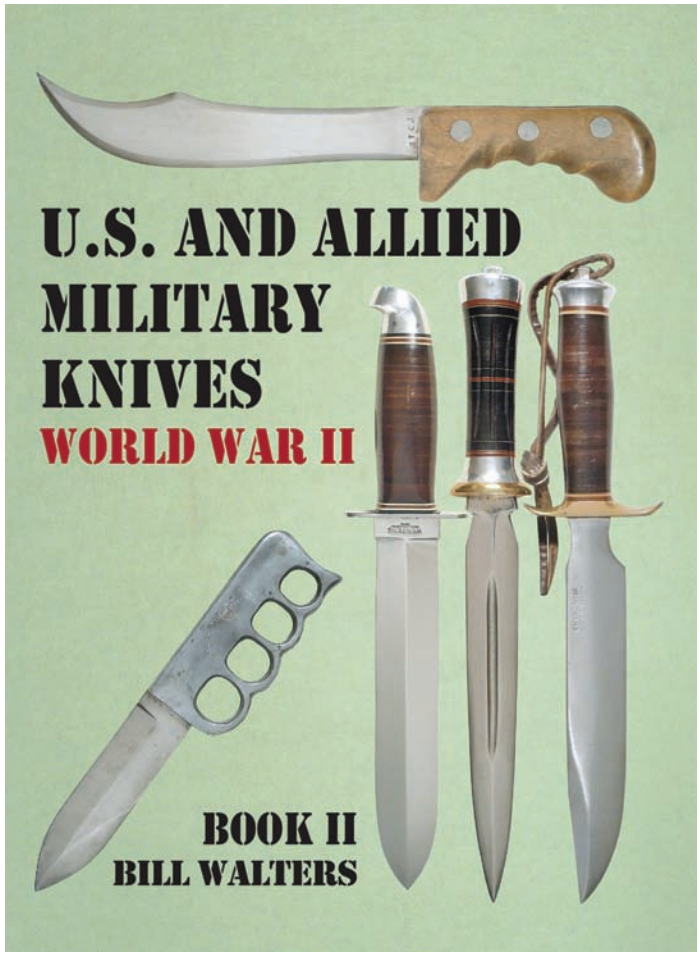

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COVER: General Douglas MacArthur and staff wade ashore on the Philippine island of Leyte early in the afternoon of October 20, 1944. Photo: National Archives

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More World War II in the News

Hardly a month goes by that there isn't something related to World War II in the news. Here's a sampling of some recent news items—all from February 2019:

Identification Sought On January 3, 1944, the destroyer USS *Turner* (DD-648) exploded under still mysterious circumstances near the entrance to New York Harbor. Of the nearly 300 sailors on board, 136 died.

Four graves in a national cemetery at Farmingdale, New York, are known to contain the remains of unidentified sailors; American Legion officials in New York asked their state legislators and congressional delegation to petition the Department of Defense to exhume the "unknown" sailors for the purpose of identifying them. The number of sailors buried in each grave is also unknown.

Blinded Black Veteran Honored The citizens of Batesburg-Leesville, a small South Carolina town, honored a black veteran with a historical marker. Hours after being discharged from the Army in February 1946, Sergeant Isaac Woodard, Jr., was removed from a Greyhound bus and beaten by the town's police chief, Linwood Shull, and deputies for allegedly being drunk and disorderly.

The beating left Woodard permanently blind. An all white jury found Shull not guilty of violating the decorated sergeant's civil rights.

The historical marker stands at the site of the former police station, where the beating occurred. The incident is said to have spurred President Harry Truman to issue Executive Order 9981 that desegregated the U.S. military in 1948. Woodard, 73, died in 1992 in the Bronx, New York.

"Kissing Sailor" Dies The second of the two people in one of the war's most iconic photos passed away at age 95. The image of a sailor forcefully kissing a woman in a white nurse's uniform in New York's Times Square on VJ Day has, for many years, symbolized the joy the world felt at the end of the war.

The sailor pictured is George Mendonsa of Middletown, Rhode Island. For years at least 11 men and three women claimed to be the people in the photo, but extensive research led historians to conclude that the sailor was Mendonsa.

Two photos of the same event were taken on that August 14, 1945, day—one by photojournalist Alfred Eisenstaedt and published in *Life* magazine. The other photo, from almost the same angle, was shot by U.S. Navy photographer Victor Jorgensen.

The nurse (actually a dental assistant) was identified as Austria-born Greta Zimmer Friedman; she died in 2016.

In an interview with the Library of Congress's Veterans History Project, she said, "I felt that he was very strong. He was just holding me tight. I'm not sure about the kiss. It was just somebody celebrating. It wasn't a romantic event."

In a 2015 TV interview, Mendonsa, who was serving on a warship and was home on leave when Japan surrendered, said that Friedman reminded him of nurses he saw on a hospital ship caring for wounded buddies.

As the *New York Times* said, "The photo has served as a symbol of the exuberance Americans felt at the end of World War II, capturing what many saw as a charmingly ideal portrait of the United States at a portentous moment of history."

It has also drawn the ire of some members of the #MeToo movement, who called it a classic example of an unwanted public sexual assault.

— Flint Whitlock, Editor

CORRECTION A sharp-eyed reader pointed out an error in the Spring issue Editorial: "I enjoy your magazine, however, in your latest editorial, you wrote that SS-Reichsfuhrer Heinrich Himmler '...was seized by Russian forces on May 20, 1945, and transferred to British custody.' Himmler was arrested by British forces on May 23, 1945, near Luneberg, while in disguise; he was never in Soviet custody.'" I apologize for the error.

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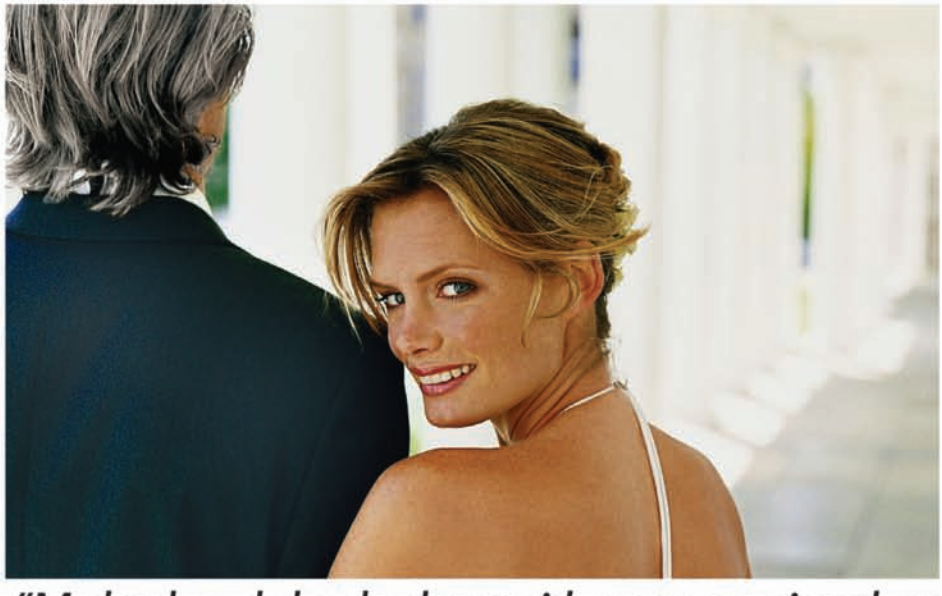
Karen James is a noted journalist and expert in sex and relationships.

Ask The Expert | Health, Marriage, and **Love After 50!**

Older Men in Italy Don't Need ED Drugs. Now We Know Why…

A Secret Any Man Can Use…

This month I got a letter from a reader in Texas about a "little secret" that has renewed her sex life with her husband!



"My husband shocked me with more passion than he's had in years. I'm so glad I discovered this new product"

Tina writes: Dear Karen,

For years my husband and I had a wonderful love life, but when he reached his 50s, he lost some of his old spark, especially in the bedroom. He tried every product available, but nothing worked. For the past few years, it's felt like we were roommates, not husband and wife.

Well, last month he came home from a business trip in Europe and shocked me with more energy and passion than he's had in years. He took me in the bedroom like we were newlyweds and gave me a night I'll never forget. It was just incredible, and our love life has been like that ever since. So here we are, closer than ever and enjoying the best sex of our lives… in our 50's!

On his trip, my husband stayed in a hotel room next to an Italian nutritionist and his wife and heard them passionately making love every night. He figured they must be in their twenties, but one morning he encountered them in the hallway and it turns out, they were in their 70s!

Instead of being embarrassed that they'd been found out, they were positively glowing and happy to share their "secret." The man pulled out a small pack from his satchel, gave it to my husband and said "These tablets come from a small town up north and are made from naturally pure extracts, packed with densely rich sexual nutrients. They will give you back your vigor in the bedroom and you will perform even better than you did as a young man. Then he laughed and said, "You will become an Italian Stallion like me!"

Karen, my husband has been taking one tablet each morning with breakfast, but the pack is almost empty and we both desperately want more. Do you know about these European tablets and how to get some in the States?

Sincerely,

Tina D., Fort Worth, TX

Tina, you're in luck, I do know about them. Ever wonder why older men from Italy and all over Europe are famous for staying energized, passionate, and sexually active well into their golden years? For decades, these men have relied on a unique blossom seed extract to enhance their bedroom power and performance.

Milled on the fertile northern plains, and sold under the brand name Provarin, these pure plant extracts have a legendary reputation throughout Europe for naturally fueling increased energy and excitement.

All-natural and safe to take, Provarin is a well-kept secret for those in the know. An old-school, family business, they still harvest product by hand and don't do any advertising. Long-time customers and word of mouth ensures their limited stock is sold out every year.

They do have a distributer here in the U.S. and Provarin is surprisingly inexpensive. A spokesman told me they were proud to produce the highest quality product for men and couples. He went on to say that if any of my readers call and mention this article, they'll be offered an additional 50% discount, free priority shipping, and a free bonus pack of 30 tablets!

Wow, so there you go, Tina - and the rest of you readers! The offer is only good while supplies last so give them a call today. The number is **1-800-716-1057.**

Aren't you glad you asked?

Karen

America's trusty M1 Garand rifle was "Woven into the fabric of the nation."

"In my opinion, the M1 rifle is the greatest battle implement ever devised."

— Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.

After the Great War, in which American troops were sent into combat with either the bolt-action M1903 Springfield rifle or the bolt-action British Enfield, planners in the War Department realized that, if the United States were ever drawn in combat again, they would need a far superior weapon.

The M1 became one of the most popular of all military weapons. Per Army specifications, the rifle would be a long-stroke gas piston-operated, eight-round, clip-fed rifle that used the same .30-06 cartridge as the '03 and Enfield.

In 1924, one of Springfield's engineers, Quebec-born (in 1888) John Cantius Garand, began working on a concept for a lightweight semi-automatic rifle. In 1934, what became the M1 was patented by the Springfield (MA) Arsenal (which began making military firearms during the Revolutionary War) and two years later a contract was awarded to Springfield, which would eventually turn out 4.5 million copies.

To meet the demands of World War II, Winchester Repeating Arms received an order for five million more; production of the M1 ended in the 1950s when the M14 replaced it (from 1959 to 1964).

The M1s were initially issued to regular Army units but at the outbreak of the war in December 1941 and for some months afterward, National Guard and U.S. Marine Corps units were still using the World War I Springfield '03s.

What made the .30-06 M1 Garand revolutionary for its time was the fact that it was semi-automatic, which means that it would continue to fire each time the trigger was pulled, until the clip was empty.

This was due to a gas port drilled into the bottom of the 24-inch barrel near the muzzle. When a round was fired, the gases built up in the barrel were channeled back toward the receiver (through what looks like a second barrel), where the gas automatically ejected the spent cartridge and the mechanics of firing seated a new one.

To fire the M1, the rifleman pulls the operating rod handle to the rear where it engages a catch, keeping the chamber open when the last round is fired. A full clip can then be inserted through the top of the receiver and pressed down with the thumb while the heel of the hand is used to hold back the bolt handle; the thumb is then quickly withdrawn. If not done correctly,

the bolt will automatically release and slam forward (with such force that it can cause a painful condition known by soldiers as "M1 Thumb"), as the first round is shoved into the barrel.

In training and combat, the M1, because it did not need to be removed from the shoulder in order for its bolt to be pulled back to eject a spent cartridge, the soldier could maintain a reasonably accurate "sight picture" of his target and not have to completely reacquire the target between shots.

The Army rated the rifle as accurate up to 450-500 yards in the hands of a proficient marksman. The M1 front blade sight was fixed but the rear sight could be adjusted in 25-yard increments and there was a knob to make "windage" adjustments. The amount of recoil was not excessive, although soldiers were advised by their rifle-range instructors to press the stock closely against the cheek and shoulder.

Although not heavy by Browning Automatic Rifle M1918 standards (which weighed 16 pounds empty), the M1 was no featherweight. Scaled at 10.5 pounds empty with its walnut stock and leather or canvas sling, plus the cleaning kit installed in its butt stock, the rifle was easy for the average soldier to carry (although some complained that it inexplicably got heavier as the day wore on, especially on long marches during basic training). The Colt 5.56mm caliber M-15 rifle (derived from the Armalite AR-15) introduced during the Vietnam War, weighs about 6.37 pounds empty.

Like any weapon, the M1 could become inoperable if mud, ice, rust, or other debris got into any of its moving parts. Therefore, soldiers were constantly implored to keep their weapons clean and well lubricated.

One disadvantage that many soldiers complained about in combat was the loud metallic "ping" that emanated from the weapon as it flung its empty clip into the air. One soldier said, "You might just have well yelled out to the enemy, 'Hey, I'm out of ammo for a few seconds.'" That being said, however, in the general din of battle, the "ping" was almost never heard by either friend or foe.

ABOVE: A worker finishes the wooden stock for an M1 Garand. More than 400,000 M1s were produced in the U.S. during World War II, at the rate of 1,000 a day. BELOW: John C. Garand, an inventor and engineer with the Springfield Arsenal, poses with the rifle that bears his name. OPPOSITE: A young soldier of the armored forces trains with a Springfield Arsenal .30-06 M1 Garand rifle at Fort Knox, Kentucky, in early 1942. Soldiers liked the rifle's rugged construction and dependable operation. A skilled marksman could hit targets at a range of 450-500 yards.

During the Korean War in the 1950s, International Harvester and Harrington & Richardson of Ilion, New York, were also awarded contracts to produce M1s.

The Germans also developed their own semi-automatic rifles in the early 1940s.

Called the Mauser Gewehr 41(M) and the Walther Gewehr 41(W), these weapons suffered from reliability problems that limited their usefulness on the battlefield. They were replaced by the Berlin-Lübecker Maschinenfabrik Gewehr 43, renamed the Karabiner 43 in April 1944; a total of just over 400,000 were produced before the war's end.

After the war, the United States sold or loaned most of its M1 arsenal to other

Continued on page 98

Bloody Lesson at Lemberg

BY THOMAS HARPER KELLY

On the third anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, men of the Powder Horn Regiment—the 100th Infantry Division's 399th Infantry Regiment—were poised on the outskirts of the small Alsatian town of Lemberg in northeastern France. The 100th Division was advancing through the Lower Vosges toward German positions around the Maginot Line fortifications at Bitche.

The soldiers of the 399th were the first of the 100th Infantry Division's units to enter combat. They had relieved elements of the battle-weary 45th Infantry Division in the Vosges Mountains near St. Remy a month earlier.

Although formed in November 1942 at Fort Jackson, South Carolina (it also trained at Fort Bragg, North Carolina), the "Century Division" was not sent overseas until October 1944, arriving at Marseille, France, and assigned to Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch's Seventh Army, which had been battling its way up the eastern border of France since landing along the Riviera (Operation Dragoon) on August 15, 1944.

In their first month of action, the 399th, along with the rest of the 100th Division, successfully breached the German winter line near Raon l'Etape and the Meurthe River, an action for which the regiment's 1st Battalion would ultimately be awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

The 1st Battalion's commander, class of 1937 West Point graduate Lt. Col. Elery Zehner, had a reputation for aggressiveness and leading from the front. When the leading companies in the battalion's first offensive action at St. Remy stalled under German artillery and machine-gun fire, Zehner marched over 400 yards of open ground to personally lead the advance into the town. His actions that day would earn him the Distinguished Service Cross.

Zehner is also credited with originating a unique fashion trend in his battalion. He wore a red scarf, a style that dozens, if not hundreds, of men in his battalion would later emulate, and under Zehner's leadership the 1st Battalion became known as the "Red Raiders."

In early December, the 399th doggedly pursued retreating German units during its drive toward the fortress city of Bitche, which was ringed by Maginot Line fortifications and dominated by a citadel built by Louis XIV.

A small but determined German force stalled the advance of the 100th Infantry Division in France's wintry Vosges Mountains.

The 100th Division's intelligence reports show that as Maj. Gen. Withers A. Burress, the 100th Division's commanding general, and Colonel Andrew Tychsen, the commander of the 399th Infantry, discussed plans for attacking Lemberg, Burress remarked that while he did not want to be optimistic, he thought the town was "pretty well cleared out."

Tychsen's reconnaissance told him of several German positions in the hills to the east of the town, and when he informed Burress that the enemy was in Lemberg the night before the planned assault, Burress responded "We will shoot the hell out of them tonight and see if they are still there in the morning."

What Burress and Tychsen did not know was that their adversary, Maj. Gen. Alfred Philippi, commander of the 361st Volksgrenadier Division, veteran of the Russian Front and recipient of the Knight's Cross, correctly surmised that the American advance would proceed along the main road leading through Lemberg to Bitche and, consequently, he concentrated his forces there.

Philippi's infantry units had been badly mauled in the preceding two months, and on the eve of the American attack on Lemberg he was forced to "comb out" his rear echelon in order to provide replacements for the 953rd Grenadier Regiment defending Lemberg. However, his units were still grossly undermanned. For example, the 2nd Battalion of the 953rd had only around 200 soldiers, not even a third of its strength according to the table of organization.

All Photos: National Archives

Taking cover in a shallow trench, soldiers from the 399th Infantry Regiment, 100th Infantry Division watch as an American tank passes by, December 1944. The "Century Division" had only been deployed to a combat area since October and was about to see its first major action in mountainous terrain during the advance on Bitche, France.

Philippi's preparations were extensive. He blew a road bridge in the path of the American advance, mined roads and the forests around them, and assembled five antitank guns and four antiaircraft 20mm cannons. Philippi's defense also included an antiaircraft flak battalion equipped with mobile flakwagens mounting 20mm cannons.

Tychsen's plan was to use his 1st Battalion to attack on his left flank, cutting the Enchenberg-Lemberg road before proceeding over railway tracks and into the wooded high ground to the north and west of the town, while the 3rd Battalion advanced on the right flank cutting the Lemberg-Mouterhouse road before seizing several hills that bordered the town to the east. The attack was scheduled for 9:30 AM, December 7, 1944, and would begin after a 20-minute artillery barrage.

The 1st Battalion had drawn the tougher assignment. Its route of advance was largely over open ground and its attack would be in broad daylight. The 3rd Battalion's orders contained their own dangers, too, though. Tychsen had received reports that there was at least one pillbox and some armored forces protecting the road and hills in the path of the 3rd Battalion's advance, and the steeply wooded hills would minimize or negate the amount of support the attached armored units could give to the attacking riflemen. Also, intermittent rain and snow nullified any impact American air power could lend to the American troops. If the Germans in Lemberg were determined to defend the town, it would be largely on their terms.

Major Zehner, leading the 1st Battalion, commenced his attack at 9 AM, 30 minutes before the planned start time. For troops in his battalion, disaster struck immediately. Instead of the rolling artillery barrage that the soldiers had been expecting, Raymond Howarth, a mortarman in B Company, recalled that the "rolling barrage, to me, seemed to consist of just a few artillery rounds placed haphazardly."

The soldiers in Howarth's B Company, which would be advancing across barren farm fields, questioned the intelligence of their orders. One BAR-man, Manson Donaghey, recalled that the enlisted men around him thought the idea of crossing open fields in daylight was crazy, and that "before we stepped into that field, the guys were all looking at each other thinking, 'We can't go out there across that open field.' The dumbest private there knew that was a stupid plan."

ABOVE: Medics load a 398th Regiment soldier, wounded during the drive on Bitche on December 14, 1944, into an ambulance. Many less seriously injured men refused to be evacuated. OPPOSITE: 105mm artillery pieces fire on German positions during the 100th Division's advance on Bitche.

Rifleman Carl Fleck told his sergeant that "the whole deal of advancing in skirmish lines over open ground sounded as foolhardy as Pickett's charge in Gettysburg."

Even the company commander, West Point graduate Captain Altus E. Prince, also may have been critical of the proposed plan of attack. He is alleged to have told his first sergeant, "Nothing in training would justify sending our company across that open ground."

When B Company began its attack, leaving the protective cover of the tree line, the Germans waited until the leading platoons advanced approximately 200 yards and crossed the Enchenberg-Lemberg road before unleashing a fusillade of small-arms and artillery fire.

The soldiers already across the road were helplessly exposed to German fire, and casualties began to mount. Ray Howarth saw a man decapitated by a 20mm cannon shell and "could see men being hit all around me, and everyone seemed to be screaming."

Those who could desperately tried to escape the maelstrom by running back over the road and taking cover in a shallow drainage ditch that provided some protection from small-arms fire. Even there, though, safety was not guaranteed. As Manson Donaghey lay in the ditch beside the Enchenberg-Lemberg road, two soldiers on one side of him were wounded, and Pfc. Daniel Hale, Donaghey's ammunition bearer who lay on the other side a mere six feet away, was struck by fragments from a tree burst that killed him instantly.

While most soldiers did their best to dig into the frozen ground for protection, others aggressively engaged German gunners. Sergeant Charles Adamcek's squad set up their light machine gun in the open and, despite being seriously wounded, Adamcek directed their fire, which knocked out a German *flakwagen*.

Ray Howarth ordered his squad to set up their 60mm mortar with the sight upside down so they could manipulate it from the prone position, and told them to use the crack of his buttocks as an ad hoc aiming stake. His squad immediately placed a 20mm cannon under fire and destroyed it on their second round. Howarth then systematically aligned himself with other targets as his squad rapidly fired their mortar. He believed that their continued firing knocked out a flakwagen, two German machine-gun positions, and reduced the amount of fire directed at his company.

Another B Company soldier, Pfc. Dick Jones, ran "with bullets whizzing by like a swarm of hornets" back across the Enchenberg-Lemberg road where his platoon and the company commander, Captain Altus Prince, were pinned down. After Jones strung field phone wire, Prince was able to regain contact with battalion headquarters and arrange for supporting artillery fire.

Charlie Company, which had been advancing on the right flank of B Company, was hit with the same barrage of fire as it moved into the open fields around Lemberg. Walter Bauer recalled, "You couldn't do anything. You just had to lie there and take it and try to shrivel up and crawl into the earth when each shell whistled in."

Charlie Company also hit back. Pfc. Richard Jackson displayed incredible bravery by leaving his sheltered position in the woods near the line of departure and, without orders, led his squad into the open fields where his men could fire at German positions. Despite the unrelenting German artillery and mortar fire, Jackson coolly operated his weapon and dropped 60mm mortar shells onto a German position firing at B Company.

Jackson's accurate fire also allowed two of C Company's platoons to advance, and GIs led by Sergeant Frank Rubino and Pfc. Donald Taylor managed to capture two 20mm guns that were battering their sister companies before being forced to retreat.

Meanwhile, on the battalion's left flank, A Company, which was largely shielded from German observation by trees, nevertheless began to suffer casualties after walking into the minefields set by Philippi's Volksgrenadiers in the days preceding the attack.

Frank Gurley, a rifleman in A Company, remarked, "The ones who didn't step on a mine got shrapnel" because the Germans had "laid traps and zeroed in with artillery and took a worse toll than a stubborn line of defense ever could have."

David Parr, a radio operator who had been loaned to A Company from the 1st Battalion Headquarters, confessed, "I was never more scared in my life." Under constant shellfire, Parr recalled that the noise was so great that "you could shriek your prayers and no one would hear you" and that "it was impossible to find a place to hide. The forest floor was all roots and stones. No place to dig in."

Gurley and his buddy tried to dig a foxhole, but it quickly flooded; he concluded that "the joint was a reservoir covered with dirt and trees." Instead, he built his foxhole vertically, using logs to assemble a rickety log cabin and philosophized, "Its value against incoming stuff was dubious but a sense of security is more important than security."

By noon, it was clear that the 1st Battalion's attack had failed. Maj. Gen. Burress spoke by radio with Colonel Tychsen early in the afternoon and told him that he was concerned by the 399th's lack of progress. Tychsen, either because he was unaware of how badly the attack was floundering, or to downplay the situation, told him that there were not "too many casualties," and that he already was formulating a plan for a renewed assault in the morning.

In the fields around Lemberg and in the town of Bitche, casualties were being collected and the outlook was not as optimistic. The wounded were not only exposed to German fire, but also a steady freezing rain. There was a shortage of stretcher-bearers, and the wounded were sometimes left unattended for hours.

Leon Wiskup, a machine gunner in A Company, was wounded by a land mine that almost severed his foot shortly after the attack began. After being treated by one of his company's medics he was left wedged against a tree on the side of a hill and drifted in and out of consciousness for hours. As night fell, "I was freezing and the morphine was wearing off. I said, 'Nobody's going to hear me. I'm not going to cry or anything like that. I'm just going to die silently. Nobody's going to hear me complain.'"

Then he heard footsteps in the snow, and an American voice swearing. Fortunately, a stretcher party had come nearby as Wiskup regained consciousness. He cried out, "I'm over here! I'm over here!" and the stretcher-bearers carried him to their jeep. Because of their exposed position, most of the soldiers in B Company could not withdraw until after dark. When they tried to get up and run back to the protection of the woods, they struggled to stand because their legs were numb from cold.

Roy Gray made his way to safety by "half crawling and stumbling, ramming my M1 [rifle] in the mud, all I saw was dead bodies."

The B Company history states that the company's retreat was "a sorry spectacle, the living carrying the half-dead, the lesser-wounded struggling back with their more sorely wounded comrades, others dragging themselves out by sheer willpower, the dazed and half-crazed stumbling ahead of them leaving this hellish place. Prayers of thanks mingled with curses of hate."

The total casualties for B Company that day were 17 dead and 34 wounded, but in testament to the horrors these men witnessed, 12 men were evacuated for exposure, shell shock, or nervous conditions.

In C Company, Walter Bauer had been sent to the battalion aid station after watching men blown apart by cannon shells and retreating to the wood line. But when Bauer got to the aid station and saw "all the guys from Charlie Company torn up and bloody, I figured there was nothing the matter with me," so he returned to the line, only to find that his 40-man platoon was down to only eight men, the equivalent of an understrength squad.

As units tried to reorganize and assess their losses, more than one soldier believed that their companies had been annihilated. One company suffered a profoundly tragic loss. Chester Fraley, who had transferred from the 398th Infantry Regiment shortly before the division embarked for France to serve alongside his twin brother Lester in combat, searched the battlefield for Lester, from whom he had become separated during the day.

ABOVE: Medics at the base of a house in a French village tend to wounded soldiers as a knocked-out Sherman tank, left, burns. RIGHT: A member of the 100's 325th Engineer Combat Battalion carefully removes an unexploded German 88mm round that penetrated a road near Lemberg.

Their comrade, Robert Hogberg, heard Chester Fraley "calling for his brother Lester who had been killed in the area. His plaintive call was chilling and very sad, I'll never forget it." All night, the Germans continued to fire on the 1st Battalion's positions. The regimental operations report noted, "There was precious little rest for the 1st Battallionites that night."

On the right flank of the American attack, the 3rd Battalion of the 399th was also running into stiff German resistance and was unable to relieve pressure on the 1st Battalion by outflanking Lemberg from the east. The attacking American companies were repeatedly pinned down in the ravines and on the hills that lay in the path of their advance. Even after calling in several tremendous artillery barrages, they were only able to make minimal advances. One of the attacking companies had 70 casualties.

As darkness fell, it was clear to Colonel Tychsen and the rest of the 399th regimental staff that the attacking companies had lost contact with their adjacent units and were in danger of firing on each other in the darkness. Also, the headquarters building was being targeted by German artillery observers. The German fire was so accurate that one shell, mercifully a dud, landed just outside the door of Tychsen's headquarters.

During the night of December 7, Colonel Tychsen retooled his original plan to capture Lemberg and called upon his 2nd Battalion, which had been in reserve, to move astride the 3rd Battalion and attempt a wider flanking assault of the hills stalling their advance and hopefully force the Germans to retreat out of Lemberg itself.

Major Zehner, commander of the 1st Battalion, stepped over the unexploded German artillery shell outside of the Tychsen's headquarters and offered to continue his attack straight into Lemberg itself with some armor from the 781st Tank Battalion he had located. Tychsen, aware that Zehner's rifle companies had been hit hard that day, and with tears in his eyes, replied gratefully, "Would you?"

An American machine gunner provides covering fire as his comrades advance on Maginot Line fortifications held by the Germans.

As dawn broke on December 8, it became apparent that the 1st Battalion was unable to immediately renew its attack. Frank Gurley remembered that as men from his company streamed back into Bitche that morning, "everyone looked like they had just gone through a wringer."

During the day, the 1st Battalion remained in positions in and around Bitche. To one B Company survivor it looked as though the company had lost a third of its men. By contrast, C Company, which had only lost one man killed in action, had 27 men wounded.

In A Company, one platoon was down to 14 men, less than a quarter of its strength, and the prevailing opinion was that their company would not be committed again for another few days. As they dried their clothes and gorged themselves on C rations, the order came to "Get your stuff on, we've got to take Lemberg."

The attack launched by the 2nd Battalion had succeeded in capturing a number of hills outside of the town, and elements of the 3rd Battalion were able to enter the outskirts of Lemberg itself. Zehner's weary 1st Battalion was needed to help secure the southern reaches of the town.

At around 5 PM, Sherman medium tanks from the untested 781st Tank Battalion

were rushed forward under a protective smoke screen, and despite having two tanks immediately disabled by mines, pushed into town, supported by the remnants of A and C Companies and fired point blank into at any house German soldiers fired from.

As night fell on December 8, Zehner's men had a foothold in the town, but cohesion between the battalion's weakened companies had all but disintegrated. In the dark, with the only light provided from burning houses, the companies could not coordinate their positions.

Frank Gurley from A Company heard someone approaching and assumed it was a soldier from C Company, which was supposed to be nearby, "I helpfully yelled 'Who is it?' The only answer I got was one word— 'Vas?' and even I know enough Deutsch to know that to be Kraut lyrics. I shut up."

Mortarman Richard Jackson of C Company, who was experiencing urban combat for the first time, recalled, "To move into the blackness of cellars was scary. On top of that, the Lemberg residents were happy to hear GI voices, and they grabbed us in thanks" as the GIs tried to search their homes for German soldiers. After clearing a few houses, the men bedded down for the night, exhausted from their two-day ordeal.

Outside of town, the 2nd Battalion was bearing the brunt of a fierce counterattack spearheaded by Philippi's flakwagens. In the predawn hours of December 9, German troops attacked F Company's positions near a railroad cut east of the town. Screaming, "Pigs, give up or die!" German soldiers rushed the company's positions.

Infantryman Hal Bingham of F Company recalled, "Those that could, ran from the deadly fire…. We had been exposed to the intense cold most of the night in our holes. Our limbs were numb, but we made them work like they had never worked before."

When F Company returned to its original positions on December 10, they found the bodies of some of their men lying side by side, all with bullet holes in their heads and their arms tied behind them. One of the executed was a close friend of Hal Bingham, and, after seeing his dead buddy, Bingham "cried like a baby between hurling profanity at the Krauts…. I learned to 'hate' from that experience."

ABOVE: American infantrymen advance through a French village and beneath a railroad overpass west of Lemberg. The division took Lemberg on December 9, but only after heavy losses. BELOW: A damaged M4 Sherman of the 781st Tank Battalion, attached to the 100th Division, gets towed out of a ditch near Lemberg.

By the morning of December 9, Colonel Tychsen was fully aware of how badly his troops had suffered in taking Lemberg. Maj. Gen. Burress was ready to move fresh troops from the 398th Infantry into the town if necessary, but although Tychsen confessed that A, B, and I Companies were each "down to the size of a good-sized platoon," he was confident that "we will have this place today."

He pushed his weakened 1st Battalion, supported by Sherman tanks from the 781st Tank Battalion, which continued to fire point blank into enemy-held houses, to drive through the remainder of the town. As the American soldiers reached the outskirts of Lem-

berg, the enthusiastic tankers charged on and annihilated a German column that included three flakwagens, two 75mm field pieces, and two howitzers.

Tychsen's prediction was correct: by 11:45 PM on December 9, Major Zehner, the 1st Battalion's commander, radioed that Lemberg was completely occupied, with the exception of snipers "here and there."

As the 1st Battalion was withdrawn from Lemberg and placed in reserve at Bitche, the weary soldiers—now veterans—marched over the first day's battlefield. Frank Gurley recalled, "We saw the vast field of craters we had crossed two days before and couldn't believe we had actually done it."

The attack on Lemberg had been a success, but at a terrible and unsustainable cost. The first day of the attack was the bloodiest day of the war for the Red Raiders, and the brutality of the fighting overshadowed either side's strategy.

The Germans defending the town had shown that, when possible, they could check the American advance for days at a time with relative ease. To an American survivor of the attack on Lemberg, the battle showed that not even the 1st Battalion's courageous leader Major Zehner could "turn a clever enemy ambush into a glorious 1st [Battalion] victory."

The 100th Infantry Division went on to distinguish itself in subsequent actions. It successfully held the line during the part of the Battle of the Bulge known as Operation Nordwind. On March 16, 1945, the citadel of Bitche fell to the men of the Century Division, and the American Army began moving into Germany. By the time the Germans surrendered on May 8, the 100th Division was positioned east of Stuttgart.

While spending 185 days in combat, the division suffered 916 killed in action, 3,656 wounded, 180 missing, and 491 listed as POWs. As the division's historian wrote, "In liberating or capturing over 400 cities, towns and villages, they defeated major elements of eight German divisions. In this process, the men of the 100th inflicted untold casualties on the enemy, the only calculable number of which is the 13,351 enemy prisoners taken." □

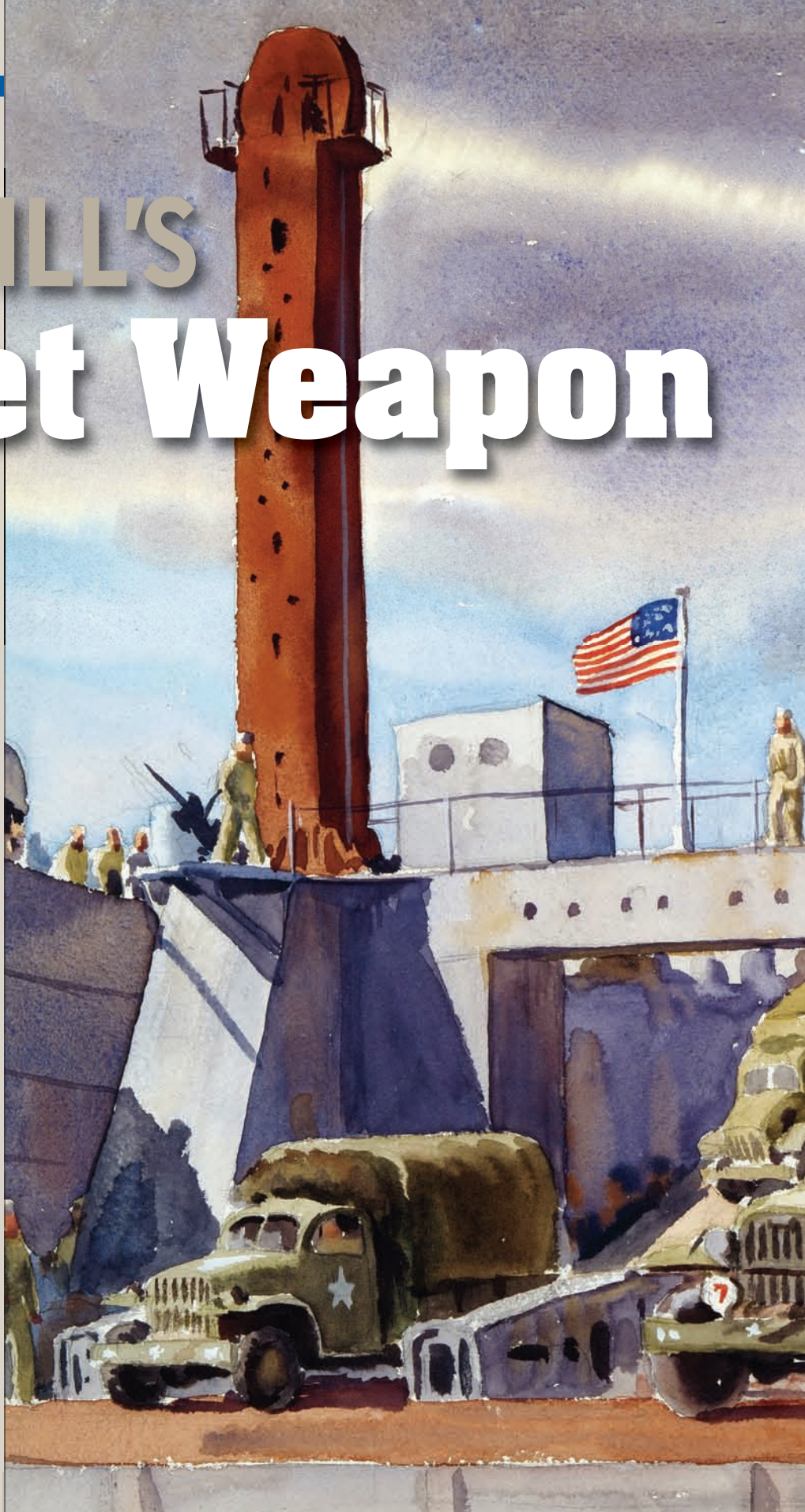
BY ALAN DAVIDGE

CHURCHILL'S Secret Weapon

The D-Day beaches contained no natural harbors. So Allied engineers built artificial harbors and towed them across the English Channel to supply the troops.

BACKSTORY: *The author has always had a soft spot for the story of the Mulberries. His mother, who was a skilled maker of wedding dresses in London, was conscripted to learn welding and sent to Jones' Cranes, at Letchworth, just north of the capital city. In American terms she became Rosie the Riveter. A few years ago, he discovered that Jones was the company contracted to make the cranes that would unload the ships at the Mulberry harbors.*

Then the author learned that Allan Beckett, the designer of the floating roadways that, come hell or high water (literally), brought the goods ashore, was a former pupil at his school, East Ham Grammar, in London's East End. This gave him a personal interest in the subject and one that he never missed the opportunity to expand on whenever he takes school parties or visitors to the cliff tops overlooking the remains of Mulberry B—alias Port Winston—at Arromanches, France, also known as Gold Beach.



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In this watercolor by U.S. Navy artist Dwight Shepler, an LST (Landing Ship, Tank) discharges its cargo from both upper and lower decks onto a floating Mulberry roadway at Omaha Beach. These floating piers operated for only a few days before they were destroyed by the large storm of June 19-20, 1944. This artificial harbor, and the one at Arromanches, France (codenamed Mulberry B and dubbed "Port Winston"), made it possible to resupply the Allied invasion forces.

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ABOVE: As testing nears completion, a British Crusader tank heads away from Cairn Head in Garlieston Harbour, Scotland, on Allan Beckett's floating roadway. This location was selected because the tide there rises up to 24 feet, similar to Normandy. OPPOSITE: Dwight Shepler painted the massive concrete "Phoenix" caisson units under construction at Portsmouth, England. These were then towed across the English Channel at 3-4 knots, where they were then sunk to create the breakwaters.

Brave men win wars. On D-Day they jumped out of C-47s, crash-landed in gliders, and stormed out of landing craft, dueled with minefields, barbed wire, and any form of ordnance that the enemy could throw at them. They emptied clips and magazines at everything that moved, but with each fateful ping from their M1 Garands they knew they would be closer to running out of ammunition unless they had a reliable supply chain to back them up.

Brave men also have to rely on engineers, planners, and the right sort of politicians to crack the whip when required and ensure that their front line kept moving. All of the combat drills practiced so diligently in the run-up to June 1944 would have been pointless without the work being undertaken simultaneously by Churchill, Britain's War Office, and the Admiralty to provide them with material support by building artificial ports to be installed on the D-Day beaches.

Gooseberry and Mulberry harbors sound like unlikely heroes. If your weapon of choice has a name like bazooka or Marauder, you feel that you have a head start in dealing with the opposition. However, for the liberation of Normandy and ultimately the whole of France and Europe, the contributions of these artificial harbors that supplied troops post-D-Day with a lifesaving supply route have ranked with the service rewarded by a Victoria Cross or a Medal of Honor, not to mention a Purple Heart or two when the forces of nature joined forces with the enemy.

Our story begins with the miracle of Dunkirk. As soon as Churchill's rescue mission was completed, he began planning for the day when British and Commonwealth troops would be back on the French beaches. He probably hoped that they would be accompanied by their American compatriots, but in 1940 that was wishful thinking. His immediate concern was to prevent a German invasion of Britain, increase arms production, and ensure that the country was not starved into submission.

If Britain survived this onslaught and reached a position where an invasion of Europe became possible, it was clear that the enemy would already have built defenses along the French coastline. In particular, they would have fortified the existing ports where troops would be able to disembark in large numbers and where large supply ships could unload the precious cargoes they needed to penetrate further into enemy occupied Europe.

Britain held on, was joined by the United States in December 1941, and managed to defeat Rommel in North Africa in the fall of 1942, enabling Churchill to allow himself a little optimism: "This is not the beginning of the end, but it may be the end of the beginning." His caution was partly conditioned by the results of the failed Dieppe Raid (Operation Jubilee) in August 1942, when the Allies discovered exactly what would happen if they tried to capture one of the Channel ports.

The joint Anglo-Canadian raid occupies a place in history as a very painful wound costing 70 percent casualties, but military planners were able to turn this negative into a positive. The eventual plan to invade Europe, Operation Overlord as it would become known, would not include a part of the coastline where the Allies would have to capture a port.

Vice Admiral John Hughes Hallett, the leader of the Dieppe Raid, stated categorically after the raid that capturing a port would be impossible, and that one would have to be brought across the English Channel. After the raid, he became chief of staff at the War Office, and slowly a plan for that very thing began to take shape. Some ideas had already been submitted for artificial harbors by leading naval civil engineers.

The planners would also try to convince Hitler that the invasion would take place at Calais, but it would actually happen on the sandy beaches of Normandy. There was just one problem: once the landing craft had dropped divisions of assault troops on to the beaches, where would the supply vessels, requiring deep water and port facilities, be able to discharge the equipment necessary for the invasion to progress inland?

Churchill's record in World War I, especially after the disastrous Dardanelles campaign, was not one to attract superlatives from historians, but one of his ideas, which had to be shelved at the time, was to provide a starting point in the search for a solution.

It consisted of a plan for the construction of temporary deep-water harbors off the Dutch-Danish coast. In 1941 this was resurrected and expanded by a group of forward-thinking civil engineers. A new department, Transportation 5, was set up at the War Office under Brigadier Bruce White, who channeled the ideas of these engineers into a plan that was eventually to become the Mulberry Project.

In addition to the War Office, the Admiralty and Lord Louis Mountbatten's Combined Operations also played a role in the planning. Predictably, there was a range of opinions on how best to proceed—and plenty of conflict between engineering experts, politicians, and the military.

It was estimated that the advancing army would need to be supplied with 12,000 tons of equipment and 2,500 vehicles each day. Like the early experiments with flying machines, a project of this scale was something that had never been tried before. But unlike the development of manned flight, the development of the mobile harbor labored under severe time constraints and a desperate need for secrecy, all while fighting a global war.

There was also a view articulated by Admiral John Leslie Hall, Jr., once the United States became involved, that the large LSTs (Landing Ships, Tanks) could do the job without the need for artificial harbors, although their operation would be dependent on the daily tides. In fact, the LSTs performed well on the latter half of D-Day, and some military historians still argue, hypothetically, that they could have provided all the supplies needed by the liberating armies.

However, there were some decisions that could be agreed upon. Sites were chosen on the west coast of Britain, in southern Scotland on the Solway Firth, and North Wales at Morfa where the coastline had sufficient similarities to Normandy to allow initial engineering experiments to take place. Part of the labor supply came from military personnel, but because many of the fit young men with the necessary practical skills were already serving their country overseas, a fresh supply of construction workers had to be found and trained in double-quick time.

Construction camps were set up, and men and women—some of them refugees from war-torn Europe—worked in secrecy to advance the testing of the project prototypes. Initially the focus was on floating roadways and pier heads without the consideration of breakwaters. Progress was slow, resulting in increasingly frustrated memos from Churchill to find a structure that could rise and fall with the tide.

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The whole construction project was completed in a mere six months, an amazing achievement, and although it was carried out under the strictest secrecy, there were one or two security scares.

At the same time, the British Royal Navy was taking a closer look at the French coast. Initially, the planners had begun collecting old photographs and holiday postcards of the beaches and matching them with reconnaissance photographs to get an idea of the topography and beach defenses. They also began looking at the Normandy tides, which rose and fell 21 feet twice a day.

Next, a series of clandestine forays in the dead of night brought back sand, mud, and rock samples to help understand the geology. As well as confirming that the water would be deep enough for a harbor, they had to ensure that heavy vehicles, once landed, would not get bogged down on the sand.

Major Logan Scott-Bowden of the Royal Engineers one night took a motor torpedo boat to investigate part of what was to become Sword Beach, swimming ashore under cover of darkness, knowing that capture would have serious consequences.

Subsequently, a daring mission involving a midget submarine brought back vital information from Vierville (Omaha Beach) to be fed into the project that was evolving on Scotland's Solway Firth. As a result of these efforts, scale models of the projected landing beaches were constructed and the plans moved on apace.

After the dangerous reconnaissance, the months spent on the drawing board, and the experiments that were played out under a cloak of total secrecy, the final decisions were made.

The project then moved into the construction phase, another breathtaking exercise in logistics. The final go-ahead was given on September 4, 1943. Two artificial harbors would be created; Mulberry A would be located on Omaha Beach to supply the western end of the invasion area, and Mulberry B would be installed at Gold Beach at Arromanches-les-Bains to supply the eastern end of the D-Day beaches.

To build the two massive artificial harbors, 300 companies were commissioned, involving over 40,000 pairs of hands, many of which were not possessed of construction skills. But if car factories could produce aeroplanes, seamstresses like the author's mother could become welders, and young farm hands could build reinforced concrete structures.

Locations were chosen around Britain for specific sections of the project that would eventually come together as one dynamic jigsaw or Lego monster. The huge concrete caissons would be built in new dry docks on the estuaries of the River Clyde in Scotland and on the Thames downstream of Blitz-torn London.

The metal floats were constructed in Kent in southeast England and along the south coast in areas around Southampton. Existing bases on Scotland's Solway Firth and Morfa in North Wales also continued to play a role.

The whole construction project was completed in a mere six months, an amazing achievement, and although it was carried out under the strictest secrecy, there were one or two security scares.

The worst came when the British traitor and renegade broadcaster William Joyce (alias Lord Haw Haw) announced that the enemy knew all about the concrete structures that were being constructed to be sunk off the coast to create harbors. He then went on to say sarcastically that the Germans would save the British forces the effort and sink them themselves.

This caused alarm but not panic, and the British code breakers at Bletchley Park set to work intercepting any messages that could indicate how much the Germans knew. Eventually one was found that indicated they believed they were simply anti-aircraft towers.

In light of what appeared to be a serious breach of security, a further precaution was taken. Alongside the planning for Operation Overlord was a deception plan (Operation Fortitude) that was developed to convince Hitler that when the inevitable invasion took place, it would be in the Dover-Calais area, the shortest distance between England and France. To reinforce this bit of misinformation, a concrete caisson was towed to the English coast near Dover.

Some descriptions of the structures produced are confusing because of the code-names used, but an account given on the Combined Operations website is very lucid and does not overwhelm with engineering jargon. It also has some excellent appendices containing primary source material and tables of statistical detail.

The basic structure was a ring of breakwaters with three entrances for the cargo vessels. Once in this sheltered environment, the ships would unload onto piers and the supplies would be transported to the shore by trucks traveling along floating roadways. There were three major components to the structures: breakwaters, piers, and roadways.

Breakwaters had three components. The first was the cross-shaped bombardons that were floating breakwaters, anchored in place, and forming the first point of resistance to the waves and tides of the English Channel.

Next to these were the huge, concrete caissons, codenamed "Phoenixes," which were hollow inside so that, once the valves were opened, they could be sunk into position. There were a total of 146 of these

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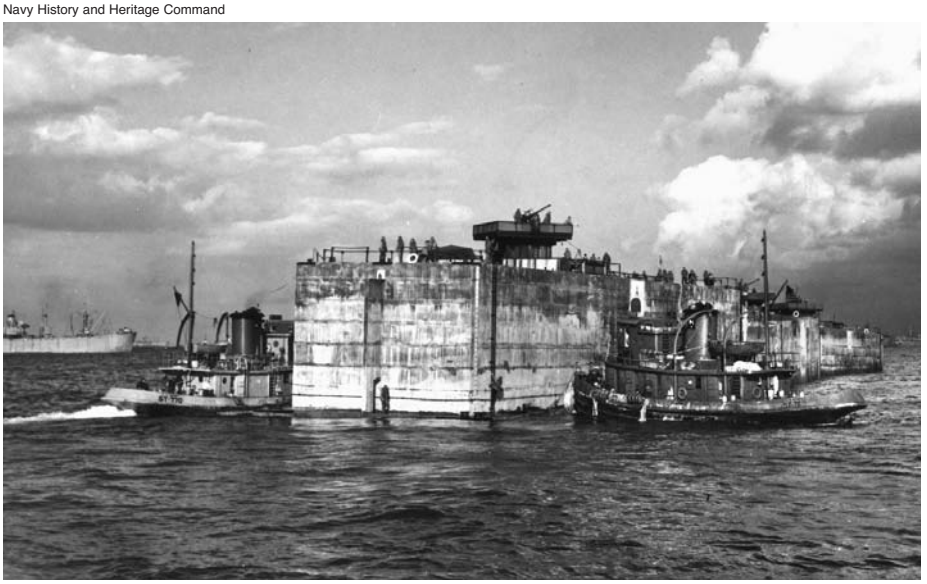

ABOVE: Seacocks were opened to allow water to sink them into position. Antiaircraft guns were mounted on the largest caissons and barrage balloons floated overhead as protection against enemy aircraft. TOP: Caissons were moved into position by tugs to form a continuous line of breakwaters. OPPOSITE: Aerial view of the Gooseberry breakwater that was emplaced hours after the Normandy landings at Arromanches. Vessels can be seen passing through openings in the line of old Navy ships sunk to create the Gooseberry.

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ABOVE: Seven pier heads are joined together by bridges. Each pier head consisted of pontoons attached to the seabed but could rise and lower with the tide. RIGHT: Black American soldiers construct a landing ramp at the end of a floating roadway as part of Mulberry A at Omaha Beach. The ramp was steel mesh laid over wooden staves. OPPOSITE: Mulberry B Harbor completed and in full operation. At bottom, the breakwater of caissons and block ships; in the center is the row of pier heads forming the wharf, with floating roadways running to shore. All together, they formed a port as big as Dover's.

Phoenixes; they were 196 feet long, 59 feet high, and 49 feet wide.

Although not exactly visible from space, a brief look at Google Maps today provides an instant understanding of how durable these structures proved to be and gives an immediate impression of the actual scale of Mulberry B. Visitors to Gold Beach at low tide can easily absorb this vista from the viewing platform in the cliff-top parking lot or walk out to them.

The final piece of the breakwater jigsaw puzzle was an armada of old ships (known as "block ships") that crossed the Channel, many under their own steam, and, in a final act of service, were scuttled in relatively shallow water to complete the ring of resistance. Within this ring there were three gaps (north, east, and west entrances) for the supply ships to enter and exit. The scuttled ships were codenamed "Gooseberries," and there were 70 in total.

Although a number of the old ships were employed at the two Mulberry harbors at Omaha and Gold Beaches, the majority were used as breakwaters at Utah, Juno, and Sword to assist with the unloading of LSTs.

Once inside the breakwaters, the ships and barges would anchor at a pier head to unload. Codenamed "Spuds," these were held on the seabed by four stout legs. They were built with platforms that could be electrically raised and lowered in relation to the tide and were connected to the shore by Allan Beckett's floating roadways.

Roadways represented the phase of the construction project that took the most time to perfect. Sections of roadway, 80 feet long and codenamed "Whales," were attached to floating pontoons called "Beetles." These concrete-and-steel structures had to support the 56 tons of the whale—plus a further 25 tons whenever a tank crossed over them. The roadways were connected to the beach by a buffer or approach span. Power-driven pontoons called "Rhinos" were also constructed to bring other supplies ashore.

After the war, many of the roadway sections were conveniently recycled as bridges to cross some of Normandy's rivers. Close to where the author used to live in Pont Farcy, the river Vire was spanned by one of the whales from Mulberry B. It was replaced in 2008, saved by a group of enthusiasts, and placed in a local picnic area beside the river for visitors to appreciate. Many of the others form part of open-air museums at Arromanches and the Vierville Draw at Omaha Beach.

Planning D-Day was an enormous exercise in logistics. In addition to training the first-wave assault troops and arming the ships and planes whose shells and bombs would support the landings, the planners had to find ways of organizing and storing the trucks, jeeps, tanks, tents, medics, and other support staff who would follow through once bridgeheads had been established.

The roads and villages of southern England were full of men and machines. (One wag said that the vast numbers of barrage balloons floating over Britain's ports and shipyards were the only things keeping England from sinking.) At the beginning of June it was estimated that there were three million troops in southern England, ready to invade Europe. This approximates to the total population of Mississippi.

As D-Day drew near, at Lee-on-Solent close to the Isle of Wight, a fleet of tugs waited for instructions for what became known as Operation Corncob. These tugs had been requisitioned from the United States and Britain to steer the components of the Mulberries into position as soon as the troops had landed.

Anticipating a date of June 5 for D-Day, the tugs sailed on the 4th and assembled together in the English Channel. Bad weather delayed the assault, but Eisenhower made the momentous decision to go for it on the 6th. By D+1, they were anchored five miles

off the French coast while calculations were made from high ground on land and from high-water marks on the beaches of Omaha and Gold for the alignment of the piers. Marker buoys were also placed in the planned locations for the lowering of the concrete caissons and the scuttling of the block ships to create the breakwaters.

Next, the order was given for the block ships to sail, under the command of Lt. Col. Landsdowne, RN, to the locations where they would be sunk as breakwaters—a task that was made easier by the Luftwaffe who sank two of them in just the right spot off Omaha Beach!

The tugs at this point were also under enemy fire, although the more rapid progress made by troops inland from Gold Beach meant the tugs at Mulberry B could function with less hindrance. The journey for the tugs was a difficult one, being limited to a maximum speed of five miles per hour. In all, a total of 400 units were tugged across the English Channel, no less a flotilla than the assault force that had preceded them.

At Utah, Juno, and Sword Beaches, other block ships were sunk to create the Gooseberry harbors that would act as breakwaters to assist with the supply of men and materials via smaller vessels. The role they played was significant and helped to take the pressure off Mulberries A and B. At Utah Beach in particular, they made a major contribution to supplying U.S. troops and were operational until November 1944. (This story is well described and displayed to visitors at the recently expanded Musée du Débarquement Utah Beach.)

At the two Mulberries, the outer ring of protection was created by the bombardons, which were towed into moorings on June 6 that had already been positioned by boom-laying craft. Unfortunately, an error in calculating the depth of the water resulted in their being located in deeper water than had been planned, and they formed a single rather than a double barrier, giving less wave protection.

The caissons, including a two-man crew and an antiaircraft gun team, arrived on June 7 for the tricky maneuver that would set them into the positions, which some of them still occupy. Their valves were opened and they sank to the seabed. The tops were between 10 and 30 feet above sea level, depending upon the tides, and barrage balloons and antiaircraft guns were affixed to the structures to deter any enemy planes that took an interest in them.

The investment in gunners on the caissons proved its worth when Mulberry B was targeted by 12 Messerschmitts in mid-July. After a sustained duel, only three of the planes returned home.

On the night of June 19, the Normandy coast was subjected to the worst storm in living memory. It came from the northeast—the worst possible direction—and continued to pound the coast for three days. The storm only damaged Mulberry B at Gold Beach, but at Omaha Beach, the harbor was irreparably destroyed. Ships were blown into the concrete caissons,

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which subsequently broke up.

The breakwaters, however, did manage to provide shelter for many vessels that would otherwise have been destroyed, and some supplies did get through. On the worst day of the storm, 800 tons of petrol and ammunition were unloaded at Arromanches, together with hundreds of fresh, if seasick, troops.

There is an even deeper significance to the date of June 19, as it was the next alternative for D-Day. One consideration for Eisenhower, when his chief meteorologist consulted the tide tables and weather forecasts to decide whether or not to postpone the original plan, was the next date when the tides were favorable. The advice he received was to select June 18-20. The consequences of a postponement to these dates would have been even more devastating to the campaign to reclaim Europe than the destruction of Mulberry A.

As the storm subsided, American troop landings at Omaha reverted back to the methods used on June 6. Landing craft and ships ran onto the beach and sailed back with the rising tide. This actually worked better than expected, and some of the salvageable parts of the harbor were used to strengthen Mulberry B.

Mulberry B, which became known as Port Winston, soon began to play its part in winning the war. Initially, it was used for unloading stores, but following Patton's breakthrough at Avranches and the British Operation Bluecoat, which drove great wedges through Hitler's defenses, the port became a major conduit for troops to enter Europe.

During the week of August 14, when German troops were in full flight toward the Falaise Gap, 24,000 of the 34,000 British soldiers who landed in France arrived via the port.

Throughout the late summer and fall as Paris was liberated, and as Patton characteristically accelerated his tanks toward Germany, the area around Gold Beach and the little town of Arromanches became a frantic hive of activity to supply the push eastward.

The capture of Cherbourg at the end of June meant that a major French port was in Allied hands, but the German Army had so thoroughly wrecked and mined the facilities that American engineers had to work night and day through the end of August to make it usable. Even then, it was at the far western end of Normandy and was of limited value as the Allied forces had driven farther eastward.

By November, with the capture of Walcheren, the Belgian port of Antwerp became available, and the Allies could begin a new supply line closer to where the action was taking place. Mulberry B could then heave a sigh of relief and enjoy a place in history.

The statistical records speak for themselves: during the five months that it was operational, Mulberry B provided a gateway to Europe for two million servicemen and 500,000 vehicles. In addition, four million tons of supplies were unloaded to support the liberation.

From an engineering perspective, it was equally impressive: the harbor eventually contained a structure of 600,000 tons of concrete, 31,000 tons of steel, 33 jetties, and 10 miles of floating roadway.

Another logistical engineering marvel that often gets overlooked is the contribution of PLUTO (Pipe Line Under The Ocean). Without sufficient quantities of fuel, the mechanized Allied armies would have ground to a halt shortly after reaching Normandy. Therefore, like the Mulberry Project, engineers had been secretly working on an ingenious way to keep fuel flowing from Britain to France.

Two separate plans were developed. The first was basically a large, three-inch flexible hose that looked more like an undersea communications cable than an oil pipeline. Carried aboard ships on huge reels, the pipeline was laid from the Isle of Wight to Cherbourg—a distance of 70 miles—on August 14, 1944.

National Archives

ABOVE: In the wake of the savage storm, small craft, vehicles, and components of the harbors themselves lie in shambles at Omaha Beach, rendering it totally useless. Thereafter, all supplies had to come ashore at Mulberry B until coastal ports could be opened. BELOW: Remains of Mulberry B, photographed recently, can still be seen at Arromanches. OPPOSITE: Another Shepler painting shows the wreckage of Mulberry A at Omaha Beach after the storm. The row of concrete caissons disintegrated on the third day of the storm, allowing the seas to break up the piers and floating roadways.

Navy History and Heritage Command

The second PLUTO relied on 20-foot sections of three-inch steel pipe that was, like the flexible hose, coiled around huge floating spools code-named "Condundrums." These deployment systems weighed 1,600 tons each and were pulled by three tugboats from the British terminal at Dungeness to the French port of Boulogne, 31 miles away. As the spools unwound, the pipe settled to the bottom of the English Channel.

Between the two PLUTO systems, a million gallons of fuel per day could be delivered to the Continent.

The Mulberry Project belongs among those near-miraculous events like Dunkirk, the Dam Busters Raid, and the war in the Pacific that succeeded against all odds to bring an end to the most costly war in history.

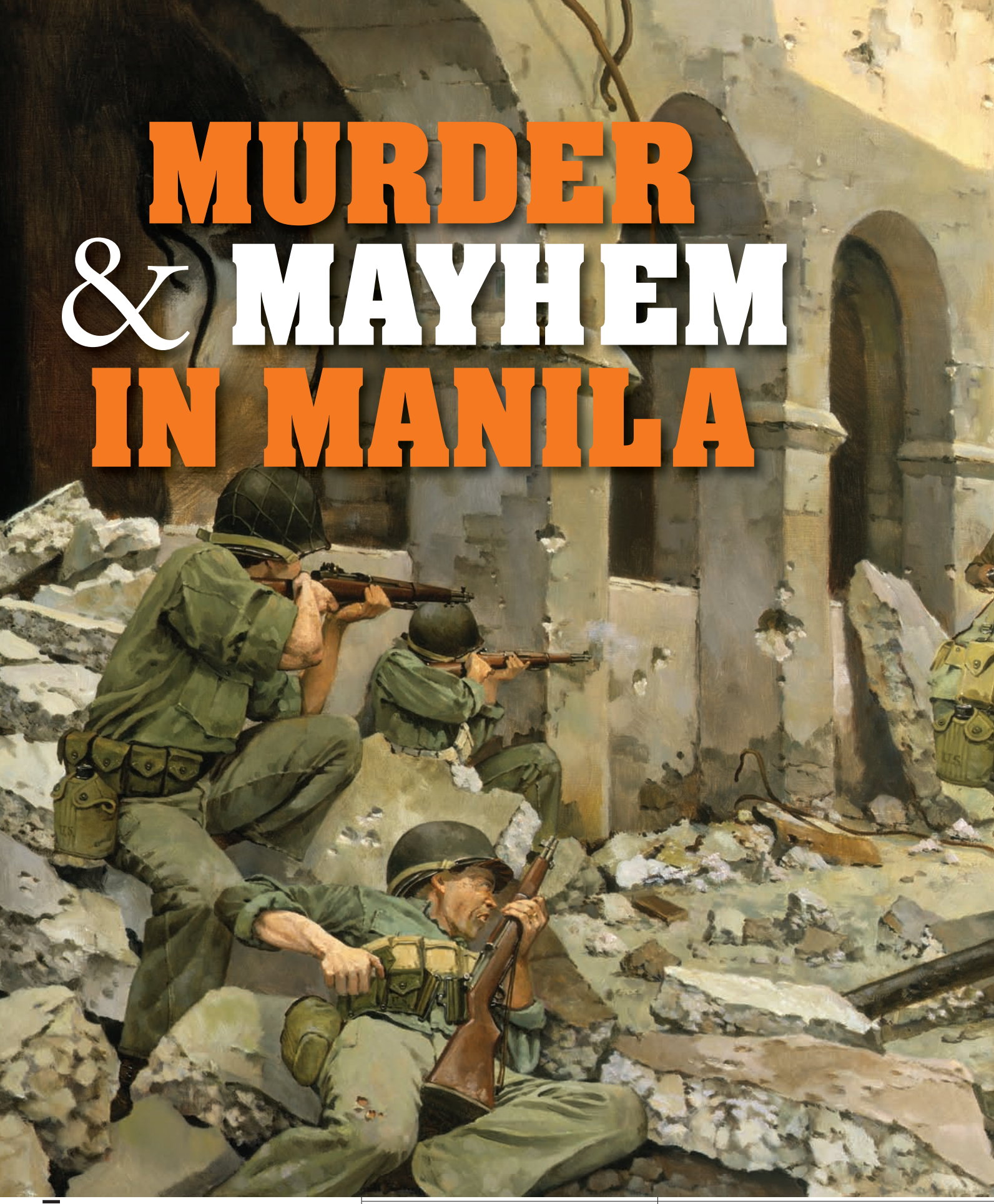
It attracted a few critics, however, especially after the storm that destroyed Mulberry A at Omaha Beach meant that the unloading of supplies had to carry on regardless and succeeded without an artificial harbor.

However, it must be remembered that Mulberry B was fully operational and contributing daily to the supply chain with increasing levels of efficiency and could be confidently relied on, whatever the weather conditions. It was as if a plane had crash-landed on one engine. It had landed and everyone was safe!

The value of the contribution of the Mulberry and Gooseberry harbors is beyond question, but even before D-Day, the project was creating spinoffs that would be useful elsewhere. Many people believe that it indirectly assisted with the development of the LSTs, which were then in their infancy, and that the procedures developed at Mulberry B provided the basis of the roll-on, roll-off ferries used globally today.

Working under pressure within enormous logistical and time constraints forced engineers to come up with solutions to problems that would have other uses. Aside from the logistical value, the morale boost that this successful project gave to the Allies at a crucial time is incalculable. □

MURDER & MAYHEM IN MANILA



The brutal 29-day battle to liberate the Filipino capital left the "Pearl of the Orient" a smoldering ruin.

BY JAMES M. SCOTT

On the early evening of March 11, 1942, General Douglas MacArthur, his wife Jean, and the couple's four-year-old son Arthur walked out onto Corregidor's north dock in preparation to escape the battered Philippine island. Under siege by advancing Japanese forces, MacArthur's garrison would soon fall.

Four Navy PT-boats would take the general, his family, and a few trusted aides some 500 miles south over two days to the lush island of Mindanao, where B-17 bombers dispatched from Australia would pick them up at a Del Monte pineapple plantation and fly them to the port city of Darwin.

MacArthur helped his family into the boat, where young Arthur clutched his white stuffed rabbit. The general then turned for a final look at the scorched rock fortress. "Gone was the vivid green foliage, with its trees, shrubs, and flowers," he noted. "Gone were the buildings, the sheds, every growing thing."

The general's eyes fell upon his troops, who stared at him in silence. In addition to his suitcase, musette bag, and walnut cane, MacArthur would take his wife and son, the two most precious people in his life. He would leave behind thousands of

Men of the U.S. 148th Infantry Regiment, 37th Infantry Division battled the Japanese in the rubble-strewn streets of once beautiful Manila. In this illustration by Keith Rocco, squad leader Sergeant Billy E. Vinson is depicted stopping a bayonet charge by six desperate Japanese with his Browning Automatic Rifle. Vinson's actions earned for him the Silver Star for valor.

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: In his headquarters tunnel on the Filipino island of Corregidor, General Douglas MacArthur (left) confers with his chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Richard Sutherland, shortly before the commander of U.S. Army Forces in the Far East was evacuated to Australia. LEFT: General Tomoyuki Yamashita was tried, convicted, and executed for war crimes.

husbands, sons, and brothers of families back home in America.

Families that had trusted him.

Those men would soon face the fall of Corregidor Island and the horrible Bataan Death March, followed by years of torture and beatings at the hands of the Japanese. Others would die of starvation, malaria, and dysentery, or be crammed inside the bowels of Japan's notorious "hell ships."

Beyond his troops, MacArthur's beloved Manila was doomed to a brutal three-year occupation that would lead to mass starvation and even the plundering of cemeteries as desperate residents robbed the dead of jewelry, clothes, and even dentures—anything that could be bartered or sold for a few pesos to buy a fistful of rice.

This was defeat.

The general raised his cap in a farewell salute. "The smell of filth thickened the night air," he later wrote. "I could feel my face go white, feel a sudden convulsive twitch in the muscles of my face."

"What's his chance, Sarge?" MacArthur heard a soldier ask.

"Dunno," came the answer. "Maybe one in five."

The boat pulled away from the dock and aimed out to sea. As Corregidor receded in the frothy wake, MacArthur made a solemn promise, one he would announce to reporters upon his safe arrival days later in Australia, a vow that would drive him as the weeks turned into months and then years.

"I shall return."

For MacArthur, abandoning the Philippines was more than a tactical retreat. It was a personal loss.

The general's father had helped capture Manila during the Spanish-American War and later served as military governor of America's new colony. The Philippine capital, during the four decades of U.S. administration, had developed into a small slice of America in Asia, a city of Spanish colonial and elegant, neoclassical architecture intermixed with spacious parks, all set along Manila's gorgeous bay.

Thousands of American service members, as well as employees with companies like General Electric, Del Monte, and B.F. Goodrich, called the Pearl of the Orient home, soaking up the relaxed quality of life, complete with social clubs and golf courses, swimming pools and movie theaters. "Manila is by far the most beautiful of all cities in the Orient," the *New York Times* wrote in 1932. "From the top of the University Club, it seems half hidden in a canopy of trees, green everywhere, a city within a park."

Like his father, Douglas MacArthur's life was interwoven with the Philippines. First posted to the islands after his 1903 graduation from West Point, MacArthur returned repeatedly, serving in greater capacities and cultivating close personal relationships with political leaders.

"In this city," he once wrote, "my mother had died, my wife had been courted, my son had been born." For MacArthur, the son of a career military officer who had spent his life ricocheting around world, Manila was the closest thing he had to a hometown.

"With my little family," he wrote of his time there, "I would be lonely no more." Many more than just Douglas MacArthur loved the Pearl of the Orient. "To live in Manila in 1941," remembered CBS news correspondent Bill Dunn, "was to experience the good life."

But the good life ended on December 7, 1941.

Following Japan's attacks on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines, MacArthur ordered the evacuation of his forces to the Bataan Peninsula and the fortified island of Corregidor. He declared Manila an open city, hoping to spare the Pearl of the Orient from destruction.

In the race to reduce the family's life into just two suitcases, MacArthur had no choice but abandon his prized library, his wife's jewelry and family silver, and even his father's Civil War mementos.

The Japanese seized Manila on January 2, 1942, herding thousands of American civil-

ians into the 50-acre internment camp at the University of Santo Tomas. MacArthur endured 77 days in the tunnels of Corregidor before his departure.

During Japan's nearly three-year occupation, the city suffered tremendously. Japanese forces confiscated warehouses of rice, sugar, and canned foods, swiped vehicles and medicines, and looted department stores. Fields rotted and the economy collapsed. Beggars swarmed the streets, many of them children.

"It is a common sight nowadays in the crowded streets of Manila that a mother, with tears in her eyes, sells her child to whoever may pay her the agreed-upon amount in cash," one American intelligence report noted in 1944.

As many as 500 people died each day from starvation. American families, locked up behind the gates of Santo Tomas, survived off dogs, cats, and even rats, which fetched eight pesos on the camp's black market. "I was fond of Whiskers," internee Robert Colquhoun recalled of his pet cat, "but when the time came, I simply picked him up and presented him for slaughter."

As commander of Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific Theater, MacArthur spent the war clawing his way north from Australia across New Guinea, each victory bringing him one step closer to returning home. When senior naval officers proposed America bypass the Philippines in the march toward Japan—a move that would abrogate MacArthur's promise to return—the general browbeat President Franklin Roosevelt at a July 1944 conference in Hawaii.

The shocked Roosevelt, who gave in to MacArthur's demands, retreated to bed that night, summoning his physician and demanding an aspirin. "In fact," the president said, "give me another aspirin to take in the morning."

The pressure MacArthur felt reflected in the comments he made to his aides over breakfast just hours before his troops stormed the beaches of Lingayen Gulf on January 9, 1945—110 miles north of Manila and two years, nine months, and 29 days since his escape. "If the Lord will let me land this one," he said, "I'll never ask so much of him again."

To liberate the capital—home to an estimated one million people—American war planners divided up the city. Maj. Gen. Robert S. Beightler's 37th Infantry and Maj. Gen. Verne D. Mudge's 1st Cavalry Divisions would approach from the north. Once inside Manila, the 37th would cross the Pasig River near Malacañang Palace and then turn west and drive toward the capital's waterfront.

The 1st Cavalry would envelop the capital from the east, crossing the river farther south before turning toward the bay, a thrust that would parallel the moves of the infantry. The 11th Airborne Division, meanwhile, would advance from the south and close the city's back door.

To stop MacArthur, Japan had dispatched Tomoyuki Yamashita, the 59-year-old general who earlier in the war had earned the nickname "the Tiger of Malaya" after he captured Singapore and Malaysia from the British. The general's rivalry with War Minister Hideki Tojo, however, had prompted the latter to sideline Yamashita for much of the conflict, exiling him to Manchuria to guard against a possible Russian invasion.

But the fall of the Marianas in the summer of 1944 had led to Tojo's ouster—and Yamashita's resurrection. The husky general was sent to Manila with orders to turn the Philippines into a tar pit and bog down MacArthur. "The fate of the Empire," Emperor Hirohito warned him, "rests upon your shoulders."

But Yamashita, like MacArthur earlier in the war, had no desire to battle for the city, where the starving residents would turn on his forces once the Americans arrived. Instead, he divided his forces into several geographic commands and dispatched them to the mountains and jungles of Luzon, hoping to use the rugged landscape against the Americans.

Rear Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi, however, had other plans. As commander of the Manila Naval Defense Force, Iwabuchi's job was to stay behind and wreck the port and waterfront in order to rob American forces of the strategic asset. Once completed, his orders mandated he abandon the city—orders he had no plans to follow.

National Archives

Manila civilians, some with their hands tied behind their backs, were massacred by the Japanese as American troops closed in.

The 49-year-old had been a failed skipper early in the war after American forces had destroyed his battleship, the *Kirishima*, off Guadalcanal. Iwabuchi had spent the rest of the war parked behind a desk, an insult to any seafaring officer during wartime. Only through Japan's worsening for-

tunes—and the death of so many more capable officers—had Iwabuchi been given a second chance.

Iwabuchi saw in Manila a chance to redeem himself by creating an urban bloodletting similar to Stalingrad. To accomplish this, he divided his 17,000 soldiers and marines into several commands that covered northern, central, and southern Manila. Iwabuchi's ultimate plan called for a final defense centered around Intramuros, the ancient Spanish citadel guarded by towering stone walls that overlooked Manila Bay.

Around the Walled City, Iwabuchi planned a defensive perimeter of large concrete buildings that resembled small fortresses, each built to withstand typhoons and earthquakes. Japanese troops barricaded rooms with desks, chairs, and bookcases. In the corridors, troops built staggered walls filled with dirt four feet thick and seven feet high, leaving just enough clearance over which to toss hand grenades. Iwabuchi's forces likewise booby trapped dozens of intersections, sinking railroad ties into the pavement and converting depth charges into land mines.

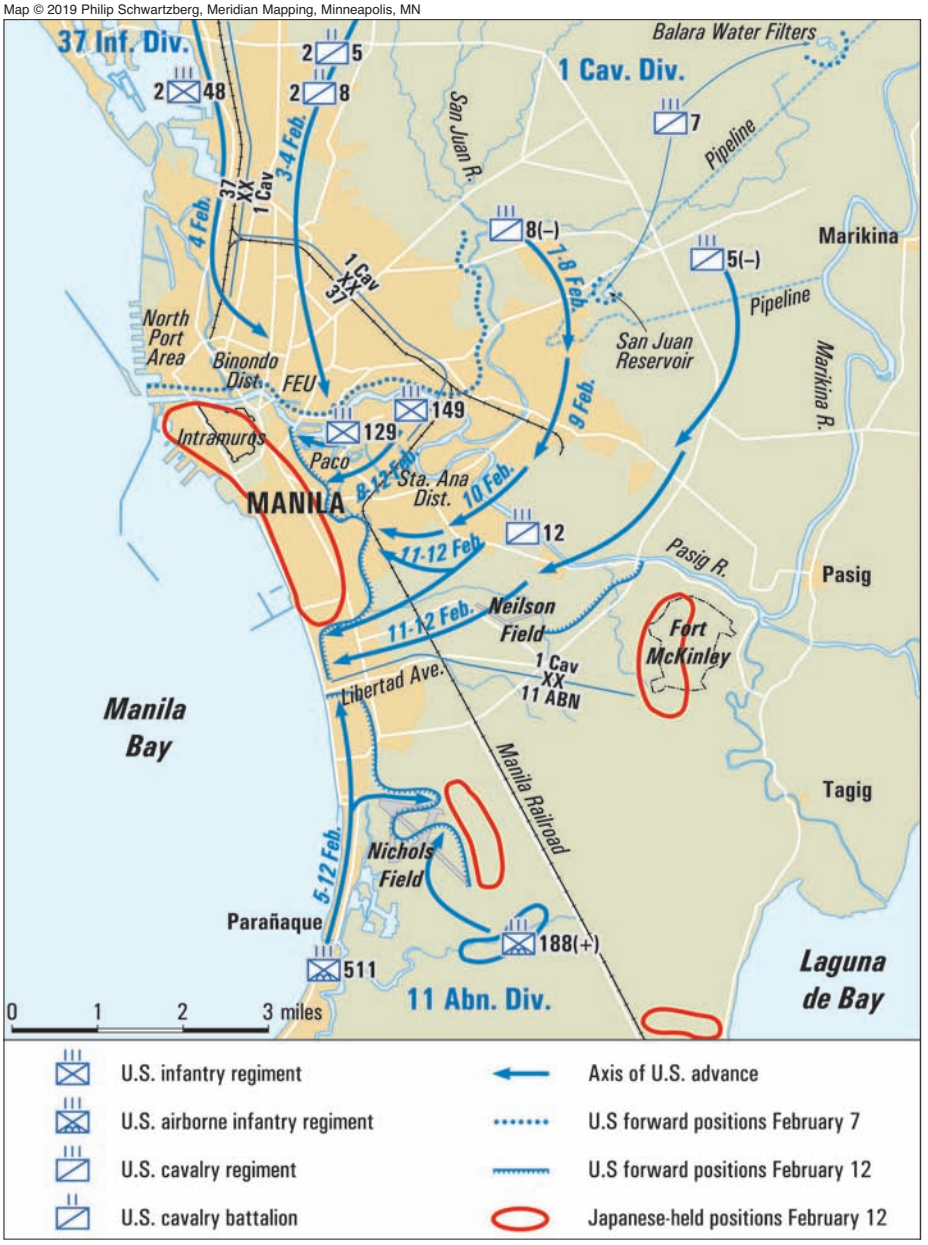
Despite these defensive preparations, which Filipino guerrillas radioed to American forces, MacArthur remained convinced the Japanese would evacuate the city. The general was so confident of this fact that he ordered his staff to plan a liberation parade.

Complicating the challenge for American war planners, however, was the conflicting intelligence. In early December, guerrilla messages reflected Yamashita's intention to abandon the city. But by January—after Yamashita left the capital for the mountains around Baguio—the messages changed, pointing to Iwabuchi's plan to fortify Manila.

"Japs erect pillboxes, trenches and roadblock on main streets," one message stated.

"Defensive preparation of civilian homes," read another.

Residents watched the city's fortification with alarm. Many who for years had prayed for MacArthur's return now wor-



With their backs to the bay, 17,000 Japanese soldiers tried to hold off the three American divisions that had them encircled.

ried over the hell liberation might bring—and with good reason. "Very few of you," Japanese troops warned, "will live to see the Americans."

Men of the 1st Cavalry Division rolled into Manila at 6:35 PM on February 3, 1945, aiming for the University of Santo Tomas, where internees starved to death at a rate of three or four a day. During the final month of internment, the daily caloric intake had plummeted to just 572. Throngs of internees swarmed the Americans. "We went berserk with joy and excitement!" one internee wrote in her diary. "We clapped, cried, shouted, screamed, and cheered."

But the excitement proved short lived.

That same day, Iwabuchi gave the order to begin the destruction of Manila. Incendiary squads blew the bridges over the Pasig River and swept through the city's northern districts dynamiting buildings, a scene MacArthur's aide, Colonel Courtney Whitney, watched unfold from a rooftop at Santo Tomas.

"Last night was a night of horror in Manila," he wrote in a letter. "Terrific explosions from the enemy demolitions shook the city and great flames belched up thousands of feet to make it appear that the whole city was aflame."

Major General Robert Beightler, commander of the 37th Infantry Division, vented over what he now realized was a deliberate plan to destroy the capital. "We were powerless to stop it—we had no way of knowing in which of the thousands of places the demolitions were being controlled," he wrote in his report. "Big, modern, reinforced concrete and steel office buildings were literally blown from their foundations to settle crazily in twisted heaps."

Infantrymen caught in the conflagration had no choice but to turn back as flames jumped from one building to the next. "Japs popped out of alleys and buildings trying to escape the fire," recalled Captain Labin Knipp with the 148th Infantry Regiment. "We were ready and shot first. Most of the men in the lead threw grenades and charged shooting from the hip."

Troops armed with Browning automatic rifles moved to the front. "We made quite a hole, killing every Jap we saw," added 1st Sgt. Roy "Bus" McMurray. "At one place the fire had nearly choked off our street. We had to charge through the opening in a rush. The blistering heat and the walls of fire closing in on us had me wonder if we would make it."

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: An antitank gun crew prepares to stop an expected Japanese counterattack, February 6, 1945. BELOW: Major General Vernon D. Mudge, 1st Cavalry Division commander, confers with some of his subordinates during the battle for Manila.

By February 7, 1945, American forces controlled the city north of the river while the Japanese held the south. With all the bridges sitting on the Pasig's muddy bottom, troops had no choice but to cross by boat, a perilous operation. Iwabuchi's troops unleashed withering fire, targeting the assault boats and the amphibious tractors used to recover them.

"Hollywood could not have staged the smoke, flash, and bang more dramatically," recalled Major Chuck Henne of the 148th Infantry Regiment. "It was spellbinding to watch pieces of paddles and splintered chunks of boat plywood fly through the air while men paddled with shattered oars and rifles to work their boats to the far bank, seemingly oblivious to what was happening to them."

Meanwhile, on the city's southern border, the 11th Airborne Division collided with the formidable enemy defenses known as the Genko Line. The Japanese, originally anticipating an American invasion from the south, built a defensive line that consisted of 1,200 pillboxes, antiaircraft guns, and machine-gun nests that stretched from Nichols Field near Manila Bay northeast to Fort McKinley.

Adding to the challenge, the Japanese converted depth charges into land mines and buried 500-pound aerial bombs in the highways leading into the city. "From now on our advance was not measured in miles," wrote Edward Flanagan, the 11th Airborne Division's historian. "It was measured in yards."

American artillery blazed a trail for the infantrymen, who fought house to house, assaulting pillboxes and bunkers with

National Archives

ABOVE: A lone Sherman tank carefully prowls the capital's shattered streets in search of enemy positions. Nearly every Japanese defender died. OPPOSITE: The historic, walled area of Intramuros within the city of Manila and built during the Spanish Colonial Period, was the scene of much heavy fighting. Here the Manila Post Office, being used by Japanese forces, is subjected to an American bombardment, February 12.

flamethrowers and demolition charges. Japanese antiaircraft shells exploded overhead, producing a rain of steel that pockmarked homes and stripped leaves and branches from trees.

"Destruction and chaos marked the path of our drive into Manila," Flanagan wrote. "Houses and shops, flanking both sides of the highway which leads to the heart of the city, were torn up by both Jap and American artillery. Tin-roofed houses looked as though a giant can opener had sliced through them, while once pretentious mansions gauntly displayed charred chimneys and trash piles of rubble."

The fight for Nichols Field proved fierce. The expansive open area gave the Japanese clear lines of sight on any advancing Americans. Enemy marines had fortified airplane revetments, encircled the area with barbed wire, and dug tunnels linking gun emplacements and concrete pillboxes, one of which was three stories deep and found to have a mahogany bed.

The defenders had lined the outer perimeter of the airfield with five-inch naval guns stripped off destroyed warships. The battle would ultimately drag on until February 13 before the last of the enemy at the field were destroyed. "The Japs," Flanagan wrote, "defended Nichols Field as if the emperor's palace itself were sitting in the center of the runway."

By February 9—just six days after American troops entered the city—Iwabuchi realized the battle was lost. MacArthur's forces had made it over the river into central Manila, while his defenses along the city's southern border threatened to collapse. What had started as a fight between two armies over one of Asia's great cities on that day devolved into one of the worst human catastrophes of World War II.

An examination of the timeline of dozens of atrocities that occurred in Manila point to February 9 as the fulcrum on which the violence shifted from individual attacks against suspected guerrillas to organized mass extermination.

Captured Japanese orders found on the battlefield—some mere fragments, others signed and dated—would later reveal that the atrocities were not random acts of unrelated violence but rather part of a systematic plan to destroy the city and annihilate its inhabitants.

"The Americans who have penetrated into Manila have about 1,000 artillery troops, and there are several thousand Filipino guerrillas. Even women and children have become guerrillas," one order stated. "All people on the battlefield with the exception of Japanese military personnel, Japanese civilians, and special construction units will be put to death."

That battlefield, of course, was the city.

Other orders gave instructions on how best to eliminate civilians. "When Filipinos are to be killed, they must be gathered into one place and disposed of with the consideration that ammunition and manpower must not be used to excess," one order mandated. "Because the disposal of dead bodies is a troublesome task, they should be gathered into houses which are scheduled to be burned or demolished. They should also be thrown into the river."

Japanese forces burned to death more than 500 people at the German Club. Troops rounded up and slaughtered another 400 males in the district of Paco, beheading 200 of them. Marines killed another 360 men, women, and children in the dining hall at St. Paul's College.

John Lewy, a Jewish refugee from Germany, survived the massacre of more than 50 civilians inside the Red Cross Headquarters. "When I came to my senses, I thought it was a dream," Lewy later told war-crimes investigators, "but everybody was dead."

These large massacres often went hand in hand with scores of small-scale atrocities as marauding troops attacked families in homes and pulled others out of bomb shelters and butchered them in the streets. The Japanese went so far as to lure victims into an open lot on Kansas Street by planting a Red Cross flag. "The Japanese wanted to be sure that everybody was dead," one survivor later told American investigators.

The attacks went beyond murder. Scores of women were rounded up and sexually assaulted at the Bay View Hotel, the luxurious property overlooking Manila Bay where Jean MacArthur once lived and enjoyed Manila's legendary sunsets.

"I was raped between 12 and 15 times during that night. I cannot remember exactly how many times," Esther Garcia Moras later testified. "I was so tired and horror stricken that it became a living nightmare."

Against the backdrop of this horror, American forces pressed deeper into the city. Between Japanese demolitions and American artillery, Manila was being destroyed from the inside and out. Men, women, and children retreated below ground, where conditions inside cramped air raid shelters devolved as the hours turned to days. Bunkers built to house a single family at times held multiple. With so many bodies pressed together, the heat soared and air stagnated, filled with the noxious smells of vomit and urine.

Austrian Hans Steiner, in a letter to his mother, recounted his experience. "We lived like dogs," he wrote. "All around us there were fires and explosions. It was the best imagination of hell one could get."

Block by block, American soldiers battled, slowed by the fortifications at intersections, which required troops to blast their way through adjacent buildings in order to attack the rear of a pillbox.

Just as perilous were the barricaded buildings, where Japanese marines dropped Molotov cocktails and even aerial bombs from upper floor windows. "The preferred solution was to use cannon to blast the upper floors to rubble and then move in," Major Chuck Henne recalled. "An equally favored alternative was to burn the building. When these alternatives wouldn't work, riflemen moved in to take the building floor by floor."

The battle for Rizal Hall, the largest building on the campus of the University of the Philippines, proved typical of the ferocious fight American troops faced throughout Manila. Japanese marines, who had fortified the passages, fought mercilessly to hold the three-story building, going so far as to try to blow up the building with both them and the Americans inside.

Neither side wanted to give ground, so as dusk settled over the city on February 22, American cavalrymen and Japanese marines prepared to share the wrecked building for the night. Iwabuchi's marines launched an 8 PM assault on the Americans on the second floor, firing machine guns and tossing grenades.

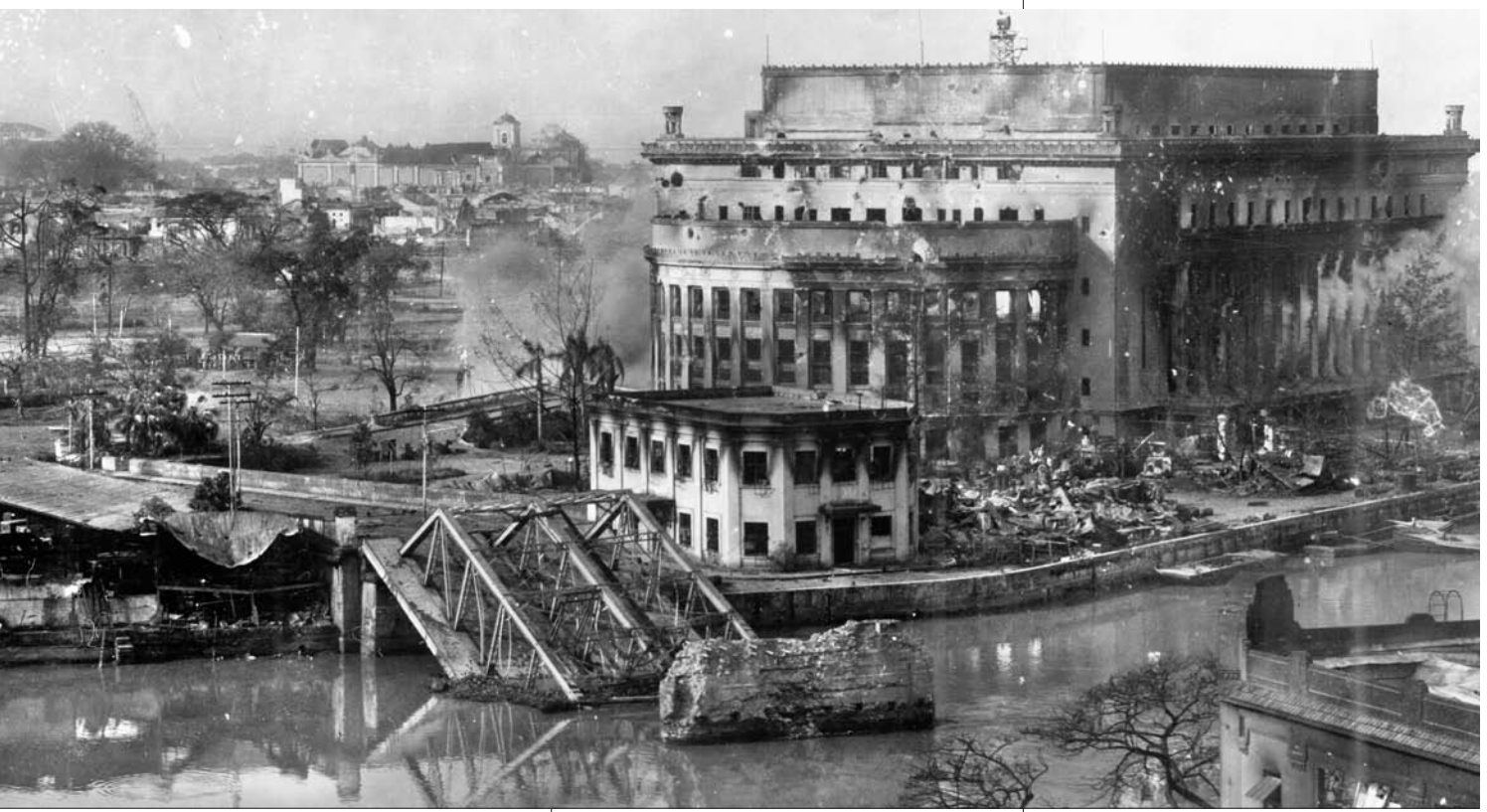
"The holding force was engaged in the firefight for about thirty minutes, then the Japs let up for about ten minutes before launching a second attack," the 5th Cavalry Regiment's report noted. "This next attack was repulsed in 20 minutes, whereupon the Japs withdrew and no more fire was received from them."

The Americans remained on alert in the darkened building, expecting another assault as soon as the moon set. The soldiers fell silent with nothing to do but wait, listen, and worry. Around 1:30 AM, cavalrymen heard enemy voices at the far end of the building. "At first they seemed to be conversational tones, but gradually increased into a weird chant until there was a full chorus of singing," recorded the cavalry's report.

"This commotion went on for about 45 minutes, culminating in a final burst of song and loud shouting, immediately followed by many reports of exploding grenades and dynamite charges."

The cavalrymen continued to listen. More grenades exploded. Then silence.

Detonations went off at half-hour intervals until around 4 AM, at which time a lasting silence settled over the building. The following morning, an assault team moved in, counting 19 bodies in the first room, all dismembered by grenades in what the cav-



National Archives

National Archives

American troops cross the Pasig River to attack enemy troops holed up in Intramuros's Fort Santiago.

alry's report described as "an appalling sight."

But the carnage did not stop there. "In the five adjoining rooms and at the foot of the staircase were more bodies showing the same manner of death," the report stated. "A total of 77 had completed the ritual which our troops had listened to during the early morning hours."

American forces readied at dawn on February 23 for the assault on Intramuros, the ancient fortress that for more than three centuries had stood against invaders. An estimated 2,000 enemy troops occupied the 160-acre citadel, protected by 2.5 miles of towering stone walls that rose in places as high as 22 feet. Japanese troops had all along prepared to make a final stand in the Walled City, killing an estimated 4,000 male civilians in recent weeks who might pose a threat once MacArthur's forces breached the walls.

Complicating any fight, war planners realized, were the hordes of women and children, some of whom the Japanese had shanghaied to serve as human shields. Furthermore, many of the civilians, who had faced starvation even before the battle began, hovered near death. In hopes of preventing unnecessary bloodshed, Lt. Gen. Oscar Griswold, commander of the XIV Corps, had attempted days earlier to convince the Japanese to release the civilians.

"Your situation is hopeless—your defeat inevitable," the general broadcast. "I offer you an honorable surrender."

Only silence, however, answered him.

"So," Griswold wrote in his diary, "it is a fight to the death!"

As the sun inched skyward at 7:30 AM, artillery opened fire. Reporters, many camped out in General Griswold's command post atop a burned-out hotel just north of the river, watched the opening salvos. "I have witnessed naval bombardments," reported Bill Dunn of CBS, "but nothing to match the concentrated fury of this barrage."

Ten minutes passed. Then 20.

The guns thundered, each of the 120 artillery pieces an instrument in the symphony of destruction. In one hour, artillery would fire a staggering 7,896 rounds—a total of 185 tons of ordnance. That was combined with another 1,900 mortars, meaning that every second of the bombardment saw an average of three shells fired. "The old soft stones," recalled Major Henne, "were no match for the gunpowder of modern artillery."

The bombardment was pure terror for the civilians held hostage by the Japanese inside Intramuros, as shells pulverized the ancient stones and filled the air with thick dust, making it a struggle just to breathe. "We could not even see each other because of the smoke," recalled survivor Benita Lahoz. "We thought that we were all going to die."

At 8:30 AM, a cloud of red smoke rose over the south wall of Intramuros, the signal for the artillery attack to end and the ground assault to begin. "The ensuing silence," Dunn recalled, "seemed even louder than the bombardment."

Assault boats pushed away from the muddy bank to cross the river. At the same time, artillerymen fired smoke mortars in front of the Legislature, Agriculture, and Finance buildings—all in Japanese hands—to prevent any counterattacks on the ground forces. Infantrymen charged across the burned and pockmarked golf course at 8:33 AM.

Three minutes later, troops debarked from the assault boats and scrambled over the rubble into the Walled City. "As dazed, half-crazed civilians moved out of the north wall toward the boats," Dunn reported, "our troops moved in and the fighting within the walls began."

Inside troops found a wasted city whose narrow streets were packed with the rubble of homes, shops, and churches, forcing the infantrymen to pick through the debris. "Retaking the Intramuros," one report noted, "developed into a small-arms duel."

Street fighting erupted, forcing S/Sgt. Maynard Mahan to duck behind a concrete block while Japanese rounds buzzed overhead. He lit a cigarette and waited, closing his eyes for a break as he inhaled. A mortar exploded nearby, raining stone down around him. He realized then that his cigarette had vanished, stolen by a piece of flying shrapnel.

"Damn it," he shouted. "That was my last butt."

American forces erected a footbridge of pontoons and boards to help with the outward flow of refugees. "Over it streamed what was left of the civilian population of Intramuros. Those who weren't emaciated from starvation bore wounds and cuts from bullets," wrote New York Times reporter George Jones. "At intervals in this pitiful proces-

sion came Chinese carrying litters on which lay sick, wounded, or dying men, women, and children."

The few remaining enemy troops retreated behind the towering walls of Fort Santiago, hiding in the labyrinth of tunnels and damp dungeons, forcing the Americans to ferret them out. "Every thinkable method was employed including gasoline and oil," noted one 37th Infantry Division report. "It was effective for when things cooled and men entered these chambers, Japs were found piled high having suffered just as horrible a death as they inflicted on the thousands of innocent civilians they massacred."

The battle for Intramuros was finally over.

For General Griswold, who had watched the fight from a battered hotel north of the Pasig, the successful capture of the Walled City came at the relatively low cost of 25 Americans killed and 265 wounded. "God has been good to me this day—and I am very grateful," the XIV Corps commander wrote in his diary. "I am sure that the battle for Manila will soon be history. It has been a great strain and responsibility."

Only three major enemy strongpoints remained—the Legislature, Agriculture, and Finance Buildings. "The buildings had been laboriously converted by the Japanese into individual fortresses of the most formidable type with sandbagged gun emplacements and barricades in the doors and windows covering all approaches to each building as well as adjacent ones," according to a XIV Corps analysis. "Machine guns within the buildings themselves were sited to fire down corridors, stairways, and even inside rooms."

Unlike earlier battles, there were no civilians trapped inside, only an estimated 700 Japanese marines under the command of Iwabuchi. The plan called for the 148th Infantry Regiment to take the Legislature and Finance Buildings, while the 5th Cavalry would seize the Agriculture Building.

The assault kicked off with a brutal artillery bombardment. General Beightler, commander of the 37th Division, was amazed at the destruction: "We made a churned-up pile of dust and scrap out of the imposing, classic government buildings."

Infantrymen stormed the Legislature, securing the first floor of the north wing and the first two floors of the main structure. Japanese marines in pillboxes set up in corridors and rooms poured lead on the infantrymen, killing two and wounding 52 others.

The battle ground to a halt. Artillerymen then picked up the fight, pounding the north and south wings before the infantry finally secured the building at 6 PM on February 27 in a scene best described by Army historian Robert Ross Smith: "Only the battered central portion, roofless and gutted, still stood above its wings like a ghost arising from between toppled tombstones."

The cavalry pummeled the nearby Agriculture Building, where Iwabuchi directed the last of his marines. Initially he implored his troops to fight to the death. "If we run out of bullets, we will use grenades," he said. "If we run out of grenades, we will cut down the enemy with swords; if we break our swords, we will kill them by sinking our teeth in their throats."

But Iwabuchi's vigor withered under the onslaught of American guns, which pulverized the columns and ripped gaping wounds in the concrete walls around him,

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: GIs rush through downtown Manila to avoid sniper fire. BELOW: Men of the 37th Infantry Division climb over the rubble of a wall in Intromuros, February 17. Modern weapons took their toll of the historic buildings and civilians who were caught in the crossfire.

exposing the building's sinuous veins of rebar. Iwabuchi was outgunned, outmanned, and surrounded. The admiral knew he had reached the end.

In the weeks since MacArthur's forces had charged into Manila, Iwabuchi had presided over one of the most barbaric massacres of World War II. His troops had wantonly slaughtered tens of thousands of men, women, and children in some of the most cruel and horrible ways. Survival was not an option, and he knew it.

Iwabuchi summoned his forces and apologized for leading them to doom. "If anyone has the courage to escape, please do so," he said. "If not, please take your lives here."

The admiral retreated to his quarters on the main floor in the northwest side of the building. Armed with a knife, he slit open his belly.

Japanese marines attempted to escape under the cover of darkness, only to fall prey to American guns. Artillery, meanwhile, hammered the building until American troops finally poured drums of gasoline into the few underground bunkers and set them on fire.

"After the number of rounds fired into this building during the past few days, it did not seem possible that any soul could be living in such a mass of rubble and twisted steel," noted the 5th Cavalry's report. "The entire northeast corner had been blown away leaving a gaping hole."

Iwabuchi's remains would never be found.

The Finance Building was all that remained. American forces broadcast an ultimatum to the Japanese, giving them just 30 minutes to surrender. During that time, at five-minute intervals, the announcer prodded the trapped enemy. "The man who stood beside you a few hours ago is now dead—what is your choice?" American forces broadcast in Japanese. "You have 10 minutes left, do you want this to be your lifetime?"

Time wound down to just 90 seconds. "At this point one Jap came literally tumbling down over the rubble in front of the building," one report noted. "He was followed almost immediately by 12 more who advanced to our lines and surrendered."

More emerged from a pillbox and foxhole, bringing to 22 the total who surrendered. American forces blasted away for two more days, wiping out the last of the enemy troops on March 3. "At the end," concluded Robert Ross Smith, "the Finance Building was a shambles. The portions not knocked down seemed to be standing only from sheer force of habit."

The Battle of Manila was over.

With the guns finally silent, survivors crawled out of the rubble, seeking loved ones amid the city's wreckage. The 29-day Battle of Manila had claimed the lives of old and young, rich and poor. Artillery had vaporized many, while others died at the steel tip of a bayonet. Alongside thousands of Filipinos, the Japanese had slaughtered Russians, Spaniards, Germans, and Indians, as well as two Supreme Court justices, the family of a senator, and scores of priests. "The list of known dead that has come to my attention sounds like a Who's Who of the Philippines," attorney Marcial Lichauco wrote in his diary.

The fight to retake the Filipino capital had resulted in the deaths of 16,665 Japanese, the near total destruction of Iwabuchi's forces. In contrast, MacArthur's men suffered 1,010 killed and another 5,565 wounded. Those numbers proved a fraction of the estimated 100,000 civilians killed during the fight.

BELOW: An American soldier carries a woman from the ruins of the Santa Clara Monastery in Intramuros, where civilians had taken shelter. It is estimated that 100,000 civilians died during the month-long battle. RIGHT: A pile of dead Japanese soldiers gives mute testimony to the savagery of the fighting.

Both: National Archives

National Archives

American troops move into the devatated Intramuros section of Manila, February 23, 1945. Manila was one of the most war-ravaged cities in the world.

The city, meanwhile, overflowed with the wounded, who filled 32 hospitals, many of them little more than primitive aid stations set up in filthy schools, churches, and even race clubs. The carnage shocked even battle veterans like Major John Carlisle, who led a civil affairs unit tasked with rounding up medical supplies and food. "If I told you some of the things I have done and seen here in the last few days," Carlisle said to *New York Times* reporter George Jones, "you wouldn't believe me."

The damage extended far beyond human casualties. Japanese demolitions coupled with American artillery had flattened 613 city blocks, an area containing 11,000 buildings ranging from banks and schools to residential neighborhoods. The battle had left an estimated 200,000 homeless and destroyed countless cultural assets, from centuries-old cathedrals to sculptures and paintings inside the Philippine National Library and Museum.

"I have seen the death of a whole city," Santo Tomas internee Robert Wygle wrote in his diary. "A new city may stand in its place some years from now, but it will bear little resemblance to its predecessor."

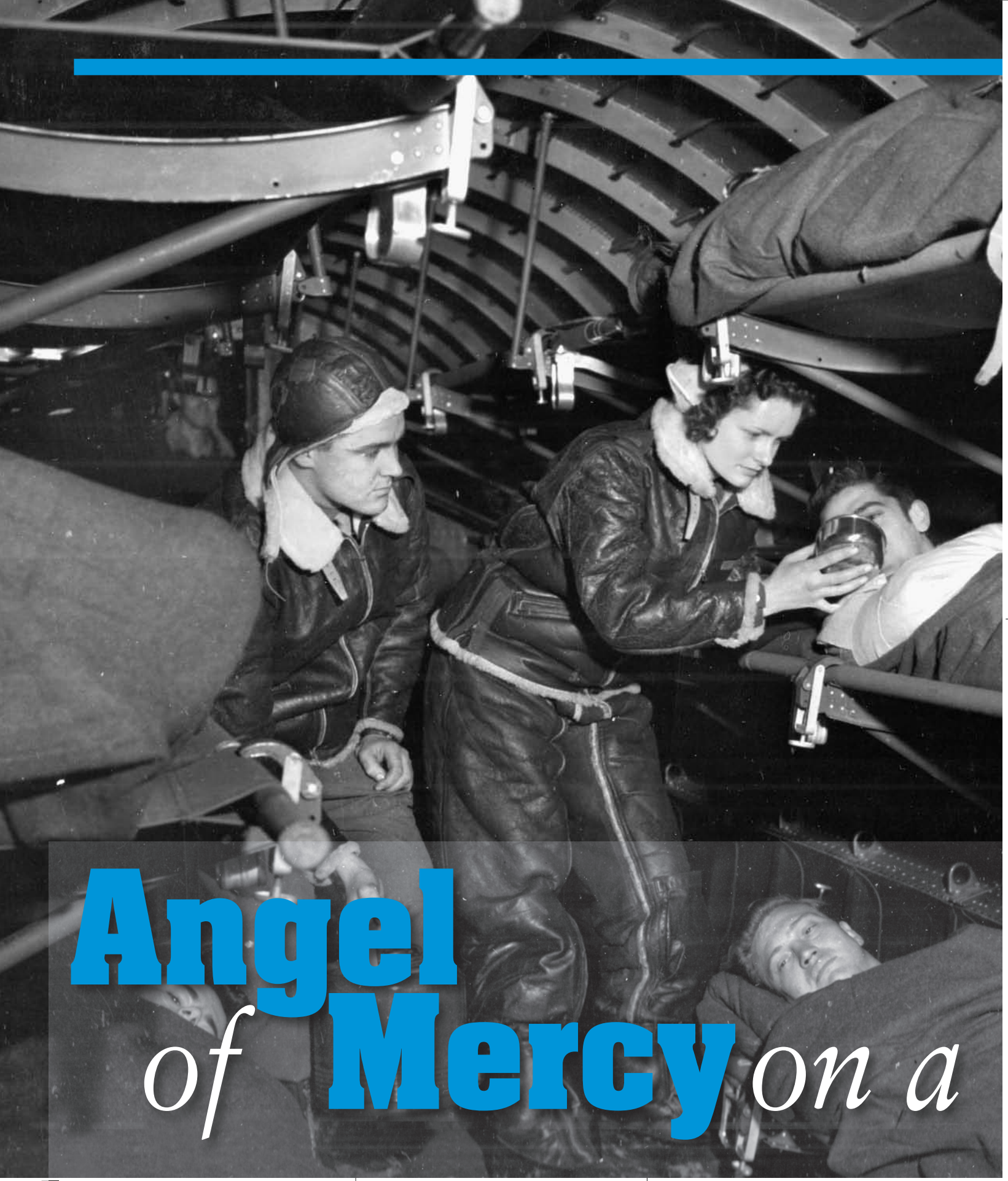
One of those properties destroyed was MacArthur's home atop the Manila Hotel, where his vast library had been reduced to ashes. Gone, too, was his son's baby book, a loss that crushed Jean MacArthur. "You wanted to know about my apartment at the hotel," she wrote a friend. "Of that, as well as everything else almost that I know in Manila is gone."

At the war's end, General Yamashita walked out of the mountains of northern Luzon and surrendered. He was put on trial in the fall of 1945 in a battered Manila courtroom, accused of allowing his forces to rape and murder tens of thousands of men, women and children in Manila and the provinces. The Tiger of Malaya denied any knowledge of the massacres, blaming the carnage on the deceased Iwabuchi.

While investigators produced no document directly tying Yamashita to the massacres, the prosecution built a circumstantial case that the atrocities were too widespread and organized for him not to have known. At a minimum, attorneys argued, he should have known. Yamashita was hanged, stripped of all decorations and even his uniform, as MacArthur ordered, on February 23, 1946.

Few cities in World War II suffered as much as Manila, which endured three years of Japanese occupation that ruined the economy, triggered widespread starvation, and shredded the social fabric. The battle to liberate the city proved an even greater nightmare. Not only did the war rob the Philippines of its capital, it also destroyed generations of families, the effects of which still ripple through lives even today, a sentiment best captured by Joan Orendain, a journalist and member of the Battle of Manila survivors group, the Memorare Manila 1945 Foundation.

"By the end of the war, we had nothing," recalled Orendain. "All we had was our memories—death's stench, the hunger, the blood, the terrible sounds of bombs, grenades, and bullets, the great fires, the odor of charred bodies and charred wood, and the eeriest sounds of all—the whistling of a bomb about to hit, and the keening over the slain, in its aftermath. We hear those sounds today as clearly as we heard them then." □



Angel of Mercy on a

C-47

BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

Flight Nurse Madeline "Del" D'Eletto recalls how she treated wounded soldiers on medical evacuation flights from the battlefields of continental Europe to British hospitals.

In a field hospital in Normandy, France, 1st Lt. Madeline "Del" D'Eletto was watching an Army doctor operate on a soldier's head injury when one of her fellow nurses asked, "What do I do with this?"

D'Eletto turned and saw the woman holding pinkish-white brain tissue. "It's no good," said the doctor. "Throw it away; we can't put it back in."

It was not always the case. "Sometimes you could wash it off and repair the injury if the damage was not too great," explained D'Eletto. The incident drove home the war's gruesomeness.

Photo: Madeline D'Eletto

As a flight nurse with the Ninth Air Force's 814th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron, D'Eletto spent her days caring for wounded soldiers onboard a Douglas C-47 Skytrain transport aircraft, flying them from the battlefields of Europe to hospitals in Great Britain. "It was raw, hard work," she recalled.

But it was the job she wanted. D'Eletto had wanted to become a nurse ever since reading an article about nursing as a teenager. Raised in the western Pennsylvania town of New Castle, she grew up the elder daughter of Italian-American parents, with an older brother, Gaitano, and a younger sister, Filomena. D'Eletto decided that as a nurse she could make money and have a permanent career. "The Depression was on," she said. "Everyone lived close to the penny."

In 1935, D'Eletto graduated from Chestnut Hill Nursing School in an affluent suburb of Philadelphia, having never taken a sick day. "I've never been ill," she explained. When she donned her white nursing uniform ahead of the other graduates, they cheered her. She became a

LEFT: A flight nurse in winter gear gives a drink to a wounded soldier. C-47s could carry 24 wounded men but did not have red crosses on them since they brought fuel and supplies to the front. D'Eletto rarely talked with her patients, knowing they were in great pain. INSET: First Lieutenant Madeline "Dell" D'Eletto, from New Castle, Pennsylvania, treated wounded soldiers from the battlefields of continental Europe to Great Britain inside Douglas C-47 Cargo aircraft.

National Archives

private-duty nurse at Chestnut Hill Hospital, living with two other nurses: Helen Fatula and Mary Chubb, both fellow graduates. "We were establishing ourselves."

When D'Eletto's niece underwent surgery, she took a temporary nursing job back at the New Castle hospital to care for her. She also cared for a teenage boy named Tony who suffered from rheumatic fever. Despite his illness, Tony often danced on his bed, entertaining the other patients. To get him to stop, D'Eletto drew him a chart of his heart's actions while exercising. Tony stopped his dancing.

Once her niece improved, D'Eletto returned to Chestnut Hill. Not long after her return, she heard over the radio that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. With roommate Helen Fatula getting married and Mary Chubb planning on moving home to Doylestown, 28-year-old D'Eletto decided to join the military, hoping to learn more about nursing and to help the wounded.

She passed her physical and signed up at the recruiting office in Center City Philadelphia at Market Street Station, across from Wanamaker's Department Store. A few days later, on April 18, 1942, she joined another nurse named Tress for the swearing in. The two then boarded a train headed south to the Key Field Army Hospital in Meridian, Mississippi.

D'Eletto cared for sick and injured soldiers and fliers. She cared for an officer who had suffered a serious head injury when his Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter plane crashed. "He was so needed that they put two on-duty nurses with him as private nurses," she said. The whole time he lay flat with his room lights dimmed, despite his requests they be turned up. "You will not operate on me," he told her one day, worried that brain surgery would ground him, "because I will continue flying."

After a few months at the hospital, D'Eletto took some time off to return to Pennsylvania. When she returned, her supervisor asked her if she knew her vacation had been canceled. "Oh no!" she responded. The supervisor had expected Tress to relay the message to D'Eletto. Then she asked D'Eletto an odd question: "Is Tress hard of hearing?" It turned out Tress was, indeed, hard of hearing, yet had managed to pass her physical and work at the hospital without anyone noticing.

After almost a year and a half in Mississippi, D'Eletto was accepted to the Air Evacuation School at Bowman Field, Kentucky. She trained both as a soldier and flight nurse, running through the basic training courses and taking classes. She learned what modern weapons and high altitudes could do to the human body and drilled in treating patients while the plane climbed steeply or dropped. "Once up there, we got a good field lesson on how the body changes," she said. "That training changed my whole life." Amazingly, through all the rough air training, she never got sick. "That's why I'm here now."

D'Eletto's final test involved a psychiatrist asking her what she found most difficult in basic training. "Grabbing the rope and jumping over the water," she responded. He then asked her, "What would you do if you fell in the water?" She replied, "I'd ask the boy ahead of me for help. In fact, once he grabbed my belt to pull me in." When the interview ended, she asked the psychiatrist, "Well, do you think I will be all right?" He looked up and slowly nodded.

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Flight nurses test their reactions to high altitude and low air pressure. D'Eletto claimed the training changed her life.

The next morning, D'Eletto and her fellow graduates rushed to a large board listing their names, assignments, and to see whether they had gotten a gold or silver star next to their name. Most names had a gold star. D'Eletto's had a silver star, but she didn't understand its significance until someone told her she would be a first lieutenant. The women with gold stars would be second lieutenants. When she asked, "Why me?" one of the women told her, "Don't say that—you're supposed to lead us!" D'Eletto would soon be a chief nurse in charge of five nurses.

After training, D'Eletto became good friends with a tall Texan girl named Chegnard, who went by the nickname "Shag." One day Shag told D'Eletto, "I'm having a heck of time saying your name, so I'm christening you "Del." The new name was born. "I've been called Del ever since," D'Eletto explained.

D'Eletto was assigned to the 437th Troop Carrier Group's 814th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron, part of the U.S. Ninth Air Force, flying out of England. The Ninth arrived in October 1943 after supporting Allied forces in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, and would serve as a tactical air force once Allied troops landed in France.

On February 1, 1943, eight months before the Ninth Air Force's arrival in England, D'Eletto boarded a troop ship for the weeklong trip across the Atlantic. The ship had been a luxury liner converted for war duty. "All the beauty of the ship had been removed," she said, "and replaced with good, substantial seating."

Once at sea, many people succumbed to seasickness. "I saw a lot of individuals leaning over the rail." Walking on deck made her woozy, so she lay down one day and covered herself with her heavy nursing cape. When people told her she looked pale, she would simply respond, "Please keep moving." Once she adjusted to the swaying ship and got her "sea legs," she was able to play cards in the ship's ballroom.

Upon arriving in England on February 9, D'Eletto and the other nurses made their way to their duty station at Royal Air Force Station Ramsbury, which the Americans labeled USAAF Station AAF-4699 to obscure its location from the Germans. On her way there, she stayed at a hotel where she ate shrimp. It was her best meal of the entire war. She also

U.S. Air Force

ABOVE: Flight nurses and a medic prepare to load simulated casualties onto a mock aircraft at the Air Evacuation School at Bowman Field in Kentucky. Throughout D'Eletto's training she never got air sick. BELOW: A doctor and nurse check over the "wounded" before a loading exercise. Surgeons would normally brief the flight nurse on each man's condition prior to takeoff. Once in the air, the flight nurse was responsible for her patients' survival and comfort. D'Eletto never sat down when her aircraft was filled with wounded.

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liked the British tradition of drinking tea. "They made delicious tea," she recalled.

D'Eletto and her fellow nurses occupied a restaurant that had been converted into a dormitory. At that time, they attended the Information and Education School, where she learned about the cultural differences between the Americans and British. The only differences she noticed were the uniforms and accents. "Working with the British," she explained, "was like working at home."

Flight nurses wore brown wool uniforms and shoes, not combat boots. To ward off the high-altitude cold, they donned brass-buttoned jackets or fleece-lined leather jackets and often attached a medical bag to their belts. At their ground stations, they wore skirts but, when transporting patients, pants. D'Eletto kept scissors and forceps in her pockets in case of a medical emergency.

The five nurses D'Eletto oversaw, to the best of her memory, were Shag Chegnard, Helen West, June Saunders, Rosie Farley, and a girl they called Shorty. "We all got along," D'Eletto recalled, but she worried about Rosie, who had a weakness for alcohol. When D'Eletto caught Rosie drinking in the cafeteria, she asked her, "Why do you do that?"

D'Eletto had more reason to worry when Rosie started dating a pilot. One night, D'Eletto found Rosie lying in her bunk and asked her if she had eaten dinner. When Rosie didn't respond, one of the other nurses told her that Rosie's boyfriend had failed to come back from a mission.

Of all the nurses, Helen West stood out. "She was beautiful," D'Eletto recalled, "like a little ivory doll." One day a male officer approached D'Eletto and told her that his supervisor wanted him to get two nurses to accompany him and another officer to a concert.

"May I guess who the first nurse you're going to mention, is it Helen West?" D'Eletto asked. The soldier said, "Yes, the commander wants her." D'Eletto wasn't finished. "Who is the second asked for?" His answer surprised her: "You." "Me?" she asked. "Who is my partner?" The officer raised his hand.

The two nurses attended the performance and a dance. D'Eletto found herself dancing the tango with her officer, who gave the band leader a knowing nod. "Stay close to me," he told her. As they continued dancing, she noticed the crowd clearing the floor until they were the only ones left.

"The music is still playing," he told her, so they kept dancing. She did not know her dance partner had been a dance teacher

before joining the Army. The experience became one of her maxims: "If the music is still playing, keep dancing."

As the unannounced date for the D-Day invasion neared in the summer of 1944, the military cleared patients out of British hospitals to free up bed space for the expected casualties, sending planeloads of casualties, mostly non-combat sick and injured, back to the United States.

D'Eletto and her nurses escorted a flight to New York City. After an uneventful flight, the nurses prepared to fly back when someone told them, "Not today, pilots have priority." The Allies needed more pilots in Europe as the war intensified.

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Flight nurses and their medical technicians await their next flight to continental Europe at a U.S. Army Air Forces Hospital in Great Britain. D'Eletto rarely slept at night since the moans of the wounded in the nearby hospital kept her awake.

The nurses had to spend the night in New York. D'Eletto worried her girls would celebrate being back home, but they impressed her by not pairing up with any men. "The girls all did very well," she said. "I was surprised how well they acted."

D'Eletto's biggest surprise came when an air raid alarm sounded. While trying to find out if her nurses needed their helmets, she chanced to look out her window and saw people milling around on the sidewalks, ignoring the alarm. "No one cared," she said. She realized that the United States was quite different from war-ravaged England.

When D'Eletto's plane touched down in England the next day, she saw soldiers sequestered behind a fence. "There was absolute silence from the soldiers," she said. "We were told not to speak to them." They were preparing for D-Day.

The nurses then attended a lecture on the warning signs for soldiers suffering from depression and anxiety, such as constant fidgeting or holding onto letters. The Army was preparing them for mental injuries. The invasion date crept nearer.

As the Western Allies prepared to cross the English Channel, D'Eletto and her four nurses were given a short respite. They had been invited to a dance at an airbase in northern England. There D'Eletto met a white-haired chaplain who told her he had snuck onto a bomber flight that came under fire.

"When the shooting started," he told her, "my prayers came to screeching halt." He added that when an alarm rang, "I put my head between my arms and didn't move. I could see the firing and couldn't look anymore." He concluded by telling her, "I was scared to death," pointing out that his white hair used to be blond. The incident gave D'Eletto an idea of what she might soon be facing as a flight nurse.

On June 6, 1944, the Western Allies assaulted the beaches of Normandy—D-Day, Operation Overlord. The next day Army aviation engineers began building a small airfield near Omaha Beach. Once completed, they began lengthening it to accommodate large aircraft. On June 10 (D+4), the first C-47 touched down to retrieve the wounded.

Soon thereafter D'Eletto climbed aboard a C-47 for her first evacuation mission. The aircraft contained 24 stretchers, 12 on each side, stacked three high. Since C-47s brought materials into France before being loaded with wounded, they could not bear a Red Cross emblem, even though they were unarmed and could not defend themselves.

Flying over the Channel, she saw ships towing large concrete blocks, the British-made caissons, codenamed Phoenixes, which would be sunk off the Normandy beaches at Arromanches to make a Mulberry harbor to protect ships from storms while men and equipment offloaded.

As her aircraft crossed the beach, she witnessed a striking vision of combat. "I could see soldiers on the beach, the gold of the sand, the brown of their uniforms, and red blood," she said. "I could see the blood down there. It was really tragic." As the plane came in to land, she saw soldiers making their way through mud on the flooded plains. The plane touched down, and D'Eletto took on her first load of wounded.

And so it began. Every morning D'Eletto flew to France, picked up a batch of wounded, and flew them back to England to various hospitals. She rarely flew with the same crew or in the same plane. Nurses were stretched so thin that male medics were often assigned to their planes or stood in for nurses.

"It was work, work, work," she said, but the planes quickly got soldiers to the care they needed. Within three months, air evacuation flights had transported more than 50,000 patients to hospitals in England.

On the ground in France, D'Eletto watched medics strap patients onto their stretchers

Photo: Madeline D'Eletto

National Archives

ABOVE: Dell's team consisted of (back row) June Saunders, D'Eletto, "Shorty," Rosie Farley, (front row) "Shag" Chegnard (with puppy), and Helen West. The women got along well, but D'Eletto worried about Shorty's drinking. RIGHT: A flight nurse, dressed for the cold European winter of 1944, comforts a wounded soldier coming straight from the battlefield. D'Eletto claimed the hardest part of her job was "holding yourself together."

and sometimes helped. The doctors would tell her each patient's injury and possible treatments. "It was not easy to stand there when the stretchers were readied," she recalled. While she waited for her next batch of wounded, she often observed the first echelon of medical care, where wounded soldiers were brought directly from the front lines. That's where she witnessed the nurse holding brain tissue.

D'Eletto often worried that her aircraft would be hit by antiaircraft fire as it took off, climbed, and raced away from the combat zone. "There was nothing you could do while climbing," she recalled. "You stay put while the pilot gets in control." The patients were strapped down, but D'Eletto was not.

Sometimes she talked to her patients but got no response. "That's when you realized they were in terrible pain," she said. She kept busy moving from patient to patient, adjusting tourniquets and keeping patients from bleeding. "Most of them just wanted to sleep."

She could often see men's belly wounds through their dressings. More than once, the men's stitched abdomens swelled as the aircraft rapidly ascended, forcing her to cut the sutures, lest they tear the men's flesh. "You would get to a point where your mind wouldn't work properly, then someone would say, 'Do this!' and you'd come back."

D'Eletto found saving lives in the air, or at least keeping them stable until reaching England, incredibly stressful. "The hard part was holding yourself together and containing yourself," she said. To keep herself calm, she recited Psalm 46, verse 10a: "Be still, and know that I am God."

Once the plane touched down in England, ambulances rushed the patients to the hospital. Every day was different. Sometimes, D'Eletto would suit up and report to her plane only to find out all flights had been canceled due to bad weather. Even during down times there was little respite from the war. At night, D'Eletto and her nurses were often kept awake by the patients' moans and groans. "You could hear them getting off the planes," she said. "We knew this was their first stop before heading home."

The dangers of her job soon hit home when D'Eletto noticed a board filled with pictures of people killed in action. It contained a photograph of her old roommate, Mary Chubb, who had had died on June 14 (D+8) when a North American AT-6D Harvard trainer aircraft in which she was flying lost a wing and crashed over England.

Chubb had not stayed in her hometown of Doylestown for long, having volunteered for the military a year after Pearl Harbor. "She was very smart," D'Eletto recalled, "She was a happy girl." Nurse Mary Chubb is buried in the Cambridge American Military Cemetery in England, which contains the remains of 3,811 U.S. war dead; 5,127 names are recorded on the Walls of the Missing.

As the Allied armies pushed the Germans eastward across France and Belgium in August and September, D'Eletto's aircraft took on the additional duty of delivering jerry cans filled with gasoline to the front lines before loading up with casualties. She had to sit on the plastic pouring tubes atop the cans for her flights to France. "There was nothing else to sit on," she said.

Temperatures dropped across Europe in October and November. On a flight into Belgium late one day, word came over the pilot's radio warning them that they were about to land in a dangerous area and to go back to France where it was safe. D'Eletto's pilot led a wing of C-47s to an austere French field.

Once on the ground, the other flight nurses entered D'Eletto's plane to spend the night. As they brushed their teeth and bed-

ded down on the blood-stained stretchers, the pilot came through. "It's my plane," he told the nurses, and gave them each a kiss goodnight on their foreheads. With no patients to care for, the night was silent. "That was the best sleep I had during the war," she recalled.

On December 16, 1944, three German armies attacked Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges' First Army in Belgium and Luxembourg, driving a huge wedge into the Allied line—the Battle of the Bulge. As snow fell, D'Eletto and her crew continued to retrieve casualties.

"I remember looking over a cold land with lots of snow," she said. At one stop, she saw soldiers' bodies frozen stiff as boards. "Someone picked up a body and it didn't bend," she remembered. "They grabbed the body and threw it on the truck like a log. That was a bad sight for me." She prayed that the fighting would stop, but it continued.

During another round of flights, a colonel climbed onto D'Eletto's empty plane claiming he needed to get to Belgium. As the flight of C-47s reached the landing field at different altitudes, the air traffic controller started calling in the planes. "Something's out of line," the colonel said. "He should call them in one at a time."

The colonel went into the cabin and shouted to the pilot, "They're calling them in wrong. Turn this plane around!" The colonel's complaints and demands just added confusion to an already tense situation. Suddenly, D'Eletto heard a loud crash and saw an explosion outside her window. One of the planes had been hit by ground fire, killing the crew and a medic onboard. D'Eletto recognized the plane's tail number. "I knew the medic who was on it," she said. "He was married and had two children."

When D'Eletto's aircraft finally landed, the colonel reprimanded the controller, but she knew where the fault lay. "He wasn't supposed to be on that plane," she said. "He should have been quiet and let the pilot fly his plane."

The Allies erased the Bulge on January 25, 1945, and even though there would be four more months of fighting before Germany surrendered, the war was already beginning to wind down.

With fewer evacuation flights, D'Eletto started volunteering at a British military hospital. The nurses and staff learned to laugh once in a while during the intense work. One day the medics brought in a soldier in a body cast that covered his abdomen. The doctors cut off the cast, causing the man's full bladder to release, shooting a stream of urine almost to the ceiling. "We joked about not having an umbrella to deal with the rain," she said.

Another time, D'Eletto learned that a patient was asking about the nurse from New Castle, Pennsylvania. She walked through the ward until she came across Tony, the little boy she had treated for rheumatic fever back in the 1930s. A shocked D'Eletto asked him, "Did you tell them you had rheumatic fever?" "No," he told her. "I wanted to do my part."

When he said he was being sent home, she said, "You shouldn't be here in the first place," and gave him a kiss. Everyone in the ward whistled.

Not long after, D'Eletto woke up to hear people cheering all over the base, "It's over! It's over!" It was May 9, 1945, and Germany had officially surrendered to the Allies in General Dwight D. Eisenhower's headquarters in Reims, France. Celebrations exploded across Europe and the United States. "There were songs and dances," said D'Eletto. "There was noise on both sides of the Channel."

While everyone celebrated, one of the ground doctors, who rarely spoke, told a nurse, "Open that narcotic box and bring me that liquor bottle." After downing a shot, he spoke about the war for the first time. "He had one good drink, and then he could talk to us," she explained.

National Archives

Lieutenant D'Elleto cares for wounded soldiers stacked three high. When men's sutured abdomens swelled during steep takeoffs, she had to cut off the sutures before they tore the skin.

Every morning at breakfast, D'Eletto chatted with a male captain—a dentist. They often discussed a nurse who was keeping her pregnancy a secret. On D'Eletto's last day of work, she told the dentist the nurse had delivered her baby and was putting him up for adoption. "I already have a daughter," the dentist told her, stressing that it was too late for him and his wife to adopt. D'Eletto departed, not knowing the fate of the new mother and son.

Four months after the surrender, on September 15, 1945, D'Eletto boarded a ship to go home. She had been in Europe for two and a half years. After a four-day journey, she arrived again in New York City and was greeted by her Uncle Ralph and his wife Marion.

"I was surprised to see them there," she said. They offered for her to stay with them for a while. But while D'Eletto accepted, she felt out of sorts and overwhelmed. She found herself standing in downtown Manhattan, saying to herself, "Well here it is, you're home now, what do you want to do with your life?"

While in New York, a soldier D'Eletto had dated in England contacted her and invited her to his home in Maine. She accepted, but found the reunion unsettling. She worried that his family looked down on her Italian heritage. He followed her back to New York where she grew tired of him.

"I want you to leave and I never want to see you again," she told him. He was sur-

National Archives

A flight nurse, with the pilot listening in, provides instructions to a ground medic before patients are loaded onto her C-47. D'Eletto saw the horrors of war up front when she watched battlefield surgeries and saw frozen dead men "stiff as boards."

prised and responded, "You don't mean that." She calmly replied, "I mean every word."

D'Eletto returned to her parents' home in New Castle. They were glad she was home safely and wanted to know what she had done during the war. Once she told them, they repeatedly asked, "How could you do that?" Soon the neighbors arrived for a visit. "You're the children to all the neighbors," she explained about her neighborhood. Everyone asked her about her role in the war, and she soon grew tired of recounting her experiences.

One of the neighbors, Mary Louise Murphy, who had just returned from the Midwest, pulled D'Eletto aside. "I have something to tell you." She explained how she told a group of people how D'Eletto had inspired her to become a nurse. When one of the men heard the name, he told her, "If you see her again, tell her I adopted the boy." It was the dentist from England. He and his wife had adopted the single nurse's son.

After a few weeks at home, D'Eletto realized she needed to get a job, but was torn. She loved nursing but she did not want to return to a hospital. "I had seen enough damage to people," she said, "and I didn't want to be around the people I knew because I was sick of talking about the war." Instead, she took a job in farm labor nursing, taking care of immigrant farm laborers across Nebraska.

During the war, with so many able-bodied men sent overseas, migrant workers, many of them Jamaicans, came to the United States to work on farms. D'Eletto bought a car and headed west where she drove from farm to farm, telling the owners, "If your boys become ill, call me." Sometimes she received pushback. Once, when she brought some Jamaicans to a doctor, he said, "Here comes socialized medicine." "No," she told him. "The boys will be coming home soon and these men will go to their own homes."

After wrecking her car at a train crossing, D'Eletto traveled with Lyle Johnson, another farm labor worker. One day they picked up an accountant, Robert "Bob" Sherrill Jr., and the three became a trio. "I had a wonderful time with those two gentlemen," she recalled.

One night, Bob asked D'Eletto to see a movie. She reluctantly accepted. At the theater, she explained that she learned during the war that modern dating back in the States required women to pay their own way, but Bob treated. They held hands through the entire film. When business called Bob away, he asked her if he could write her and, more importantly, if she would write back. She agreed.

Bob married D'Eletto in December of 1946 and, four years later, on January 28, 1950, she gave birth to their daughter Lynda in Fort Worth, Texas. Bob passed away on March 2, 1994, at the age of 76. In 2012, D'Eletto moved to Shreveport, Louisiana, where Lynda and her husband William Hicks care for her today.

At the age of 105 in 2019, D'Eletto gets around with the help of a Hoveround powered wheelchair. She enjoys watching the news and vintage TV shows like *Columbo,* although her hearing and vision are not what they used to be.

Looking back on World War II, D'Eletto admits that it changed her life. It provided her with a different way of looking at others and a way to evaluate herself. "You got to know people in a down-to-earth way, where good qualities were brought out," she said. "You got to know others deeply."

The friendships she made give her a wonderful feeling. She recalls her fellow nurses, the doctors, and the little boy with rheumatic fever who fought for his country. "When I go to sleep at night, I think it over, and I think I would do it the same way," she said.

She also has all the letters Bob wrote her over the years. "I received a letter from Bob every day he was away from me, all my life," she said. "They're going to put them in my casket." □

Monty's ARMORED COR

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The political and military reasons for launching Operation Goodwood have been discussed in virtually every book written about the Normandy campaign.

In essence, by July 10, 1944, five weeks after D-day, the Allies were facing a crisis. The only large port in their hands, Cherbourg, was not yet operational, the Americans had failed to achieve their planned breakout, German occupation south of Caen was blocking the advance of the British and Canadians to the Falaise Plain, and insufficient ground had been captured in the Allied bridgehead for the forward airfields to be constructed.

Significantly, four German infantry divisions had reached Normandy in early July with the aim of releasing the panzer divisions for their classic counterattack role in operations against the Americans. British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, the overall Allied ground commander, was thus facing criticism from all quarters. If his declared strategy of breaking out from the west was to succeed, it was essential that he create a sufficient threat on the Caen flank to hold and attract the German armor, which might otherwise be used against the Americans.

Consequently, and having already failed to achieve a breakthrough to the west of Caen, Montgomery decided to launch a strong armored thrust on the east side from the Orne bridgehead. As he put it in a letter to Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke on July 14, "The Second [British] Army is now very strong ... And can get no stronger ... So I have decided that the time has come for a real 'showdown' on the eastern flank, and to loose [on 18th July] a corps of three armoured divisions into the open country about the Caen-Falaise road."

This was to be followed by a breakout by the First U.S. Army around St. Lô (Operation Cobra) on the 20th. Both attacks were to be preceded by massive aerial bombardments.

In the case of the Second British Army sector, subsidiary attacks on the west side of Caen by the newly arrived XII Corps and the veteran XXX Corps were planned to last from the night of July 15 until the 17th. These attacks were designed to divert German atten-

RIDOR

Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's brainchild, Operation Goodwood, failed to achieve a breakthrough in the weeks following D-Day and nearly cost the legendary commander his job.

BY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL REYNOLDS

tion and allow the British to gain what ground they could.

The Germans were certainly not distracted from the main threat; indeed, they predicted it precisely on July 16. An Ultra intercept revealed that the commander of Luftflotte (Air Fleet) 3, Field Marshal Hugo Sperrle, had signaled his units that a major British attack was "to take place south-eastwards from Caen about the night 17th-18th." In the end, the diversionary attacks gained little ground and the cost was appalling: another 3,500 casualties.

Taking cover in a ditch near the French town of Cagny, July 19, 1944—the second day of Operation Goodwood, the drive on Caen—soldiers of the 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards, prepare to move out.

The plan for Operation Goodwood was for three British armored divisions of General Richard O'Connor's VIII Corps to

carry out the main attack toward the enormously important and almost featureless Bourguébus Ridge to the southeast of Caen and the village of Vimont in the low, flat ground to its east. At the same time, Lt. Gen. Guy Simonds's newly arrived Canadian II Corps, with its 2nd and 3rd Canadian Infantry Divisions and the 2nd Armoured Brigade, was to capture the southern part of Caen from Colombelles to Vaucelles, bridge the Orne, and be prepared to exploit south to a line from St. André-sur-Orne to Verrières, where it would hopefully link up with a British armored division. This part of the plan was code-named Atlantic; in addition, Lt. Gen. John Crocker's I British Corps was to secure the left flank of the main assault by clearing the east side of the planned salient to a line from Emiéville through St. Pair to Troarn.

Imperial War Museum

Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery, commander of Allied ground forces in Normandy, confers with Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill and army commanders Lt. Gen. Guy Simonds (left) and Lt. Gen. Miles Dempsey.

On July 15, Montgomery issued a personal memorandum to O'Connor in which he made clear his intentions for VIII Corps: "engage the German armour in battle and write it down to such an extent that it is of no further value to the Germans as a basis of the battle. To gain a good bridgehead over the Orne through Caen and thus improve our positions on the eastern flank. Generally to destroy German equipment and personnel, as a preliminary to a possible wide exploitation of success…. The three armoured divisions will be required to dominate the area Bourguébus-Vimont, and to fight and destroy the enemy."

However, on July 17, just before the attack, Lt. Gen. Miles Dempsey, commander of the Second Army, restricted the VIII Corps objectives by specifying them as Vimont, Garcelles-Secqueville, St. Aignan de Crasmenil, Verrières, and Rocquancourt.

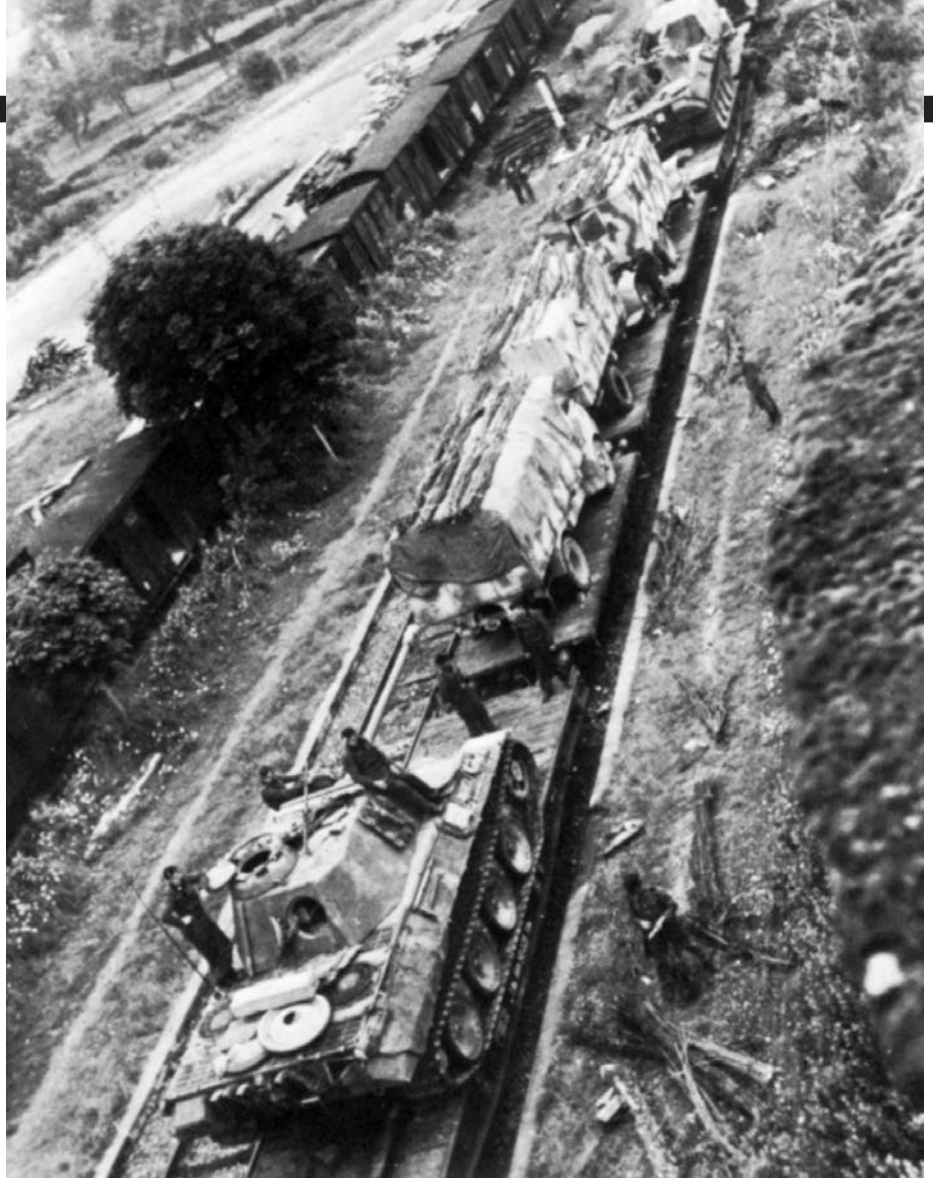
The German defenses facing Dempsey's Second Army attack were considerable and, unknown to Allied intelligence, laid to a depth of some 12 kilometers. The two relevant corps of the German Panzer Group West in this sector were General Sepp Dietrich's I SS Panzer Corps and General Hans von Obstfelder's LXXXVI Corps. The latter, to the east of the Caen-Falaise road, had its 346th Infantry Division in position from the coast near Deauville to just north of Touffreville, and the remnants of the badly mauled 16th Luftwaffe Field Division from there to Colombelles.

The bulk of the 21st Panzer Division formed the third division in the LXXXVI Corps, and its 192nd Panzergrenadier Regiment with a Luftwaffe Panzerjäger battalion was positioned from Colombelles to the Orne bridge south of Caen.

Behind these screen forces was Kampfgruppe (KG) von Luck, named after the commander of the 125th Panzergrenadier Regiment of 21st Panzer Division, Major Hans von Luck. He had just been recommended for the Knight's Cross and returned from three days' leave in Paris on the morning of the attack. His KG consisted of his own 1st and 2nd Panzergrenadier Battalions and the 200th *Sturmgeschütz* Battalion. This latter unit was to play a critical part in the forthcoming battle. It had five batteries for a total of 30 self-propelled (SP) armored 75mm assault guns and 20 SP armored 105mm howitzers, all of which could be used in an antitank role.

These batteries were sited in or near the villages of Giberville, Démouville, Grentheville, Le Mesnil-Frémentel, and Le Poirier, all of which dominated the proposed British axis. On the eastern flank of the 21st Panzer Division, the 1st Panzer Battalion with 22 Mark IV tanks and the 503rd Heavy Panzer Battalion with 36 Tigers, including one company with Tiger IIs, were in position to support KG von Luck and to act as a divisional reserve. They were assembled under the cover of orchards, copses, and barns in the area from Sannerville to Emiéville. In addition, the 9th Werfer (rocket launcher) Brigade had been attached to LXXXVI Corps, and one of its battalions was sited near Grentheville, while a four-gun battery of a Luftwaffe 88mm flak battalion was near Cagny. It is noteworthy that there were no German antitank minefields, thus allowing freedom of movement for their armor.

Farther south, on the ridge behind Bourguébus, the Reconnaissance and Pioneer Battalions of the 21st Panzer Division were protecting the artillery of the three divisions of the LXXXVI Corps and, very significantly, an 88mm antitank battalion and two 88mm flak battalions with a total of 78 88mm guns were in the area of the Bois Secqueville.



Imperial War Museum

A German train hauls tanks and service vehicles of the 1st SS Panzer Regiment to the front near Caen, July 1944. The Germans, with two panzer corps in the area, were especially strong.

According to Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's records, there were 194 artillery pieces and 272 Werfers (1,826 barrels) in the sector. Unfortunately for the Allies, there were insufficient bombers available for these to be targeted during the morning of the 18th. Offers to attack them later were rejected by Dempsey, who believed that if he was to succeed at all his armor must by then have reached Bourguébus Ridge.

Dietrich's I SS Panzer Corps was on the left of the Caen-Falaise road. The 272nd Infantry Division was in a forward position from the Orne bridge in Caen to near Eterville. The 25 Tigers of the Corps' 101st SS Panzer Battalion (only 17 were operational on the day of the attack) were around Grainville-Langannerie, and SS Maj. Gen. Teddy Wisch's 1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte (LAH) was, unknown to British intelligence, in reserve in the area between Ifs and Cintheaux. However, its 2nd SS Panzer Battalion, 1st SS *Stürmgeschutz* (StuG) Battalion, 3rd SS Panzergrenadier Battalion in armored personnel carriers (SPWs), and 2nd SS (SP) Artillery Battalion were acting as a separate corps reserve on the west side of the Orne.

The other division of Dietrich's I SS Panzer Corps, the 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend (HJ), was still reorganizing and recovering after the recent heavy fighting. Its armored KG, under SS Lt. Col. Max Wünsche, had by July 17 moved to an area to the northwest of Lisieux. There it was joined by the newly activated 1st SS Panzerjäger Company HJ with its 10 new Jagdpanzer IVs. The rest of the 12th SS was some eight kilometers north of Falaise preparing to follow on. Suggestions that this move to the Lisieux area was part of a strategic plan by the German high command to meet any breakout to the east of Caen are incorrect. The 12th SS was directed there in response to Hitler's fear of a second Allied landing between the Seine and Orne Rivers.

It has also been suggested that Rommel was personally responsible for the layout of the German defenses. This is not true, although his views would undoubtedly have been taken into account by the man who had the overall responsibility: the much respected and combat-experienced holder of the Knight's Cross, General Heinrich Eberbach. He decided the basic structure of the Caen sector defenses, and the details were worked out by the two corps and six divisional commanders.

A strength report dated July 17 shows SS Lt. Col. Jochen Peiper's 1st SS Panzer Regiment LAH with 59 Mk IVs and 46 Panthers combat ready, and Heinrich Heimann's 1st SS Sturmgeschütz Battalion with 35 StuGs. The total number of operational armored vehicles available to the I SS Panzer and the LXXXVI Corps on the morning of July 18 was 219 tanks and 95 SP assault guns. However, 49 of these were with KG Wünsche, temporarily attached to another corps in the Lisieux area. In addition, there were eight Tigers, 30 Panthers, and 25 Mk IVs in short-term repair, giving a grand total of 377 German tanks, StuGs, and SP armored assault guns. This number was much greater than Allied intelligence estimated at the time.

There were a great many drawbacks to the Goodwood plan drawn up by Dempsey, approved by Montgomery, and due to be implemented by O'Connor with support from Simonds and Crocker. First, the bridgehead to the east of the Orne, from which the attack was to be launched, was far too small to accommodate three armored divisions—the Guards, 7th, and 11th. They would therefore have to follow one behind the other, not only across the three double bridges over the Orne and its canal between Ranville and the sea, but also through the protective British minefields that could not

be gapped until the last moment as they were under German observation.

In fact, the Germans had a commanding view over the three double bridges and the whole Orne bridgehead from the Colombelles factories. After negotiating the minefields, the problems for the British were by no means over. The initial, very flat "corridor" along which the tanks were required to move was less than two kilometers wide for the first five kilometers, owing to the factory area of Caen on the west side and a forested ridge to the east. This meant that even after his armor emerged from the minefields, O'Connor would still be able to maneuver with only one of his three armored brigades.

Another significant problem was that after the first eight kilometers the leading tanks would be beyond the range of most of the artillery support, since the guns would be to the west of the Orne until all the tanks and infantry had cleared the bridges and assembly area. Only the few 25-pounder SP close support batteries moving with the forward tank battalions would be in range.

It is hard to imagine a worse or more complicated plan—three divisions with 877 tanks and over 8,000 vehicles being required to cross a canal and a river and then advance in column (six brigades one behind the other) through a minefield and along a narrow corridor to objectives 15 kilometers away.

To understand the Goodwood battle, it is important to begin by describing the ground over which it was fought. The main objective of the whole operation was the Bourguébus Ridge that overlooked the southern exits of Caen. The villages of Bras, Hubert-Folie, Bourguébus, and La Hogue at the northern and northeastern ends of this ridge dominated the whole very flat area to their north and east, an area that had little or no cover for attacking troops. They, like most Norman villages, have houses built of brick and stone and strong walls surrounding gardens, farmyards, and orchards, making them ideal for defense.

The railway lines from Caen to Troarn and Caen to Vimont were not obstacles, though they inevitably took a little time to cross. Much more significant, and usually not even shown on maps in most books, was the railway line coming out of the northeast part of Caen and then running south past the west side of Giberville and Grentheville between Hubert-Folie and Bourguébus and then past the west side of Tilly to the quarries and mines south of Grainville. It was significant because it ran along a high embankment from south of Giberville until it reached Bourguébus; it was a serious obstacle requiring even tanks to use its underpasses. It was also important because it was, and still is, impossible to see to the west of it from the villages of Le Mesnil-Frémentel and Grentheville. In effect, it divided the battlefield into two quite separate parts, the eastern part dominated by Bourguébus and La Hogue and the western by Hubert-Folie and Bras.

Despite stating that his men were "raring to go," the commander of the leading 11th Armored Division, Maj. Gen. "Pip" Roberts, had severe misgivings about the plan, and he remonstrated about it with O'Connor, both verbally and on paper. He was concerned that, although his mission was to reach the high ground at Verrières and Rocquancourt on the western flank, he was first required to capture the villages of Cuverville, Démouville, and Cagny. This would necessitate the use of his 159th Infantry Brigade, an armored battalion, and an artillery battalion (half his division) and, as he put it, "make me fight with one arm tied behind my back." O'Connor agreed that he need only "mask" Cagny until the following Guards Division cleared the village, but said the rest of the plan must stand. If Roberts did not like it, he would find another division to lead the attack. Roberts gave in.

Ullstein Bild

Lt. Col. Max Wünsche, commander of Kampfgruppe Wünsche of the youthful, fanatical 12th SS Panzer Division (Hitlerjugend).

The final plan was for the 11th Armored Division to take the high ground to the west, then for the Guards Armoured Division to follow and, after Cagny, swing to the east and reach Vimont. Maj. Gen. Bobby Erskine's "Desert Rats" would then exploit south to Garcelles. A total of 200 guns were to provide a creeping barrage behind which the tanks would advance, and a further 350 guns, mainly mediums and heavies, were available to engage targets as required. An air support signal unit was provided to enable each armored brigade and division to call in ground attack aircraft, and the leading brigade, the 29th, had with it a RAF liaison officer in a tank who could talk directly to the fighter bombers. Significantly, his tank was knocked out early in the battle. German tank and antitank gunners were trained to engage command and special tanks as a top priority.

Operation Goodwood began at 0525 hours on July 18, 1944, with an artillery barrage against known and suspected antiaircraft batteries. Ten minutes later, 1,100 British heavy bombers dropped a carpet of high explosive bombs on the eastern parts of Caen, the area from Touffreville to Emiéville, and in the vicinity of Cagny. They were followed at 0700 hours by 482 Allied, mainly American, medium bombers that used fragmentation bombs on the axes of the armored divisions, while 300 fighters and fighter bombers went for known strongpoints and gun positions.

Dust and smoke from the initial attacks made it difficult for aircraft in the later waves to find their targets, and many had to abort their missions. Then, for half an hour starting at 0800 hours, 495 American heavy bombers dropped further fragmentation bombs designed to do maximum damage to the defenders but not to impede the advance of the British tanks. Some of these planes also had trouble with smoke and dust, as did fighter bombers later in the day. They had great difficulty finding targets on what became a very confused battlefield. A total of 7,700 tons of bombs were dropped. Major Bill Close, a leading tank company commander later recalled, "It really did seem that nothing could

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Rearmed and refueld, a long line of British Cromwell tanks prepare to move out along a dirt road near Caen. Stubborn German resistance at Caen prevented the British from taking the city until July 20, by which time the crossroads city had lost its strategic value.

live under the bombardment, but how wrong we were!"

Most of the forward German positions were destroyed, and the panzer reserves in the Sannerville-Emiéville area were badly hit, but amazingly, all the armored assault gun batteries except the one in Démouville survived, as did most of the rest of KG von Luck. Even the panzergrenadier battalion in Colombelles was able to withdraw later under the cover of darkness with remarkably few casualties.

It is also worth mentioning that the commander of the 3rd Company of the 503rd Tiger Battalion, Lieutenant (later Bundeswehr Major General) Freiherr von Rosen, personally described to this author in 1981 how one of his 57-ton tanks was literally turned upside down by the force of the explosions. One of his men was driven insane, and two more committed suicide during the attack. Four of his Tigers were destroyed, and the rest had to be dug out of the earth and debris that covered them. That his company recovered to fight at all on that first morning is an indication of its high morale and professionalism.

The I SS Leibstandarte and 12th Hitlerjugend Panzer Divisions were virtually unaffected by the bombing, as was the Corps' 101st SS Heavy Panzer Battalion.

In order not to arouse German suspicions, when in fact they were fully aware that a major attack was coming that morning due to the noise made by so many tanks, only the 29th Armored Brigade crossed into the bridgehead east of the Orne before H-hour. When the artillery barrage opened up at 0745 hours, some of the shells fell short, killing and injuring a number of the forward tank crews who were out of their vehicles awaiting the order to advance.

According to Major Close, "This happening a few seconds before we were to start added considerably to the confusion, and we set off after the barrage in some disorder." Dust, smoke, and cratering in the path of the two leading tank companies, trying to advance with 32 Shermans in line abreast, soon added to the chaos. Fortunately for them, they met no opposition before the Caen-Troarn railway line, which they reached at 0830 hours. Even though the artillery barrage was advancing at a rate of only eight kilometers per hour, the leading tanks were soon left behind.

At the railway, there was a planned 15-minute pause to allow the tanks to cross and sort themselves out, but even then not all could catch up. In fact, they averaged only a walking pace in the first hour and a half. Not surprisingly, the second tank battalion, which was meant to come into line after emerging from the minefield, soon caught up with the rear tanks of the leading unit and added to the confusion. The brigade's third tank battalion dropped back due to the traffic congestion and poor visibility.

Shortly after 0900, the main artillery barrage ended and the tanks were on their own except for their own close-support SP batteries.

The two leading tank battalions pushed on toward the Caen-Vimont railway line and at last, between the Troarn and Vimont roads, they managed to change from column to line, with one passing to the west of Le Mesnil-Frémentel and the other to the east. As the latter crossed the Caen-Vimont road at about 0930, the rear company, together with a supporting motorized infantry company and SP artillery battery, was suddenly engaged by assault guns from positions in Le Mesnil-Frémentel and Le Poirier. Twelve Shermans went up in flames.

The German gunners had deliberately let the two leading companies pass unhindered, for they were to be dealt with by other assault guns in Grentheville. The commander was skillfully withdrawing his batteries in accordance with the British advance, and three of them would shortly take up new positions to the southeast of Four and in Soliers and Hubert-Folie. The 159th

Infantry Brigade, which would have been invaluable in dealing with these assault guns, was fully engaged clearing the villages of Cuverville and Démouville to the north.

The leading tank company on the right flank also lost six of its Shermans to fire from Le Mesnil-Frémentel and was now faced with the problem of the north-south railway line running along the steep embankment. Its commander, Major Close, led the rest of his tanks under an embankment bridge at about 1000 hours and deployed without further loss one kilometer short of the Cormelles factory area. The remainder of the battalion and accompanying infantry company soon followed, but at noon ran into effective antitank fire from Bras and Hubert-Folie and even some 88mm fire from Bourguébus. This could have come from Tigers of SS Captain Michael Wittmann's 101st SS Heavy Panzer Battalion. Sherman after Sherman went up in flames.

During the morning, General Eberbach had become aware of the size of the Allied attack and particularly of the threat along the line of the Caen-Vimont railway. He therefore ordered Dietrich—who was focusing on the Canadian attack out of the center of Caen but was also aware of the threat to the right flank of his corps—to move the *Leibstandarte* to the area of the Bourguébus ridge and launch a counterattack as soon as possible.

Dietrich agreed to release back to the Leibstandarte that large part of the division that was still west of the Orne. The 1st SS Panzer Battalion (46 Panthers) was to advance from the area east of Rocquancourt, through Cagny, and push the enemy back across the Caen-Troarn railway line. It was to be assisted by the 2nd SS Panzer Battalion and the 1st SS StuG Battalion as soon as they arrived from west of the Orne. Panzergrenadiers from both the Leibstandarte's regiments were to advance to and hold the Four-Soliers area and secure Bras. With admirable speed, the first reconnaissance elements of the Leibstandarte arrived in the Bourguébus area around 1200 hours.

The movement of the 1st SS Panzer Regiment to the battle area went undetected by Allied aircraft. Its arrival on the Bourguébus ridge at about 1245 hours coincided with that of the two remaining British tank companies of the left-flank battalion, which were advancing past Four toward Soliers and the ridge running from Bourguébus to La Hogue. Within minutes, the regiment lost 29 tanks, including its commanding officer's. The situation was so bad that at 1258 hours the reserve tank battalion of the brigade in the Grentheville area was ordered not to advance south of Soliers.

Allied fighter bombers were very active during the day, but seem to have had difficulty finding and effectively engaging the German armor in the dust, smoke, and general confusion of the battlefield. The main problem was that after the tank with the RAF liaison officer was hit during the morning, no one on the ground was really capable of talking directly to the pilots and giving the required targets.

Behind the 29th Armored Brigade there had been increasing chaos as units became delayed and mixed up. Worse still, as the leading tanks of the 5th Guards Armored Brigade approached Cagny at 1015 hours, they were engaged by the four Luftwaffe 88s von Luck had ordered, at pistol point, to take up antitank positions in the northwest part of the village. These guns had to be dealt with before any further advance could be made, and while one tank battalion tried to do this, the other two bypassed Cagny at about 1230 hours. They took a detour through Le Mesnil-Frémentel to advance along the line of the railway to Vimont. Unfortunately, this put them right across the path of the 7th Armored Division and only added to the confusion.

The 7th Armored Division had asked the VIII Corps headquarters for assistance at 1145 hours but, as the 7th Divisional War Diary put it, "[7th Armoured was] badly congested by the Guards Armoured Division who came too far west and blocked our exit against the 11th Armoured Division."

In the meantime, one of the tank battalions advancing on Cagny was hit by a counterattack from the remains of the 21st Panzer's armored reserve consisting of up to 10 Tigers and nine Mk IVs. This failed when two of the Tigers were mistakenly engaged and knocked out by the Luftwaffe 88s in Cagny. The remaining tanks withdrew and were then ordered to Frénouville, where von Luck's headquarters was located, and the Le

The leading battalion did not arrive at the Caen-Vimont railway line until 1800 hours, and by then it was too late to help. It had taken two hours to move the three kilometers from the Caen-Troarn road to Grentheville!

Poirier area, with a view to blocking the open German flank to the southeast of Caen.

At 1430 hours, the reserve tank battalion of the 29th Armored Brigade was ordered to advance past the sad remains of the left flank unit toward Soliers and Four. It was soon halted by assault guns in Soliers, the tanks of the Leibstandarte on the ridge, and the German armor in the area of Le Poirier and Frénouville. As they tried to withdraw, just before 1500 hours, every tank in the leading company was destroyed.

The unit history relates, "With no time for retaliation, no time to do anything but take one quick glance at the situation, almost in one minute, all its tanks were hit, blazing and exploding. Everywhere wounded or burning figures ran or struggled painfully for cover, while a remorseless rain of armour-piercing shot riddled the already helpless Shermans."

By 1506 hours, the remnants of the left-flank battalion had withdrawn to the north of the Caen-Vimont railway line. Twenty-two minutes later the unit on the west flank, which had already pulled back to the north-south railway line at 1400 hours, reported the ground to its front "covered by tanks and anti-tank guns."

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-495-3427-02, Photo: Siedel

A German MG-42 crew moves through Caen, which was almost totally destroyed during the month-long battle, to take up a new position.

At 1600 hours, when "Pip" Roberts met his corps commander and the commander of the 7th Armored Division just behind Le Mesnil-Frémentel, his armored brigade was in complete disarray and his infantry brigade was still tied up at the north end of the corridor. Grentheville had been cleared, but Frénouville, Four, Soliers, Le Poirier, La Hogue, Bourguébus, Hubert-Folie, and Bras were all in German hands.

Roberts had already called forward his only armored reserve, the Divisional Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and he demanded, not unreasonably, that the 7th Armored Division move forward to fill the gap between himself and the Guards. However, the 7th Armored had been seriously delayed getting through the minefields and, as previously stated, further disrupted in its advance in the narrow corridor north of Le Mesnil-Frémentel. It has been suggested that its commander, who certainly thought the whole operation was a waste of armor, displayed undue caution on this day and perhaps deliberately delayed his leading armored battalion, saying there was no way between the 11th Armoured Division and the Guards.

This is difficult to believe because it would have required the collusion of both the brigade commander and the unit commander, not to mention the various staffs. Whatever the truth, the leading battalion did not arrive at the Caen-Vimont railway line until 1800 hours, and by then it was too late to help. It had taken two hours to move the three kilometers from the Caen-Troarn road to Grentheville!

In the meantime, the 32nd Guards Brigade had reached Cagny at 1600 hours. The 88mm gun crews blew up their guns before withdrawing, but it took until 2000 hours before the village was finally cleared. Le Poirier fell at 1630 hours. Attempts to advance on Vimont at 1900 hours again failed in the face of German tanks and assault guns around Frénouville. The War Diary of the Guards Armored Division says 60 Shermans were damaged during the day, of which 15 were knocked out.

At 2000 hours, the 2nd SS Panzergrenadier Battalion of the 1st Regiment arrived to join the Leibstandarte's StuGs in Bras. The latter claimed to have surprised some 15 to 20 tanks on the northern edge of the village earlier in the evening. These were the Cromwells of the 11th Armored Division's Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, which Roberts had committed in a final attempt to achieve his mission. Sixteen of them were lost in this forlorn attempt to take the ridge from the north.

By the time darkness fell, the remnants of 11th Armored's four tank battalions had withdrawn to the north of Soliers and the Caen-Vimont railway line. The 29th Armoured Brigade had lost at least 125 Shermans during the day's fighting. The 159th Infantry Brigade had finally caught up and was dug in around Le Mesnil-Frémentel. With the 32nd Guards Brigade in defense around Cagny and the 5th Guards Armored Brigade to the west of a line from Emiéville to Frénouville, the situation at the southern end of the "armored corridor" was both crowded and confused.

One of the excuses given for the VIII Corps debacle on July 18 was a lack of infantry. Hans von Luck, in his book *Panzer Commander*, certainly criticized British tactics. He pointed out that the tank attacks were almost always carried out without infantry support and there was therefore no one immediately available to eliminate troublesome antitank nests. This is an overstatement in that a motorized infantry battalion was an integral part of

each of the two armored brigades involved, but it is certainly true that the potential of the three infantry brigades in VIII Corps was largely wasted.

A plan that deprived the leading armored division of its infantry brigade, a lack of armored personnel carriers, and poor cooperation between infantry and armor ensured that the British tanks in Goodwood operated virtually unsupported. There were 12 infantry battalions available in VIII Corps, three of them mechanized, to support nine tank and three armored reconnaissance battalions, and yet five of them saw no action at all on July 18.

Despite the terrible tank casualties in O'Connor's VIII Corps, the cost in human terms was surprisingly light—521 in all, and only 81 killed in the four tank battalions of the 11th Armored Division. Even more surprising, the four infantry battalions of the same division suffered a total of only 20 casualties.

In the meantime, the Canadians had cleared the Colombelles factory area, penetrated into Vaucelles and, early on the 19th, bridged the Orne—all at a cost of less than 200 men. The Germans withdrew from the Caen suburbs during the night and took up new positions on the western end of the Bourguébus ridge where the bulk of the Leibstandarte was now located.

On the eastern flank, the 3rd British Infantry Division and other troops of I British Corps cleared Touffreville and Sannerville during the day and reached the outskirts of Troarn, but attempts to advance farther south were firmly blocked by the German defenders in the Emiéville and St. Pair sector. The cost had been relatively heavy, 651 men and 18 tanks, but this time the bombing had undoubtedly helped the attackers.

In summary, at midnight on the 18th the Germans had lost Caen, but were still holding all the villages to the south of the Caen-Vimont railway except Grentheville, and were defending a firm line running north from Frénouville through Emiéville to Troarn.

During the night, the Leibstandarte reorganized slightly, giving the 1st SS Panzergrenadier Regiment responsibility for the Bras, Hubert-Folie, and Bourguébus sector and the 2nd Regiment the area of Le Poirier, Four, Soliers, and La Hogue.

But what had happened to the 12th SS Panzer Division? There is a general belief that two strong Hitlerjugend KGs with tanks were sitting in reserve north of Falaise on July 17, and that on the 18th they were used to thicken the German defenses to the southeast of Caen and repel the British Guards and 11th Armored Divisions. Not so. The part of 12th SS in the Falaise area, in terms of combat-ready troops, consisted of little more than one KG under the command of SS Major Hans Waldmüller.

To prevent the British and Canadians from breaking out of the invasion area and rushing toward Paris, the Germans put up a stubborn defense in the vicinity of Caen. A D-Day objective, it did not fall for several weeks.

But what had happened to the 12th SS Panzer Division? There is a general belief that two strong Hitlerjugend KGs with tanks were sitting in reserve north of Falaise on July 17, and that on the 18th they were used to thicken the German defenses to the southeast of Caen and repel the British Guards and 11th Armored Divisions. Not so. The part of 12th SS in the Falaise area, in terms of combat-ready troops, consisted of little more than one KG under the command of SS Major Hans Waldmüller.

On July 17, General Eberbach, suspecting that the British were about to attack, cancelled the plan for this group to join KG Wünsche northwest of Lisieux, and at about midday on the 18th, worried by the strength of the VIII Corps attack, asked the high command if he could use the Hitlerjugend Division. However, permission could not be given without consent from Berlin since, on July 16, Hitler had expressed his intent to preserve the division.

The 12th SS Panzer Division was released to I SS Panzer Corps at 1500 hours on the 18th and ordered to take over the sector from Emiéville church to Frénouville from 21st Panzer as soon as possible.

Interestingly, the Germans had appreciated that the ground due east of Vimont, along the Route Nationale 13, was quite unsuitable for armored forces, being only just above the water table. KG Wünsche was therefore wasted near Lisieux. The more likely British axis was through Airan and then on to cross the Dives River near St. Pierre-sur-Dives, so it was decided to concentrate the 12th with its center in the Vimont area. While it would not be too difficult to move KG Waldmüller forward during the night, the destroyed bridges over the Dives would present serious problems for Wünsche. All concerned knew that the Hitlerjugend Division could not be fully in position before midday on July 19. Fortunately for the Germans, the British were to allow the necessary time.

During the night of July 18-19, the Luftwaffe made one of its few effective raids against

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A Lend-Lease Sherman tank belonging to a British unit kicks up dust as it speeds past a knocked-out PzKpfw IV near Gagny on July 19, 1944.

the British bridgehead east of the Orne. It caused heavy casualties among some of the administrative echelons and replacement tank crews for the Guards and 11th Armored Divisions. The vital bridges were not hit.

Although both the forward British armored divisions had full-strength infantry brigades available and in the right place, neither attempted the one operation the Germans were dreading: a night attack by infantry. Instead, they "consolidated their gains." Moreover, VIII Corps took no offensive action during the morning of July 19 either. It was "reorganising for further action." The Germans, on the other hand, were active. At 0700 hours a counterattack from Four by a company of the 2nd SS Panzergrenadier Regiment recaptured Le Poirier.

O'Connor met his three divisional commanders at midday and told them to resume their attacks. The 11th Armored Division was to capture Bras and Hubert-Folie beginning at 1600 hours, and then at 1700 hours the 7th Armored was to capture Bourguébus, now known to the soldiers as "Buggersbus." Then it was to advance to Tilly-la-Campagne and Verrières, while the Guards were directed to retake Le Poirier and then advance to Vimont.

Besides carrying out the counterattack against Le Poirier, the men of the Leibstandarte spent the morning improving their defenses and preparing further ones in depth. Lieutenant Werner Wolff's 7th SS Panzer Company joined the 3rd SS Panzer Company in the Tilly area, and the rest of the 1st SS Panzer Battalion moved up behind the ridge to the east of Bourguébus.

As a result of observed British movements, only two StuGs were left in Bras. The 3rd SS Panzergrenadiers and the remainder of the Stürmgeschutz Battalion were moved to better positions between the village and Hubert-Folie which, along with Soliers, was held by the 1st Battalion of the 1st SS Panzergrenadier Regiment. The 2nd SS Battalion was defending the ridge from Bourguébus to Tilly, and SS Lt. Col. Rudolf Sandig's 2nd SS Panzergrenadier Regiment continued to defend the right flank of the Leibstandarte sector in Le Poirier, Four, and La Hogue.

The leading elements of Kurt Meyer's 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend arrived in the forward area at 0530 hours on the 19th, and by midday a KG had taken over for the 21st Panzer Division on both sides of the Cagny-Vimont road at Frénouville. The Divisional Escort Company was behind it at Bellengreville.

Another KG also arrived on the high ridge running north-south in the Argences-Moult-Airan area around noon. It was an ideal location for the divisional reserve. During the afternoon, SS Panzergrenadiers moved in on the right flank and occupied Emiéville. The 8th SS Panzer Company took up ambush positions astride the Vimont road between two panzergrenadier battalions and, while the 12th SS Pioneer Battalion lay mines and constructed obstacles throughout the sector, the 1st SS Panzerjäger Company provided depth behind Frénouville.

Thirty-six replacement Mk IVs destined for the 2nd SS Panzer Battalion were still in transit and did not arrive in time for the fighting on the 19th. Nevertheless, for the first time since its official formation in 1943, the two designated divisions of Hitler's I SS Panzer Corps Leibstandarte were to fight side by side.

On the afternoon of July 19, elements of the 32nd Guards Infantry Brigade attacked Emiéville, but were beaten off by SS panzergrenadiers who suffered a loss of only two killed and six wounded. A larger attack at 1900 hours by the same brigade easily retook Le Poirier. The company of the Leibstandarte's 2nd SS Panzergrenadier Battalion that had been defending it had by then withdrawn, under orders, to Four. However, further attempts by the Guards to advance on Frénouville failed. The 5th Guards Armored Brigade inexplicably remained idle. Its War Diary records, "It was reported that a screen of 88s barred any further progress in the direction of Vimont and it became more important that we should hold Cagny so that the 7th and 11th Armoured Divisions on our right

flank should be able to advance."

The attack by the 11th Armored Division began at 1600 hours with the Divisional Armored Reconnaissance Battalion advancing on Bras from the northwest. It was followed by a tank battalion, which, once Bras was secured, had the task of capturing Hubert-Folie. However, by 1620 hours it was clear that the attack on Bras had failed, and it was decided to mount a second attack from the northeast. One of the two StuGs that had been left in Bras withdrew after the other was lost, leaving the panzergrenadiers without close armored support. A member of the 9th Company remembered later, "The tanks rolled up. Two, five, eight, ten, we stopped counting. They approached our foxholes carefully. Dread and fear paralyzed us. We knew they would pulverize us. Those of us who survived were taken prisoner."

At 1710 hours, the British tanks emerged on the southwest side of the village, and by 1730 the supporting infantry was mopping up.

Following the fall of Bras, the Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was ordered to advance on Hubert-Folie at 1810 hours, but the village was defended by parts of the 1st SS Grenadiers and the 2nd SS StuG Company, and after 20 minutes the advance broke down in confusion. Even so, when the remaining 25 or so British tanks advanced again on Hubert-Folie at 2000 hours they found no enemy. The Leibstandarte defenders had withdrawn to the dominating ridge two kilometers to the south, near Verrières, where Peiper's tanks were already in position.

The concurrent attack by the 7th Armored Division's 22nd Armored Brigade against the Leibstandarte forward defenses in Four and Soliers was initially delayed by SS panzergrenadiers, but after a short time they fell back, again under orders, to the Bourguébus-La Hogue ridge. Then, as the British tanks surged forward just before 1900 hours on either side of Bourguébus, they ran headlong into Peiper's 1st SS Panzer Regiment and lost eight Shermans. There was little option but to pull back into Four and Soliers.

Hitler's Leibstandarte Corps had, for all intents and purposes, held firm. The Hitlerjugend had given no ground and, as darkness fell, the Leibstandarte was still holding the vital ground from La Hogue through Bourguébus to Beauvoir.

Meanwhile, on the 19th, the Canadian 2nd Infantry Division had cleared Cormelles, Fleury-sur-Orne, Hill 67 just to the north of St. André, and Ifs. This placed the Canadians in a good position to take over Bras and Hubert-Folie on the following day and relieve the badly mauled British 11th Armored Division.

At 1000 hours on July 20, Dempsey ordered the 7th Armored Division to complete the capture of Bourguébus. At the same time, the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division was to advance and establish itself on the Verrières feature astride the Caen-Falaise road.

When the 7th Armored Division began its advance it found Bourguébus abandoned by the Leibstandarte's 1st SS Panzergrenadiers, but when its tanks tried to continue across the gently rising ground toward Verrières they came under heavy fire and were stopped in their tracks. The Leibstandarte, supported by tanks of Wittmann's 3rd Tiger Company, was as usual on the vital ground. But the British 22nd Armored Brigade was not the only formation attacking Verrières on the morning of the 20th.

The Canadians had also been ordered to take the ridge, and their 6th Infantry Brigade had crossed the Orne that morning. After hurried consultations between the II Canadian and the VIII British Corps, it was agreed at midday that the British would withdraw to the east of the Caen-Falaise road and provide fire support for the Canadian attack. The British got the best deal.

Meanwhile, the Guards Armored Division had occupied Frénouville and Emiéville after SS panzergrenadiers had abandoned both. These withdrawals were carried out to shorten the Hitlerjugend's line, but further attempts by the Guards to advance toward Vimont were strongly resisted and failed. Low, threatening clouds precluded any Allied air support. The new 12th SS line ran from just east of Emiéville to a point halfway between Frénouville and Bellengreville.

The Canadian attack against Verrières began at 1500 hours. It was supported by both Canadian and British artillery and Typhoon ground attack aircraft. Despite the fact that this was a full-scale attack, the infantry advanced on its own, unaccompanied by tanks, which for some strange reason were held back in a counterattack role. A foothold was secured in the relatively unimportant village of St. André-sur-Orne, defended by the 272nd Infantry Division, and by 1730 hours the Canadians reported that they had companies in the Beauvoir and Torteval farms.

Despite a violent rainstorm that turned the ground into a sea of mud, the inevitable German counterattack hit the Canadians a short time later. It was mounted from the direction of Verrières by the 5th and 6th Companies of the 2nd SS Panzer Battalion supported by a StuG company and elements of the 1st SS Panzergrenadier Regiment. The Canadians were overrun and suffered 208 casualties, including the commanding officer and 65 men killed. The same German force then turned on the follow-up Canadian unit that had moved up to occupy the area between Beauvoir and St. André, causing it heavy casualties. By 2100 hours two of its companies had been broken.

Heavy fighting continued throughout the night of July 20-21, as did the torrential rain, terminating any hopes Montgomery, Dempsey, O'Connor, or anyone else might have had of continuing Goodwood.

On the morning of the 21st, the Leibstandarte launched another heavy counterattack against the Canadian center, causing more casualties and recapturing the vital Torteval and Beauvoir farms. The strategic Verrières ridge was back in the hands of the Leibstandarte, and the largest armored battle ever seen in the history of Western Europe—over 1,200 tanks and armored assault guns involved—was over.

The strategic results, failures, successes, and implications of Operation Goodwood have been discussed many times. This author will confine himself to four basic state-

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A Sherman tank from the Canadian 27th Tank Regiment rolls through the shattered, deserted streets of Caen after the Germans pulled out. The British/Canadians lost thousands of men and 300-500 tanks. The delay in securing Caen badly damaged Montgomery's reputation among the Allies.

ments. First, of the four objectives specified by Dempsey—Vimont, Garcelles, Hubert-Folie, and Verrières—only Hubert-Folie had been captured, and one assigned by Montgomery, Bretteville-sur-Laize, was still over eight kilometers away.

Second, Montgomery's aim of "writing down" the German armor had not been achieved.

Third, the cost for what was achieved was enormous. British losses in the VIII and I Corps only were 3,474, and Canadian casualties amounted to 1,965, including 441 dead. Reports that the British lost over 400 tanks are much exaggerated. A careful study of the relevant documents indicates a maximum of 253 for the period of Goodwood, and many of these were repairable.

Fourth, Montgomery's vital aim of holding the bulk of the German armor on the eastern flank, to prevent it from being used against the intended American breakout in the west, was achieved.

With regard to "writing down" the German armor, the claim in the British official history that the Leibstandarte and 21st Panzer Divisions lost 109 tanks on July 18 is certainly another exaggeration. One can, however, account for 41 tanks and six assault guns knocked out in the initial bombing, and the commander of the Leibstandarte mentions a figure of 12 Panthers and one Mk IV lost on the same day. It is also known that the Leibstandarte Sturmgeschütz Battalion had 17 StuGs knocked out or badly damaged on the 18th and 19th, although only two of these were total write-offs.

It is confirmed that the 12th SS suffered no tank casualties during the fighting and that on July 20 the Leibstandarte still had 17 Panthers and 46 Mk IVs operational. Therefore, the figure given by Maj. Gen. Roberts, commander of the 11th Armored Division, in an interview at the British Staff College in 1979 that was used in the British Army training film on Goodwood, of 75 German tanks and assault guns destroyed can be accepted as accurate. This is only 20 percent of the total German armored strength in the I SS Panzer Corps sector and cannot possibly be described as the "writing down" of armor as required by Montgomery.

German casualties were relatively light. The Leibstandarte lost 1,092 men, including 243 killed, from July 16 to August 1. In the case of the Hitlerjugend, most casualties were caused after Goodwood by Allied artillery fire. The total loss from July 19 to August 4 was 134, including 18 killed.

The failure of Goodwood to achieve a breakthrough caused a major row in the highest echelons of the Allied command. Supreme Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower was furious and made his famous remark that the Allies could hardly expect to advance through France at a rate of a thousand tons of bombs per mile. Marshals Arthur Tedder and Trafford Leigh-Mallory and all the senior air commanders were equally angry. Many officers at SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) wanted Montgomery sacked and Eisenhower himself to take command of all land forces.

Even Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who was never particularly fond of Monty, began to have doubts about his ability. There is little doubt that while Montgomery would remain a hero to most of the British fighting soldiers who served under him, his reputation with many senior officers and military historians would be forever tarnished. Sadly for him, his chance of remaining overall Allied land force commander ended with Goodwood. □

PATTON AT BUCHENWALD

"Old Blood and Guts" was sickened by what he saw in the liberated concentration camps—and vowed that others should see it, too.

BY FLINT WHITLOCK

The blue arrows on Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.'s Third Army situation maps in his mobile headquarters trailer all pointed eastward. From the vicinity of Frankfurt-am-Main, Patton's three corps—Troy Middleton's VIII, Manton Eddy's XII, and Maj. Gen. Walton H. Walker's XX—were plunging side by side over hills, across rivers, streams, and fields, through woods, and into towns and villages, through barricades, road blocks, and minefields, destroying all efforts by the Germans to slow the advance.

Since August 1944, the XII and XX Corps had been the main striking arms of Patton's Third Army and, as such, had blazed a trail from the western coast of France, through Belgium, and into Germany.

The divisions that comprised Walker's XX Corps from the middle to the end of March 1945 were the 6th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Armored Divisions, and the 5th, 26th, 65th, 80th, and 94th Infantry Divisions. During that same period, making up Manton S. Eddy's XII Corps (which had been attached to Third Army on August 1, 1944), were the 4th Armored Division and the 76th, 89th, and 90th Infantry Divisions.

Middleton's VIII Corps, which had been added to Third Army on December 20, 1944, shortly before Middleton's units were mauled during the Battle of the Bulge, consisted only of the 87th and 89th Infantry Divisions. All told, the three corps that made up Patton's Third Army totaled some 203,000 men.

By mid-March, Walker's XX Corps had taken Trier, Saarlautern, and Kaiserslautern. By March 21, Walker's advance elements had reached both the Rhine and the Main, then crossed both rivers and took Mainz, Wiesbaden, and Frankfurt. Eddy's XII Corps, too, had progressed well, crossing the Mosel River on March 14 and capturing Bad Kreuznach on March 18 and Worms three days later. For six days—March 21-27—XII Corps battled for and seized Mainz in conjunction with XX Corps. On the 22nd, XII Corps assaulted across the Rhine River at Oppenheim where it pummeled the German defenders.

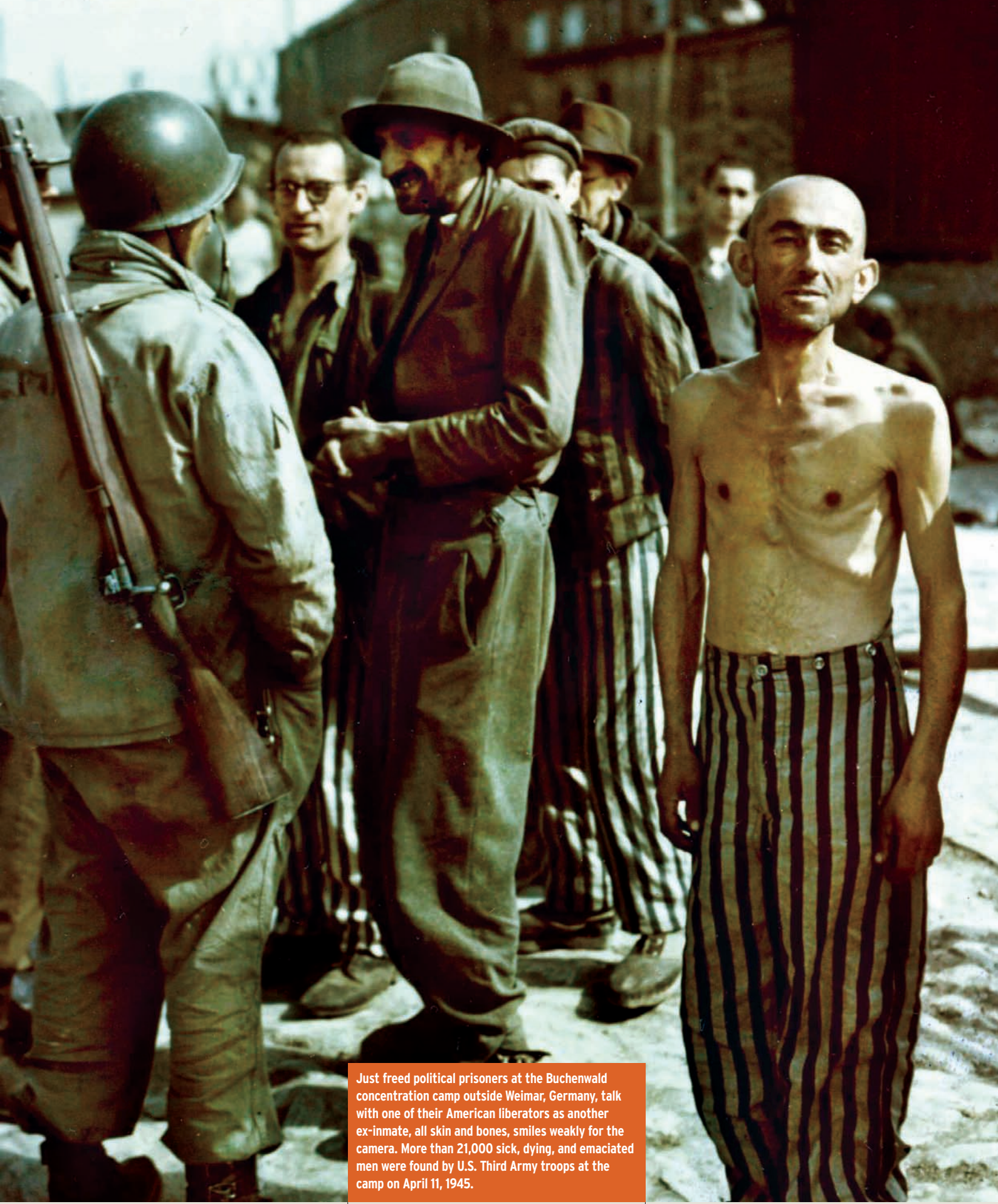
Middleton's VIII Corps followed behind the spearhead units and performed "mopping-up" operations, i.e., eliminating pockets of resistance that were bypassed by the lead units in order to keep the advance from stalling.

By the end of March, the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions were seasoned, battle-hardened units. Highly regarded was Maj. Gen. William M. Hoge's 4th Armored Division, which had come ashore with VIII Corps at Utah Beach, Normandy, France, on July 11, 1944, and proceeded to cut a bloody swath through the Germans all across Western Europe.

During the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944, 4th Armored was one of the key elements that made an historic winter march in record time to help break the siege on American forces at Bastogne, Belgium, thus earning the sobriquet "Patton's Best." So feared was the 4th that the Germans referred to the outfit as "Roosevelt's SS."

Transferred from VIII Corps to XII Corps in January 1945, the 4th Armored was the tip of the spear for much of Patton's bold dash toward Germany—and into the history books.

Major General Robert W. Grow's 6th Armored Division had also seen plenty of combat since arriving at Utah Beach eight days after the 4th Armored. Like the 4th, the 6th



Just freed political prisoners at the Buchenwald concentration camp outside Weimar, Germany, talk with one of their American liberators as another ex-inmate, all skin and bones, smiles weakly for the camera. More than 21,000 sick, dying, and emaciated men were found by U.S. Third Army troops at the camp on April 11, 1945.

Imperial War Museum

also took part in the action to relieve besieged Bastogne. The 6th crossed the Rhine on March 25, bulldozed its way through heavy opposition at Frankfurt-am-Main, and then headed in a northeastern direction toward Kassel.

On March 30, Grow's tankers saw firsthand the evidence of Nazi cruelty. The division's newspaper, Armored Attacker, reported that the 6th came across a camp of 900 Hungarian Jewish women near Homburg, a town about 22 miles southwest of Kassel:

"Most of the 900 had been working in munitions and poisonous-gas factories under incredibly hard slave-labor conditions. For months they had received only one bowl of water-like soup and two pieces of bread per day, wore wooden shoes and burlap-like garments, and had no soap with which to wash. The women were under the strict control of SS troops, who shaved their heads.... The most horrible part of the story concerned the treatment received by the women who became too ill to work. They were disrobed, thrown on trucks with the already dead and their fate then became unknown."

Even this initial encounter with evil did not fully prepare the men of the division for what they would discover in just a fortnight.

For the leaders of the Third Reich, the handwriting on the wall spoke very clearly about a bad end looming for them. The SS chief, Heinrich Himmler, was especially worried about his fate if the Allies should capture him. The trail of blood and ashes from millions of victims of the SS led directly to his doorstep, and he began to think of ways he might be able to escape the hangman's noose.

One thing he could do, he believed, was to try and cover up the magnitude of his and the SS's crimes. To accomplish that, he had but two choices: either murder all of the remaining inmates of the concentration and death camps and dispose of their bodies, or open the gates of the camps, march the inmates out, and allow the Allies to find only empty barracks.

The problem with the first option was simply that Nazi Germany was running out of time. No matter how efficient the Nazis' mass murder system had become, it would still take weeks, and possibly even months, to kill the hundreds of thousands of people still in the camps and working at slave-labor jobs, and then burn or bury the corpses.

Himmler feared, and rightly so, that Nazi Germany no longer had weeks or months left to take care of such an enormous task. Added to this problem was the fact that the extermination facilities in Poland were no longer in existence, all of them having either been abandoned or captured by the advancing Red Army.

The second option seemed much more workable. The camps could be evacuated and the inmates marched into the countryside where, devoid of food and medical care, they would begin to die in droves. If Allied armies came across the bodies, Himmler's excuse could be that the inmates had escaped from the camps and, without the care offered by their SS warders, died on their own.

If liberating units came close to a group of inmates on the march, the prisoners could be killed en masse by their guards, who would then shed their uniforms and disappear into the woods. No witnesses, no prosecution. Perhaps a case could even be made that the Allied troops had gunned down the inmates, either on purpose or by accident.

Photo courtesy of Buchenwald Memorial

ABOVE: SS guards in formation for inspection. The parade ground is today the Buchenwald Memorial's parking lot. BELOW: 6th Armored Division soldiers cautiously follow a Sherman tank through the German village of Oberdorla on their way toward Weimar, April 1945. Elements of the 6th would liberate Buchenwald.

National Archives

National Archives

TOP: Trying to save his own skin, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, had the camps evacuated in a failed attempt to cover his crimes. ABOVE: Karl Otto Koch, the camp's first commandant, and Ilse Koch, his equally notorious wife, play with their children at home on the camp's grounds.

Yes, this was the only way Himmler believed he could save himself. And one of the first camps he ordered emptied was a slave-labor camp known as Ohrdruf-Nord Stalag III, located near the quaint, attractive Thuringian town of Ohrdruf, founded in the eighth century by Saint Boniface, about 30 miles west of Weimar.

In 1625, the 10-year-old Johann Sebastian Bach came to live with his brother in the town, play the organ, and compose music at the Church of Saint Michael. During the 1800s, Ohrdruf became a center for the manufacture of toys (such as the Kewpie doll), as well as the site of a military training ground (*Truppenübungsplatz*) that was created to prepare troops for the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

In the late 1930s, the military facilities at Ohrdruf were home to a modest underground Wehrmacht communications center called Amt 10 ("Office 10"), which had been started but not completed some five and a half miles east-southeast of Ohrdruf in the limestone cliffs of a valley known as the Jonastal. It became one of the Nazis' major underground construction projects—Sonderbauvorhaben III, or S-III.

Highly secret and well guarded, S-III was a huge, multi-level tunnel system with some shafts more than 1½ miles in length, hidden using shaft entrances disguised to look like chalets.

Owing to the severe aerial pounding that Berlin and other German cities were taking from American and British bombers, S-III was greatly expanded beginning in the summer of 1944, in anticipation that Hitler and the Nazi high command might need to relocate there. Doing the expanding and upgrading were 1,000 slave laborers from KL (for *Konzentrationslager,* or concentration camp) Buchenwald.

To house the slave work force, the Buchenwald sub-camp of Ohrdruf-Nord Stalag III was established in October 1944. By the end of January 1945, some 12,000 slave laborers were crammed into this small camp.

Given the severity of the work, brutal treatment at the hands of their guards, and their meager diet—not to mention work site accidents—prisoners died in droves. During his war crimes trial, SS physician Dr. Werner Greunuss testified that some 15-20 percent of the inmates died or were killed during his time at Ohrdruf.

There was still much confusion in Berlin as to what should be done with the bloated camps and their inmates. Himmler still dithered, continually suffering from second thoughts, changes of mind, and agonizing stomach cramps. In an effort to prove that he wasn't a heartless monster, Himmler issued an order to the camp commandants to spare all still living Jewish camp prisoners, including giving them sufficient rations and providing all necessary medical care to keep them alive.

On March 20, 1945, Oswald Pohl, head of the economic administration of the SS, visited Buchenwald, located high on a hill known as the Ettersberg overlooking Weimar, and reiterated to the commandant, Hermann Pister, Himmler's earlier order to spare Jewish prisoners. But time was running out.

On March 23, the British and Canadians crossed the northern Rhine in Operation Plunder. Heinz Guderian, one of the last generals Hitler could trust, went to the Führer, tried to explain the rapidly deteriorating military situation, and pleaded with him to conclude an armistice with the Western Allies. Hitler fired him on the spot.

The next day the largest and most successful airborne and glider operation of the war—Operation Varsity—took place in the vicinity of Wesel, Germany.

Three days later, from its last remaining launch site near The Hague in Belgium, Germany fired its final salvo of V-2 ballistic missiles; hundreds of other sites had already been overrun or wiped out by aerial attacks. Guderian's warnings proved to be true; before the month was over, Soviet troops were pressing Germany in the East and the Americans and British were about to encircle the Ruhr.

Like Himmler, Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels realized that the Allied discovery of the camps would mean death for the Nazi leadership if they were caught. In early April, he noted, "I fear that the concentration camps have grown a bit above Himmler's head. Just suppose that these camps should be overrun by the enemy in their present condition. What an outcry would be heard."

Himmler knew he faced Hitler's wrath—or worse—by countermanding his Führer's orders, and his nervous condition also deteriorated, but this was the only straw worth grasping. Himmler began secret negotiations with Count Folke Bernadotte, vice-president of the Swedish Red Cross.

He arranged for the removal of Danish and Norwegian prisoners at the Mittelbau-Dora camp, where the V-2s were assembled. They would be transported to Neuengamme, where the Swedish Red Cross would look after them, then three transports filled with a total of 2,900 inmates departed for Bergen-Belsen where, presumably, they were killed.

At the beginning of April, nearly 10,000 prisoners were marched from Ohrdruf to Buchenwald. Those judged too sick or infirm to make the three-day, 30-mile march were either shot or beaten to death by the guards. Only a few hundred prisoners remained behind.

Hermann Pister, the Buchenwald commandant, was also worried that if the Americans, British, or Soviets showed up before evidence of their crimes could be erased, every German associated with the camp would be summarily executed. Such an ending must not be allowed to happen.

A roll call taken on April 1 showed a total of 80,813 inmates assigned to Buchenwald, with approximately 34,000 of that number working off-site at sub-camps (such as Ohrdruf) and armaments works.

Himmler gave orders to the camp commandants to halt the evacuations and executions of prisoners and leave the camps intact for the Allies to liberate. It was an order that did not long remain in force, for American troops were coming dangerously close to the hell holes of Mittelbau-Dora, Ohrdruf, and Buchenwald, and Himmler suddenly lost his nerve, deciding not to countermand Hitler's wishes.

Here the historical record gets confused. According to Himmler's biographers Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, "[Ernst] Kaltenbrunner [the head of the RSHA, Reich Security Main Office] had ordered the wholesale evacuation of Buchenwald which began, probably without Himmler's knowledge, on 3 April. Himmler, says [Walter] Schellenberg, stopped the evacuation on 10 April as soon as he learned of it from the son of the Swiss President, Jean-Marie Musi, to whom on 7 April he had given his word that Buchenwald should be left intact for the Allied liberation, a promise intended to impress General Eisenhower in Himmler's favour."

Schellenberg's intervention, however, came too late—the evacuation had already begun, and tens of thousands of prisoners were trudging the countryside on forced marches under armed guard.

Before the battle to take Mühlhausen began on April 4, XX Corps' General Grow received an order from Patton to change his direction. The 6th Armored was to advance "with all possible speed and take the cities of Weimar and Erfurt." The 4th Armored would also head toward Gotha.

Accompanying the 6th Armored was the 80th Infantry Division, while the 76th Infantry Division was paired with 4th Armored.

Of the two infantry divisions assigned to accompany the tankers, only the 80th could be considered an experienced outfit. Maj. Gen. Horace L. McBride's "Blue Ridge" boys had entered Europe at Utah Beach in August 1944 then proceeded to fight their way eastward with barely a break in the action.

Like the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions, the 80th was hurled against the German breakthrough during the Battle of the Bulge and contributed to restoring the shattered American front lines.

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ABOVE: Unaware that they would soon liberate the Nazi slave labor camp at Ohrdruf, three 4th Armored Division tankers (left) take a break while another Sherman rolls past, March 1945. OPPOSITE: Generals Eisenhower, Bradley, and Patton view charred human remains in the burning pit at Ohrdruf, a Buchenwald sub-camp. Allied units had no knowledge or advance warning of the existence of the camps; Ohrdruf was accidently discovered by elements of the 89th Infantry and 4th Armored Divisions.

By contrast, Maj. Gen. William R. Schmidt's 76th Infantry Division had been in combat only since early February 1945. Although it had seen a few skirmishes, the 76th was still relatively new to the rigors of combat and the horrors of war.

Assisting these units in a mopping-up role were Maj. Gen. Frank L. Culin, Jr.'s 87th and Maj. Gen. Thomas D. Finley's 89th Infantry Divisions. The 87th had not seen its first action until December 8, 1944, near Metz, France, but was in the thick of fighting at the end of December during the Battle of the Bulge. The division also was engaged in the U.S. Army's attempts to crack Germany's vaunted West Wall—the so-called Siegfried Line.

The least experienced of the Third Army's combat divisions heading eastward was the 89th Infantry Division. Although it did not arrive in Europe until January 1945 and did not receive its baptism of fire until March 11, the 89th was champing at the bit, eager to meet the enemy.

The American military machine was making good progress across Germany on its drive to link up with the Soviets at the Elbe River. But 12th Army Group commander Omar Bradley considered slowing down or halting Patton's Third Army to prevent a salient from forming while at the same time pushing Courtney Hodges's First Army to catch up with Patton's forward elements and straighten the front line.

Patton was told to halt, but the 12th Army Group then received intelligence obtained from a German officer deserter regarding a vast underground German communications center at Ohrdruf. The details were sketchy but enticing, and when First Army reported that it would be unable to reach the line of the Third Army's advance any time soon, Bradley gave Patton the go ahead to push on to Ohrdruf.

Patton recalled, "[Bradley] had a plan for the capture of the German communication center in the vicinity of Gotha, Erfurt, Weimar, and Ohrdruf, which, when he explained it to me, seemed full of promise.... We explained the idea of the rapid advance on the Weimar Quadrilateral—Eddy on the right, Walker on the left [and Middleton in reserve]. I told them they would have the greatest chance in history to make names for themselves, and to get moving."

Apparently nothing, however, was then known about a possible slave-labor camp at Ohrdruf. Most of the U.S. Army and the American public at large had been kept in the dark about the existence of concentration or extermination camps. Buchenwald and Ohrdruf had been two of 40,000 slave-labor, concentration, and extermination camps the Germans had operated since 1933, the year Hitler and his Nazi Party had come to power.

Of course, there had been news reports in the *New York Times* as early as March 1933 that the Hitler regime was persecuting certain segments of its population, especially Jews. At that time, a series of measures adopted overwhelmingly in 1935 by the Reichstag (Parliament), called the Nuremberg Laws, had stripped every German Jew of virtually every right he or she once enjoyed. Their homes and businesses were taken from them, and onerous restrictions were placed on their everyday activities.

But the vast numbers of skeptical Americans (and Britons too, for that matter) regarded such reports as unfounded rumors designed to whip up anti-German sentiment as had happened during World War I.

And so, as Hitler's armies began overrunning one country after another, the tales became even more fantastic—Russian villages wiped clean of their Jewish inhabitants, cities like Warsaw, where Jews were herded into overcrowded ghettos and guarded by armed soldiers, and special camps established where thousands of Jews and other political prisoners could be kept under lock and key. There were even rumors of experiments in mass murder.

Even the Soviet discovery, in January 1945, of an extermination factory at a place called Auschwitz in Poland was widely viewed with skepticism. It all seemed to be too terrible, too fantastic to be believed.

An 89th Recon Troop officer reported that his men entered Ohrdruf-Nord Stalag III on April 4, 1945, and "saw first-hand the horror of life in a Nazi concentration camp. In addition to finding the communi-

cations center, the Americans began pouring into [the camp], which was still littered with corpses. We radioed our troop headquarters for instructions and were told to remain there, keeping the inmates contained (this was hardly necessary, as most were in their bunks, hardly able to walk) while headquarters contacted the infantry to relieve us." It took nearly three more hours before the 3rd Battalion of the 355th Infantry arrived and took control of the situation.

Among the first GIs to enter the camp was Sol R. Brandell, a scout with the 355th Infantry Regiment's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon. He saw a small building with a sign, *Krankenhaus—Achtung: Typhus* ("Hospital—Warning: Typhus") and went inside, only to be greeted by the sight and smell of "about 12 or 13 bodies lying in two-high wooden bunks and emitting the worst stench of rotten flesh, blood, and feces that I had ever before encountered—so intense that it stopped my breath and I had to escape to the outdoors, which didn't smell as bad."

After regaining his composure, Brandell went on a cursory inspection of the camp, coming across an immense pit that contained what he estimated to be the bodies of 6,000 to 7,000 naked corpses (a former inmate said there were 9,000 bodies), covered with a thin dusting of quick-lime.

Stanley N. Hodson, a private in the 355th Infantry, wandered over to another large pit, this one crisscrossed with a grid of warped steel rails and blackened logs on which burned bodies were still visible.

Hodson said, "There were long poles with steel hooks on them used for turning the bodies over. Even so, they didn't do a good job. The bodies were still there, some only charred, some half burnt. Off to one side some graves were dug."

The after-action report of Combat Command A, 4th Armored Division described the camp this way: "When the troops entered, they found 29 bodies on the ground in front of the administration building. A short distance away was a gallows and not far beyond it a shed in which 52 naked bodies were stacked in tiers of four,

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A translator shows Patton, Bradley, and Eisenhower how Ohrdruf prisoners were tortured on a whipping table, April 13, 1945. Ike would order U.S. units to visit the camps, saying, "We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for. Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting *against*."

covered with what appeared to be powdered lime.

"They apparently had been awaiting transportation to pits in the forest where between two and three thousand others had been buried during the six months the camp had existed. Most had died of disease, but most also had marks on their faces and heads and bruises on their bodies. A third group of nine charred torsos lay among ashes under a rough incinerator made of railroad ties and rails. Those in front of the administration building were the most recently dead—all shot in the back of the neck.

"Ohrdruf-Nord had no gas chamber or high-performance crematorium. The deaths there were caused by disease and neglect, helped along by overwork and brutality…. In the succeeding days the guards had marched those who could walk away to the east…. A dozen men had hidden in the camp buildings and survived to tell about the last days at Ohrdruf-Nord and to identify the dead…"

Colonel Hayden A. Sears, commander of the 4th Armored's Combat Command A, ordered 25 citizens of Ohrdruf to visit the concentration camp the next day "to view the ghastly scene left by their army. Forty-six [SS] prisoners were captured by CC 'A' in patrol activities around Ohrdruf. The mayor and his wife, while professing no knowledge of the affairs of the camp, later committed suicide," Sears said.

In his headquarters at Bad Hersfeld, Germany, Patton was planning the next phase of his drive farther east when he received reports about the discovery of Ohrdruf. Patton telephoned Bradley, who later wrote, "Third Army had overrun Ohrdruf, the first of the Nazi death camps … and George insisted that we view it. He said, 'Brad, you'll never believe how bastardly these Krauts can be until you've seen this pesthole yourself.'"

Plans were made for Patton, Bradley, Eisenhower, and other top brass to visit Ohrdruf-Nord on April 12. The day before that happened, however, another, even larger concentration camp—KL Buchenwald—was accidentally discovered.

On April 11, as a small, advance patrol from the 6th Armored Division, led by Captain Frederic Keffer, headed toward Weimar and was approaching the western outskirts at a village called Hottelstedt, they were fired upon by a group of SS soldiers. A brief fire-

fight took place and then the SS broke contact.

No sooner had the skirmish ended than a small group of bedraggled men came straggling down the road, jabbering in what sounded like Russian. Luckily, a Russian-speaking GI was with Keffer's group and he told Keffer that a huge concentration camp called Buchenwald was very close.

None of the Americans knew what a concentration camp was, or had even been informed that one was in the vicinity (Army maps did not contain that information), but Keffer was intent on finding it. With the escaped prisoners riding atop Keffer's armored cars, the group traveled the mile or so from Hottelstedt until they came to a clearing in the forest that ringed the camp.

There, they saw behind barbed wire fences scores of barracks, guard towers, and more than 20,000 men in ragged, striped uniforms rushing toward them and cheering. A hole had been cut in the barbed wire enclosure and, upon entering, the Americans were immediately swarmed by the now-liberated, foul-smelling, deliriously happy inmates, all of them excitedly cheering and babbling in incomprehensible tongues.

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TOP: Forced to attend the burial of inmates who died at the Wöbbelin concentration camp near Ludwigslust, German civilians display a variety of emotions. The camp was liberated by the US. 8th Infantry and 82nd Airborne Divisions on May 2. ABOVE: Patton ordered 1,000 Weimar civilians to tour Buchenwald. Here the group stares in dumbstruck horror at a truckload of corpses outside the crematorium, April 16, 1945. Many civilians claimed ignorance of what was happening in the camps.

Keffer was told the name of the camp, but the name "Buchenwald" had little meaning for him at that time. Suddenly, Keffer found himself lifted off the ground by a score of hands and carried around "on the shoulders of the crowd like a conquering hero."

He later wrote, "What an incredible greeting that was. I was picked up by arms and legs, thrown in the air, caught, thrown again, caught, thrown, etc., until I had to stop it, I was getting so dizzy. How the men found such a surge of strength in their emaciated condition was one of those bodily wonders in which the spirit sometimes overcomes all weaknesses of the flesh. My, but it was a great day!"

Teenage inmate Louis Gros said that he caught a glimpse of Keffer entering the camp: "He enters at a walking pace. We don't have the time to discern whether he smiles or not. And why should he smile? In half a tick, we discover that his uniform … his officer's insignia, shoes, and behavior can belong only to an American. And that one is our liberator, the first to enter the camp, to confirm our state as free men—free and rescued from the Nazi tyranny, definitely!

"Then 12 arms, maybe more, apprehend him, raise and throw him into the air, once, twice, ten times! He literally flies, such as a disjointed puppet until, tired of that exhausting sport, he shouts a forcible 'Stop!', which is promptly obeyed. Sensing that scene, I suddenly feel taken by an intense emotion. My tears release irresistibly because they have been repressed for too long a time. I have no shame; never have I felt so alive, so existing, than at that supreme instant!"

At that point, Keffer and his men were informed that, when the sounds of battle

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When the revolting, stomach-churning tour of the abattoir was concluded, Ike turned grimly to the others and said, "I want every American unit not actually in the front lines to see this place. We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for. Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting against."

erupted from the direction of Hottelstedt, it was the signal for the prisoner revolt to begin. For years, the inmates had been stealing weapons and squirreling them away in anticipation for just this day. When it came, the inmates battled with their SS guards, driving many of them away. The camp was now in possession of the prisoners.

Keffer said, "I was slowly pulled and pushed through the crowd towards a headquarters building. There I met some of the leaders of the prison underground who were now in control. I told them I would radio for medical help and for food, and I requested them not to let the former prisoners, if they could help it, wander far outside the camp and possibly unwittingly interfere with our military progress."

Lacking medicines or food in his small patrol, Keffer radioed back to his headquarters to tell what he had found and to request help to feed and care for the desperate inmates, many of whom were at death's door.

The next day, April 12, was one of the most momentous days of the war. It began with a report that American soldiers had discovered a treasure trove of stolen artwork plus the majority of the Nazis' gold reserves deep inside a vast salt mine at the town of Merkers, some 28 miles west of Gotha.

Patton, Bradley, and Eisenhower flew to Merkers to see firsthand this astounding discovery. A half mile underground, the three generals were escorted to Room #8—a massive cave filled with crates and bags of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of gold bullion, gold coins, platinum, banknotes, plus bags and boxes of gold wedding rings and gold teeth yanked from the mouths of the victims of the camps before they were fed into the ovens.

In an adjacent room, stacked in rows, were thousands of precious works of art that the Nazis had looted from hundreds of museums and galleries throughout occupied Europe.

After spending several hours underground, the generals returned to sunlight and, at the insistence of Walton Walker, headed to Ohrdruf. Patton said, "We drove to Ohrdruf and visited the first horror camp any of us had ever seen."

The moment Ike, Bradley, Patton, Walker, their entourages, and a phalanx of photographers stepped through Ohrdruf's barbed-wire gate, they sensed something sinister about the place: scores of filthy, ugly barracks, watched over by empty guard towers. Everywhere were scattered the emaciated remains of human beings—hundreds of them.

Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs, "I have never felt able to describe my emotional reactions when I first came face to face with indisputable evidence of Nazi brutality and ruthless disregard of every shred of decency. Up to that time I had known about it [the Holocaust] only generally or through secondary sources. I am certain, however, that I have never at any other time experienced an equal sense of shock."

"It was the most appalling sight imaginable," noted Patton. "A man who said he was one of the former inmates acted as impresario and showed us first the gallows, where men were hanged for attempting to escape.... Our guide then took us to the whipping table.... The [inmate's] feet were placed in stocks on the ground and the man was pulled over the table, which was slightly hollowed, and held by two guards, while he was beaten across the back and loins. The stick which they said had been used, and which had some blood on it, was bigger than the handle of a pick. Our guide claimed that he himself had received 25 blows with this tool.

"It later developed that he was not a prisoner at all, but one of the executioners. General Eisenhower must have suspected it, because he asked the man very pointedly how he could be so fat. He was found dead the next morning, killed by some of the inmates...."

Patton also noted that, at the approach of the American Army, "the Germans thought it expedient to remove the evidence of their crimes. They therefore used the inmates to exhume the recently buried bodies and to build a sort of mammoth griddle of railway tracks laid on a brick foundation. The bodies were piled on this and they attempted to burn them. The attempt was a bad failure…. In the pit itself were arms and legs and portions of bodies sticking out of the green water which partially filled it."

Through the camp the generals and their entourage continued, dumbfounded, outraged, one horrific scene followed by another that was even worse. "We were spared nothing," said Colonel Charles R. Codman, Patton's aide-de-camp. "The gallows ... the whipping racks, the butcher's block for the cleaving of jaws and smashing out of gold fillings.

"The general officers present all are men who have seen much of life in the raw, yet never on any human faces have I witnessed such horror and disgust. At one point General Patton frankly disappeared behind the corner of a building and was violently sick to his stomach."

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OPPOSITE: Following Eisenhower's orders, an American unit enters Buchenwald to see firsthand the evidence of the crimes that the Nazis had committed. ABOVE: An American congressional delegation views bodies left stacked outside the Buchenwald crematorium, April 21, 1945. A group of American newspaper and magazine editors also visited and reported on the camp.

Patton, the controversial firebrand commander of the U.S. Third Army, known as "Old Blood and Guts"—an officer who once inspired his troops in battle by telling them to grease the treads of their tanks with the intestines of German soldiers—could not stomach what he saw at Ohrdruf.

"He went off to a corner thoroughly sick," wrote Robert D. Murphy, diplomat and senior political adviser to Eisenhower, who accompanied the group. "The inmates liberated by our forces were skeletons.... It was enough to make strong men weep—and some American officers did so unabashedly."

The average 4th Armored Division GI who saw the horrors of Ohrdruf also had something to say about them. Sergeant Peter A. Belpulsi said, "It made me vomit." Pfc. Richard C. Lukehart noted, "It was horror beyond belief." After the war, T/3 Norman Sue said that so few people believed the scenes of degradation he described that he stopped trying to describe them.

At one point during the tour, a young American enlisted man accidentally bumped into a former Ohrdruf guard and laughed nervously. Codman wrote, "General Eisenhower fixed [the GI] with a cold eye and when he spoke, each word was like the drop off an icicle. 'Still having trouble hating them?'" Ike asked.

When the revolting, stomach-churning tour of the abattoir was concluded, Ike turned grimly to the others and said, "I want every American unit not actually in the front lines to see this place. We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for. Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting against."

U.S. Navy Captain Harry C. Butcher, Eisenhower's naval aide, noted, "Ike said he had forced himself to see the bodies, as he wanted to be able to have firsthand evidence to combat anyone in the future who would say that stories of the atrocities were 'propaganda.'"

Butcher said, "I told him I thought we should give responsible people at home an opportunity to see the ghastly scenes for themselves. He is planning to ask the War Department to select a group of editors and publishers to visit the camps."

Eisenhower did just that. He wrote to General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff in Washington, D.C.: "The things I saw [at Ohrdruf] beggar description.... I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in a position to give firsthand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to propaganda."

War correspondent Meyer Levin, accompanying the high-ranking officers, wrote, "We had known this. The world had vaguely heard. But until now, no one of us had looked on this…. It was as though we had penetrated at last to the center of the black heart, to the very crawling inside of the vicious heart."

And, as if the discoveries of Ohrdruf and Merkers weren't enough for one day, there was still one more bombshell remaining. Late that night, back at his headquarters, Patton noticed that his watch had stopped. Before going to bed, he turned on the BBC broadcast to get the correct time and heard the news that the American president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had died that day.

With most of the news taken up with the coverage of FDR's death, the story of Buchenwald's liberation was "buried" deep inside the *New York Times*' April 13 edition. Until that day, the name and even the existence of Buchenwald was, arguably, unknown to most Americans.

Ike sent communiqués to both Washington and London, "urging the two governments to send instantly to Germany a random group of newspaper editors and representative groups from the national legislatures. I felt that the evidence should be immediately placed before the American and British publics in a fashion that would leave no room for cynical doubt."

Now a new report came into Patton's headquarters. Patton had just heard about Buchenwald and he steeled himself to visit

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: Weak, terribly emaciated, and unable to stand, two liberated inmates can only stare blankly at the camera. BELOW: Buchenwald primarily held only men and boys. Here a group of children is marched out of the camp but, because most of their parents were dead and their homes gone, they face an unknown future.

it. In a letter to his wife Bea, he wrote, "Ohrdruf was the first, and all of us prayed the last, concentration camp any of us would ever see. No such luck. Within 48 hours, XX Corps had overrun a far bigger one north of Weimar, the notorious Buchenwald...."

Upon receiving word of the 6th Armored's discovery atop the Ettersberg, Patton ordered his aide, Colonel Codman, to alert hospital teams to the situation, get food up the hill, then get himself to Buchenwald immediately and return with a full report. Codman made the calls, arranged for some photographers, and then, accompanied by the Third Army's French liaison officer, drove to Weimar as fast as possible.

The two men passed through the rubble-strewn streets of Weimar then headed up the "Blood Road" to the camp. Codman saw the main gate to the prisoner enclosure—the

punishment "bunker" and wooden tower from which a black flag flew, erected by the inmates on April 13 when they received the news of Roosevelt's death—describing the gate thusly: "If you didn't know what it was, you might take it for the entrance to a third-rate amusement park."

Once inside the camp, Codman and the French liaison officer were met by a greeting party of high-ranking French officers—political prisoners who had been incarcerated for "crimes against the Reich." The two visitors were shown the crematorium and, outside it, a wagon stacked with 30 or 40 naked corpses. Codman noted, "Prisoners who died from 'natural causes' were simply carted into the ground floor of the crematory proper and tossed into six coke ovens, in which are still to be seen the charred remains of the last overhasty and incomplete job that the arrival of our troops interrupted."

ABOVE: Ghastly human remains fill one in the crematorium's six ovens. BELOW: An ex-inmate points out for his liberators an SS guard who had brutally abused prisoners. Many camp personnel escaped justice after the war.

Codman then described what he was told about the fate that awaited those who were brought in for execution: "Here, according to eyewitnesses … were brought prisoners condemned of capital crimes—for example, attempting to escape, insubordination, stealing a potato, smiling in ranks—usually in groups of 20 or so at a time.

"They were lined up against the walls [in the basement] each one under a hook fixed at a height of about eight feet from the floor.... A short, slip-noose was placed about the neck of the condemned, who was then raised by the guards the distance necessary to affix the end of the noose to the hook." The dead inmate was then placed on an elevator that lifted him directly to the ovens.

Codman and the French liaison officer were then guided to the killing chamber of Block 61 to witness the conditions there, where they found some inmates who were still alive. "An emaciated specter of a man who had managed to get to the latrine and back was attempting to crawl up onto the first shelf [of the bunk bed]," wrote Codman. "It was only three feet from the floor, but he could not make it.... Two of the inmates who accompanied us picked him up by the shoulders and placed him on the shelf. So much for Barrack 61. Barrack 47 was like it, but frankly, I hadn't the stomach."

Fluent in French, Codman conferred with a number of now freed French inmates about their experiences and came away sickened at the violence, the sadism, the diabolical methods of torture, the sheer inhumanity that had reigned supreme at the camp.

After returning to headquarters, he wrote to his wife, "I have taken a bath, changed my clothes, smoked two packs of cigarettes, but the overpowering moral and physical stench of Barrack 61 remains in my nostrils—the sour-sweet stench of death, dysentery, and despair. Perhaps it is meant to."

On the same day of the Army brass visit to Ohrdruf, April 12, members of the 2nd Battalion of the 80th Division's 319th Infantry Regiment marched into Weimar's destroyed main square. Two thousand citizens were there, many waving and cheering as though they were being liberated, while a few hard liners turned their backs on their conquerors. The Weimar police force also lined up in the streets and turned over their weapons to the Yanks. From the windows and balconies of Weimar's shattered buildings, where once Nazi flags were proudly draped, there fluttered only white flags of surrender.

After learning about the existence of Buchenwald, about 60 soldiers from the 80th Infantry Division arrived and probed into the camp, where they encountered hundreds of children—dirty, ragged, emaciated but still alive. Somehow the adult inmates had hidden them for months in anticipation of just this day.

One historian wrote, "The soldiers went from barracks to barracks until they reached Barracks number 66. What they saw there magnified their horror. Hundreds of children, all boys, silently gazed at them with huge, deep-set eyes from faces resembling those of elderly men. They were Jewish children from Poland and Hungary aged eight to twenty."

The American commander sent out a message to higher headquarters: "Have found a thousand Jewish children in Buchenwald. Take immediate measures to evacuate them."

The 80th Division supply officer was also directed to procure as many blankets as possible for the freed inmates of Buchenwald. Plenty of food was also found in the camp larder: 3,000 loaves of bread, 150 tons of potatoes, 30 to 40 tons of rye grits, and 30 tons of margarine. Additionally, the clothing warehouse contained a large supply of shoes and clothing.

The soldiers looked at the abundance stored at Buchenwald and then at the emaciated prisoners in their filthy, worn-out rags and wooden shoes, and just shook their heads in anger at the incomprehensible unfairness of it all. Someone would have to pay for this, they vowed.

Three days later, Patton traveled to Weimar, where he planned to set up his next headquarters, but first he wanted to see Buchenwald. Although he knew that it would make him sick again, he, along with

Walton Walker, commander of XX Corps, were taken by jeep up to see the camp atop the Ettersberg.

No matter how revolted he had been by Ohrdruf, Patton noted in his memoirs that Buchenwald "was apparently much worse than the one at Ohrdruf."

"This camp was in the vicinity of a factory largely engaged in the construction of parts for the V-1 bomb [actually, it was the V-2] and of artillery caisson," Patton wrote, "and is a monument to the accurate bombing of our air force [on August 24, 1944], because they completely eliminated the factory without putting a single bomb in the camp, which was contiguous."

Patton also visited the barracks, an experience that thoroughly repulsed him. "I walked through two buildings," he said, "each with four tiers of bunks on a side. The bunks were at right angles to the gangway and were built so that they sloped slightly toward the front, and so that the fecal matter and other refuse left by the prisoners trickled down under their chins onto the floor, which was at least three inches deep in filth when I went through."

He also observed that the inmates "looked like feebly animated mummies and seemed to be of the same level of intelligence." Patton was also escorted to see the crematorium and all its attendant horrors. In the six industrial ovens, there remained evidence of human cremation. Outside the building was a large pile of remains and another stack of bodies that were supposed to have been burned, but the ovens had run out of fuel.

Patton said that his guides also pointed out to him that in Buchenwald, there were a number of eminent physicians whose role was to conduct pseudo-scientific medical research on living inmates.

Patton wrote, "One case was reported in which 800 slaves had been inoculated with an anti-typhus vaccine and then infected with the typhus bug. Of the 800, some 700 died, and the experiment was considered unsatisfactory." Other experiments tested spotted fever and yellow fever serums and cures for cholera and gas edema.

In fact, Buchenwald had been only one of the Nazis' primary medical-research centers. The other major concentration camps that were venues for horrendous experiments included Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, Natzweiler, Treblinka, Ravensbrück, and Sachsenhausen.

Chosen—or volunteering—to conduct the experiments were some of Germany's leading scientists and doctors from the country's major hospitals, clinics, institutes, and universities.

All of the experiments were conducted on human guinea pigs—either concentration camp inmates or Soviet prisoners of war—often performed without anesthesia. In addition to the typhus studies, the doctors at Buchenwald used the inmates for experiments such as judging the effectiveness of poisons, or determining what medications best treated serious wounds and burns.

The internal organs of hundreds of victims from these experiments were kept in jars of formaldehyde in Buchenwald's pathology department. It is said that more than 30,000 organs were thus preserved. Patton was more than revolted by what he saw: he was also incredibly angry.

An anonymous XX Corps corporal recalled seeing Patton leaving the camp: "[Patton] sat stony-faced as he passed by. We found ourselves inside the camp. All about us, the starved, ragged inmates presented a sad picture. We met an English-speaking inmate who guided us. He took us to a barracks where, in bunks, lay the emaciated moribund, those who were obviously dying. It was a macabre scene I can never forget."

Remembering that Colonel Hayden Sears of the 4th Armored Division had ordered Ohrdruf civilians to tour the camp in their town, Patton decided to do the same in Weimar. He ordered Erich Kloss, the city's acting mayor, to his headquarters late on April 15 and said that he wanted a thousand citizens to gather the next day and make the five-mile march up the Ettersberg and tour the camp. Now freed inmates would be their tour guides.

Patton also called Eisenhower and "suggested he send senior representatives of the press and photographers to get the horrid details. General Eisenhower not only did this, but also got congressmen to come over."

He also followed up his phone call with a letter to Ike: "We have found at a place four miles north of Weimar a similar camp, only much worse [than Ohrdruf]. The normal [inmate] population was 25,000, and they died at the rate of about a hundred a day.…

"I told the press to go up there and see it, and then write as much about it as they could. I also called General Bradley last night and suggested that you send selected individuals from the upper strata of the press to look at it, so that you can build another page of the necessary evidence as to the brutality of the Germans."

On April 16, the thousand Weimar citizens walked through the camp's main gate. Laid out before them were tables of human organs in jars of formaldehyde, lampshades made from tattooed human skin, and shrunken heads. They were shown torture devices and the gallows. They saw grotesque piles of naked corpses. They were shown the bones of cremated inmates still in the ovens, and mounds of ash that had once been human bones. They were spared nothing. Many citizens broke down crying, while others turned away, refusing to look.

For the next several weeks—even before the final surrender of Germany on May 8, 1945—Buchenwald became a tourist attraction, with the corpses still on display. Based on Ike's request, George Marshall set in motion visits by U.S. congressmen, senators, and newspaper publishers and editors; the British also sent a parliamentary delegation.

After their tour, the British parliamentary delegation reported, "Such camps as this mark the lowest point of degradation to which humanity has yet descended. The memory of what we saw and heard at Buchenwald will haunt us ineffaceably for many years."

The next official delegation came from Washington, D.C., on April 21 as part of a

National Archives

In this haunting photo by *Life* magazine photographer Margaret Bourke-White, Buchenwald survivors appear to be, as the original caption said, "staring out at their Allied rescuers like so many living corpses."

group of six senators who had flown to Europe to visit three camps—Buchenwald, Nordhausen, and Dachau. They were followed by 12 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The congressional delegation was shaken by what they had seen. Representative John Kunkel told the press, "If you tried to tell the actual facts, you'd get into a story of obscenity and filth that would be unprintable." Representative Henry Jackson remarked, "We heard atrocity stories from the last war that were not verified, but now we have seen them with our own eyes and they are the most sordid I have ever imagined." Clare Booth Luce commented, "No one wants to believe these things, but it is important that people know they're true."

The visit of congressional delegations was followed by a group of a dozen newspaper and magazine publishers, who came on April 24. *LIFE* magazine photographer Margaret Bourke-White, as well as Army Signal Corps lensmen, arrived to permanently record the scenes of horror.

Joseph Pulitzer III, publisher of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* said that he had gone to Europe in a skeptical frame of mind, expecting to find many of the terrible reports already relayed by war correspondents exaggerations and largely propaganda.

"It is my grim duty to report,' Pulitzer wrote, "that the descriptions of the horrors ... have given less than the whole truth. The fiendishness of these operations defies description." He later said that all of Germany's surviving members of the general staff, Gestapo, SS, and industrialists should be executed "with Army bullets through their heads"—even if it meant killing a million and a half Germans.

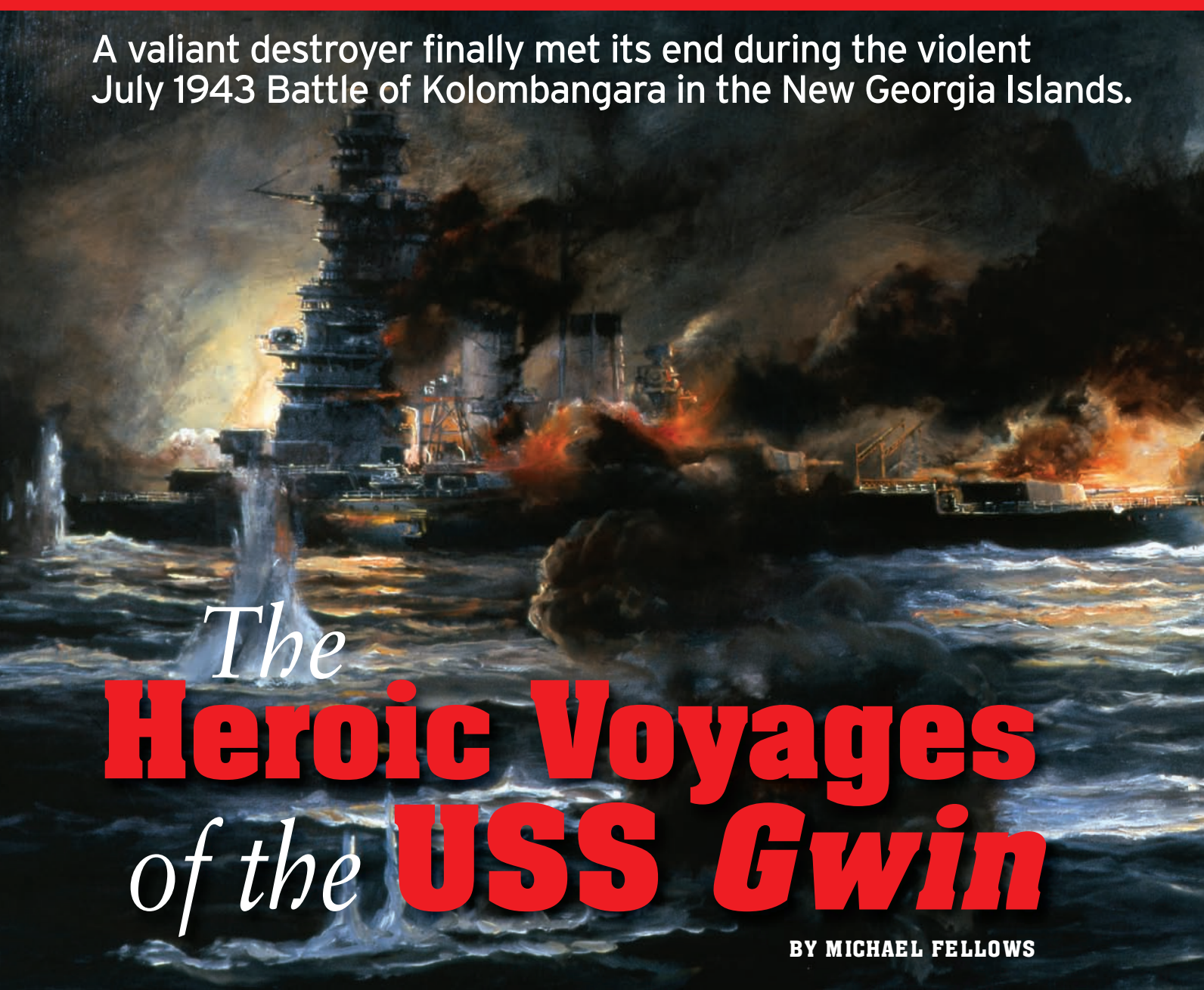
Edward R. Murrow, the esteemed radio correspondent, was also there and was unsparing in his descriptions of what he encountered. He told his listeners, "As I entered, I was surrounded by men who tried to lift me up on their shoulders.... They were too weak. Many of them could not even get out of bed. I was told that this building had once accommodated 80 horses. Now there were 1,200 human beings in it, five to every sleeping space. The stench was beyond imagination...

"I pray you to believe what I have said about Buchenwald. I have reported what I saw, but only part of it. For most of it, I have no words.... If I've offended you by this rather mild account of Buchenwald, I'm not the least sorry. I was there."

Although 1945 was less than four months old, 13,969 prisoners had already died that year in Buchenwald, while more than 12,000 had perished on the evacua-

Continued on page 98

A valiant destroyer finally met its end during the violent July 1943 Battle of Kolombangara in the New Georgia Islands.



The Heroic Voyages of the USS *Gwin*

BY MICHAEL FELLOWS

Lieutenant Commander John Benjamin Fellows, the skipper of the American Gleaves-class destroyer USS *Gwin* (DD-433), stood on the bridge trying to see into the predawn blackness. Forward of the bow, all he could see were the phosphorescent wakes of the convoy in front of his ship.

It was shortly after midnight on July 13, 1943, and despite the cover of night, it was still hot in the central Solomon Islands, some 650 miles south of the equator. The humidity was cloying; only the ship's movement through the night air brought any sort of cooling relief to the crew on deck. The crewmen below, especially those in the "black gang" who were tending to the engines where the temperatures soared above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, glistened with sweat.

No one realized that for many of them and for their ship, it would be their last day on earth. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Gwin was named for Lt. Cmdr. William Gwin, a Civil War naval officer, and it was the third ship to carry that name. She had been built at the Charlestown Navy Yard at Boston and was commissioned in January 1941. And she was well-armed. *Gwin* had five Mark 12 5-inch dual-purpose guns, five 40mm twin antiaircraft guns, and 10 21-inch torpedo tubes. She had a range of 6,500 nautical miles and a top speed of over 37 knots.

Like all members of the Gleaves class, *Gwin* was 348 feet long, 36 feet at the beam,

All images Navy History and Heritage Command except as noted

and displaced 1,630 tons standard. She had already served for 15 months on sea duty in the Pacific. On this day she carried a crew of 11 officers and 201 enlisted ranks—about the size of an infantry rifle company.

John Fellows was a seasoned and competent commander. Born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts (about 45 miles northwest of Boston), on February 16, 1910, he had graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1931—a full 10 years before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor—and had previously served on such ships as the cruisers USS *Chester* (CA-27) and *Chicago* (CA-29) before transferring to the destroyers USS *Talbot* (DD-114), *Warden* (DD-352), and *Crowningshield* (DD-134).

In October 1940, Fellows became the engineering officer of the *Gwin* and was soon promoted to executive officer and then commanding officer. When war broke out, *Gwin* had been patrolling the waters around Iceland with the Atlantic Squadron, then was

Author's Collection

During the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, November 13, 1942, five American cruisers and eight destroyers faced off against two Japanese battleships and a dozen destroyers. During the intense, 25-minute slugfest, three American cruisers were seriously damaged and four destroyers sunk. The next day, the destroyer *Gwin*, as part of a new task force, would arrive on the scene to continue the fight. ABOVE: Lieutenant Commander John B. Fellows, captain of USS *Gwin*, a destroyer that saw considerable combat until she was sunk during the Battle of Kolombangara, July 13, 1943.

transferred to the Pacific.

There, the ship participated in one of the most storied actions thus far in the war—accompanying the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet* on its fateful mission to launch the Doolittle Raiders on their air raid against Tokyo on April 18, 1942. But she had not yet heard or fired a shot in anger. That moment was soon to come.

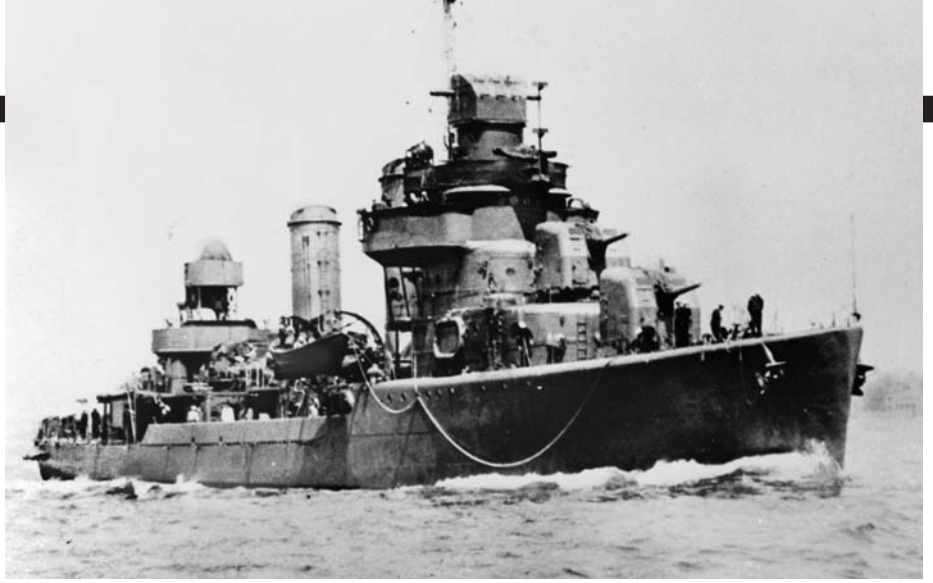
On May 23, 1942, Fellows and *Gwin* departed Pearl Harbor with a Marine Commando unit aboard to strengthen the Midway Island defenses. She then hurried to join the Fast Carrier Task Force that was racing to intercept a powerful Japanese fleet bearing down on Midway, but did not arrive until the battle was almost over.

Arriving during the final stages of the battle on June 5, *Gwin*'s officers and men learned of the American victory: four Japanese carriers had been sunk and about 250 enemy planes had been splashed. But the American carrier USS *Yorktown* (CV-5) had been heavily damaged by torpedoes and aerial bombs and was in danger of sinking.

Gwin came alongside the *Yorktown* to do whatever she could to save the carrier and her crew, but the flattop was torpedoed again on June 6; another rescue ship, the destroyer USS *Hammann* (DD-412), was also helping in the salvage and firefighting efforts when, at about 3:36 PM, a Japanese torpedo slammed into the *Hammann* in the vicinity of the No. 2 gun and exploded, breaking the ship's back. The command to abandon ship was given, and most of the surviving crew went over the side. Three minutes later, *Hammann* was gone.

Risking their lives, *Gwin*'s salvage party continued to try to save the *Yorktown* but she began listing badly, forcing *Gwin*'s men to abandon their efforts. They nonetheless managed to pull 102 survivors out of the water. *Gwin* then returned to Pearl Harbor on June 10, 1942.

A month later, on July 15, 1942, *Gwin* departed Pearl and set course for Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands chain. The 1st Marine Division was scheduled to invade Guadalcanal on August 7 and would need all the help it could get to establish a beachhead and move inland. The Navy was to supply that help.



ABOVE: USS *Gwin*, underway in 1941. The Gleaves-class destroyer had been commissioned in January of that year. BELOW: *Gwin*, left, escorts the American carrier USS *Hornet* en route to launch the Doolittle Raiders attack on Tokyo, April 1942.

The Solomons were strategically vital for both sides. If the Japanese could defeat the Americans there, Japan would prevent the United States from building up the amount of men and supplies in Australia necessary for MacArthur to move north and recapture lost territory, especially the Philippines. Cut off from aid, Australia itself would also be strangled to death.

Conversely, the Japanese realized that if they lost the Solomons, there would be little to stop the Americans from reclaiming hundreds of islands while driving closer and closer to Japan. It was, therefore, a matter of utmost urgency that the Japanese do everything in their power to prevent an American victory—just as the Americans were committed to doing everything possible to ensure that they would be victorious. Thus, the fight for the Solomons became, after Midway, the most important contest in the Pacific Theater up to that point of the war.

On August 7, 1942, 19,000 Marines came ashore on Guadalcanal and Tulagi in the Florida Islands. The landings were intended to establish a base from which the Americans could disrupt Japanese attacks on the supply route from the United States to Australia. During the fighting, the Marines captured a Japanese airfield at Lunga Point on

Guadalcanal that they renamed Henderson Field. The Japanese, whose main base was at Rabaul, 650 miles to the northwest, were determined to retake the lost real estate.

To reinforce and resupply their troops scattered throughout the Solomons, the Japanese ran warships and transport ships under cover of darkness down "the Slot"—a narrow channel between Choiseul and Santa Isabel Islands to the north and Guadalcanal and San Cristobal Island to the south. The Slot became the watery superhighway through which supplies and men from Rabaul and other bases could be funneled to their starving, beleaguered garrisons fighting on Guadalcanal and Tulagi. The Americans called these nightly enemy supply runs the "Tokyo Express."

Savo Sound (aka the Slot) was a shipping lane so dangerous that it had acquired another nickname: Ironbottom Sound, for all the sunken warships that covered its floor.

To put an end to the Tokyo Express, the Americans established cruiser-destroyer Task Force 67.4, led by Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan, with his flag on the light cruiser *San Francisco* (CA-38).

Callaghan was one of the Navy's finest officers. He had been naval aide to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and was chief of staff to Admiral William "Bull" Halsey, Jr., commander of the South Pacific Area, before requesting sea duty. The request would cost him his life.

Aboard his flagship *Yamato,* anchored at Truk Lagoon, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto directed Vice Admiral Hiroaki Abe to bombard Henderson Field on Guadalcanal so that a 12,000-man followup landing force under Vice Admiral Nobutake Kondo could come ashore to reinforce the garrison there without the danger of American aerial attack. To accomplish this mission, Abe was put in command of a formidable naval assault force of two battleships (*Hiei* and *Kirishima*), a light cruiser, and 14 destroyers.

Before the ships arrived, however, the Japanese decided to make a hit-and-run aerial attack. Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner, in command of Task Group 67.1, was himself in the process of reinforcing and resupplying the 1st Marine Division on Guadalcanal which, after more than three months of fighting not only the fanatical Japanese but also insects, disease, torrential rains, heat, humidity, festering wounds, and malnutrition, was about at the end of its endurance.

Turner's transports were finishing the process of dropping off fresh men and supplies at Lunga Point when they were suddenly attacked on the afternoon of November 12 by 32 Rabaul-based torpedo bombers and aircraft from the carrier *Hiyo,* which stood off to the northwest. Turner pulled his transports away from the beach, had all the antiaircraft guns manned, and arranged his ships in a defensive formation that would leave them less vulnerable to aerial attack.

Enemy planes dropped their bombs and torpedoes but caused little damage. U.S. Marine aircraft from Henderson Field then rose up like aerial knights to joust in a deadly tournament in the sky.

ABOVE: Smoke pours from the fatally damaged carrier USS *Yorktown,* June 6, 1942, as another ship moves in to effect rescue operations. *Gwin* also assisted in trying to save the ship and her crew, managing to pull more than 100 sailors from the water. INSET: USS *Hammann,* while assisting *Yorktown,* sinks after being torpedoed by a Japanese submarine.

The gunners on the American vessels also took their toll of the Japanese, and 31 warplanes were knocked out of the sky. The pilot of a disabled "Betty" bomber chose the *San Francisco* on which to make his suicide dive, killing or wounding 50 sailors and causing tremendous damage—but failing to knock out the ship.

Later that afternoon, Turner's transports returned to finish offloading, but few believed the Japanese were gone for good. Nervous lookouts scanned the sky and sea, searching for any sign of the enemy's return.

Intelligence soon reported that the Imperial Japanese Navy was indeed on its way. Halsey received word—thanks again to the top-secret "Magic" code breakers, who acted like spies in the other team's huddle—that Abe's flotilla was steaming toward Guadalcanal, and he passed the information on to Turner.

Halsey also called upon his single operational aircraft carrier—Rear Admiral Thomas Kincaid's *Enterprise* (CV-6), which was then undergoing repairs at Noumea—to head for Guadalcanal as soon as possible.

Turner ordered the offloading halted and the transports diverted to take shelter at Espiritu Santo. Waiting for the Japanese to return was Rear Admiral Callaghan's Task Group 67.4.

In Callaghan's command were two heavy cruisers (*Portland* [CA-33] and damaged *San Francisco*), three light cruisers (*Atlanta* [CL-51], *Juneau* [CL-52], and *Helena* [CL-50]), and 15 destroyers. Callaghan then arrayed his ships across the 20-mile-wide strait between Guadalcanal and Florida Island—the infamous Ironbottom Sound—to await the Japanese convoy.

Unaware that the Americans were setting an ambush, Abe's task force came streaming down the Slot past Savo Island at about 1 AM on November 13. Forty-five minutes later, although visibility in the dark was zero, the radar operators aboard the cruiser *Helena* detected two groups of unknown ships dead ahead. The First Naval Battle of Guadalcanal was about to begin.

Night was turned into day as the range closed and the gunners opened fire. Caught by surprise, Japanese vessels switched on their searchlights in an effort to find targets—an act that turned themselves into targets.

At 10 minutes before 2 AM, a Japanese searchlight illuminated the cruiser *Atlanta,* serving as flagship for Rear Admiral Norman Scott, commander of Task Group 64.2. *Atlanta* fired in the direction of the light with her 5-inch guns, extinguishing it, but the muzzle flashes caused Japanese destroyers to zero in on the cruiser, and she was struck and physically lifted out of the water by a torpedo fired point blank from the destroyer *Akatsuki*.

Akatsuki was itself sunk when it was smothered by return fire from Callaghan's flagship, the *San Francisco.* To make matters worse, in all the confusion, *Atlanta*'s bridge was then mistakenly blown apart by a salvo of shells from *San Francisco,* whose gunners were trying to hit an enemy ship on the other side of her. Admiral Scott and all but one of his staff were killed and *Atlanta* was left dead in the water. The cruiser would be scuttled later that night.

For the next half hour, munitions ripped back and forth across the darkened strait, the shells punching holes in hulls and bulkheads, crashing into bridges and gun mounts, sending hot shards of steel flying and ships to their doom. Men from both navies were blown into the water or jumped willingly into the shark-infested sea, their bodies aflame. Few if any naval engagements have ever been so intense or so destructive in such a short period of time.

The two sides resembled blindfolded boxers standing toe to toe and flailing away at each other. The waters of the strait were soon coated with fuel oil, floating debris, and the mangled, intermingled corpses of Japanese and American sailors. The dark morning continued to be brightened by flashes from scores of guns and the bursts of orange-colored balls of flame from shells that found their marks.

The burning *San Francisco* came under a torrent of fire from the battleship *Kirishima,* and 77 of her crew, including Admiral Callaghan and Pearl Harbor Medal of Honor recipient Captain Cassin Young, were killed.

Despite the deaths of Callaghan and Young, the badly damaged *San Francisco* remained in the fight, sinking a destroyer and crippling the Japanese battleship *Hiei* (which was later sunk by a B-17 flying out of Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides).

Aboard *San Francisco,* Lt. Cmdr. Herbert E. Schonland and Lt. Cmdr. Bruce McCandless kept the cruiser fighting after Callaghan's death, while Boatswain's Mate First Class Reinhardt J. Keppler fought fires and treated the ship's wounded in the heat of the battle. All would be awarded the Medal of Honor, Keppler's posthumously.

During the slugfest, *Portland, Helena,* and *Juneau* were badly damaged, the latter sunk the next day by enemy submarine I-26 along with her captain, Lyman K. Swensen, and

On November 12, 1942, *Gwin* and other ships were attacked by Japanese aircraft off Guadalcanal. A Japanese plane slammed into the cruiser USS *San Francisco*, right, causing 50 casualties.

LEFT: Rear Admiral Daniel Callaghan, commander of *San Francisco* and Task Force 67.4, was killed during the wild melee with *Kirishima* and received the Medal of Honor posthumously. RIGHT: After seriously damaging *San Francisco* during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on November 13, the Japanese battleship *Kirishima* was crippled by USS *Washington* and sank on November 15, 1942.

nearly 700 sailors, including all five Sullivan brothers—Albert, Francis, George, Joseph, and Madison.

An especially heavy toll was also exacted on the American destroyer force. *Barton* (DD-599), *Cushing* (DD-376), *Monssen* (DD-798), and *Laffey* (DD-459) were lost, while *Sterrett* (DD-407), *Aaron Ward* (DD-483), and *O'Bannon* (DD-450) were seriously damaged. *Buchanan* (DD-484) was mistakenly blasted by friendly ships but remained afloat.

Evidently losing his nerve in the wild melee in the dark, Admiral Abe was unaware of his good fortune and ordered his big ships to break off contact and retreat to the north while his smaller ships screened the withdrawal. Yamamoto was so furious with Abe for what he deemed a cowardly act that he replaced him with Vice Admiral Nobutake Kondo.

What has also been called the "Cruiser Night Action" was finally over, but the fight for Guadalcanal was not.

As the Japanese ships hauled out of range, the American sailors concentrated on dousing the fires that had broken out and tending to their wounded. With Admirals Callaghan and Scott dead (both would be awarded the Medal of Honor, posthumously), Captain Gilbert C. Hoover of the *Helena* found himself the highest ranking officer still alive and took command of what was left of Task Group 67.4.

However, Halsey reprimanded Hoover for abandoning the *Juneau* survivors and relieved him of command.

Admiral Halsey was informed by Navy intelligence, whose cryptanalysts were still intercepting and deciphering Imperial Japanese Navy messages, that the enemy had not given up its attempts to knock out Henderson Field and come to the aid of the Japanese garrison on Guadalcanal, and were already sending another force south. Just like Abe's flotilla the previous night, this force outnumbered anything the U.S. Navy could assemble.

Ordered by Yamamoto to knock out Henderson Field and reinforce the troops on Guadalcanal, Vice Admiral Kondo headed into action aboard the battleship *Kirishima* accompanied by five heavy cruisers (*Maya, Atago, Suzuya, Takao,* and *Kinugasa*), two light cruisers (*Isuzu* and *Nagara*), and as many as 11 destroyers and 23 troop transports.

But Halsey had very little with which to derail Kondo's Tokyo Express. Most of his cruisers were either already committed to battle elsewhere or heavily damaged, and his fleet of destroyers had been badly depleted.

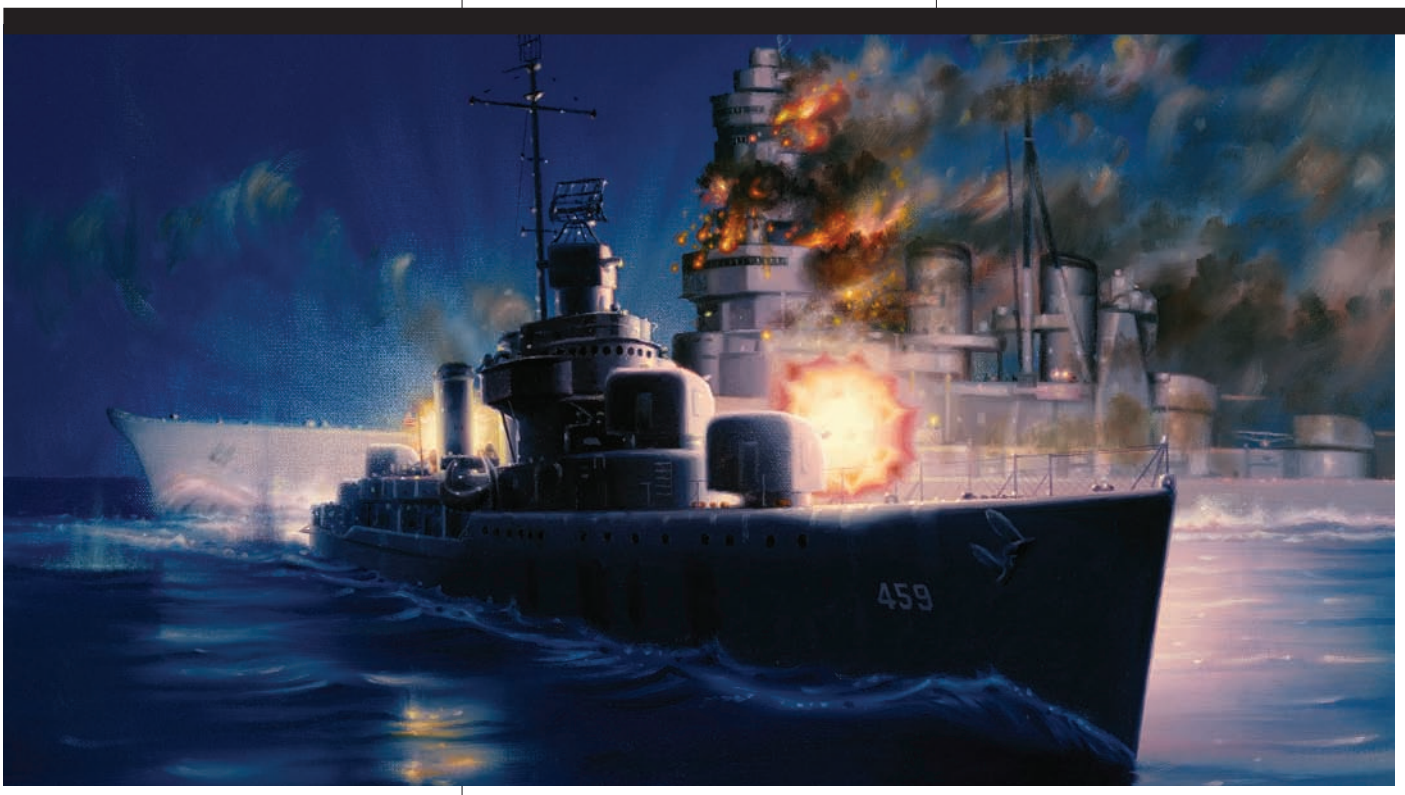
With Callaghan's task force decimated, the only truly effective power that Halsey had left in the area to stop the Japanese was Task Force 64, commanded by Rear Admiral Willis Augustus "Ching Chong" Lee, Jr., and consisting of the battleships USS *Washington* (BB-56) and *South Dakota* (BB-57), and four destroyers—*Gwin, Walke* (DD-416), *Benham* (DD-397), and *Preston* (DD-379). All would soon be involved in the Second Naval Battle of Guadalcanal.

Operating out of the naval base at Espiritu Santo, John Fellows' *Gwin* was one of many ships that had been tasked with bringing supplies and reinforcements to the Marines fighting on Guadalcanal and Tulagi, as well as providing antiaircraft and gunnery support for the Marines ashore.

On the night of Friday, November 13, 1942, Lee's task group ran into Kondo's force. As the American fleet initially stumbled blindly in the dark, a series of communication failures and command blunders allowed the Japanese to gain the upper hand, and the Second Naval Battle of Guadalcanal (also known as the "Battleship Night Action") was on. It was just as fierce as the one that preceded it—a battle that has been called "the most furious surface action of the entire war," and what one sailor described as "a barroom brawl after the lights have been shot out."

Two of the Japanese cruisers, *Maya* and *Suzuya,* got close enough to shell Henderson Field with nearly 1,000 rounds that destroyed two fighters and two dive bombers and damaged 17 other planes.

Assisting Lee's ships were aircraft from *Enterprise,* 300 miles away, and from Henderson Field, which gave the enemy a good going-over. Near Cape Esperance



A painting from the U.S. Navy Art Collection depicts the destroyer USS *Laffey* just after she has crossed under the Japanese battleship *Hiei*'s bow and engages the larger foe with 5-inch and 20mm gun and sidearms at near point-blank range off Guadalcanal, November 13, 1942.

north of Savo Island, aerial torpedoes struck *Hiei* four times, followed by a 500-pound bomb from an Espirito Santo-based B-17. Mortally wounded, *Hiei* was a sitting duck for another group of aerial attackers. Japanese destroyers took remaining crew off by that night, and it later sank five miles off Savo Island.

The Americans fought back hard. In the predawn of November 14, a flotilla of PT boats from Tulagi arrived on the scene and, after firing their torpedoes, scared off the Japanese bombardment force.

At 8:30 AM, a dozen Japanese transports were spotted in the Slot heading for Guadalcanal. Additionally, search aircraft from *Enterprise* spotted the bombardment group that had retired to the northwest around New Georgia and radioed the sighting to the carrier, which immediately dispatched another swarm of attack planes.

At 10:14 AM, warplanes bombed the cruiser *Kinugasa*, causing it to list and flood. An hour later, more planes arrived and began strafing and bombing *Chokai, Maya,* and *Suzuya,* forcing them to flee.

A group of Henderson-based B-17s then took to the sky and dropped bombs around the troop transports but failed to hit them. The Dauntless torpedo bombers were a different story as they managed to sink six and caused the others to retire in haste.

When the final tally was made, the Japanese had lost one battleship (*Hiei*), one cruiser (*Kinugasa*), 17 aircraft, and eight transports either sunk or dead in the water. The Americans had lost five planes, four officers, and two enlisted men.

But the Japanese were not easily dissuaded. They would return later that night.

At 13 minutes past midnight on November 15, Lt. Cmdr. John Fellows reported that the destroyers *Walke, Benham, Preston,* and his *Gwin* were in a column leading the battleships that were about 5,000 yard astern: "*South Dakota* reported contact, bearing 330, range 16,300 [yards]. *Gwin* observed two cruisers, believed to be Mogami type, bearing 355, range about 14,000."

Six minutes later, *South Dakota* opened fire. The other ships also began firing, with *Gwin* ordered to send up "two star-shell spreads to illuminate [enemy] cruisers under fire of [U.S.] battleships…. Fired two salvos AA [antiaircraft] at cruisers, but range was too great for the gunfire to serve other than distraction purposes.

"Opened fire on right-hand ship of what appeared to be one cruiser and four destroyers, which were apparently in column and circling Savo Island in a counterclockwise direction."

At 27 minutes past midnight, Fellows entered into the ship's log, "One of the two cruisers on our starboard quarter is now flaming, and the other apparently retiring to the northwest. *Walke* burning and has pulled out of column to port. *Benham* and *Preston* are still firing at targets which appear to be [destroyers]. Targets are very difficult to distinguish as they are masked by Savo Island."

Three minutes later, Fellows noted, "We hit [the *Ayanami*] with two consecutive salvos. Target which had been firing 4-gun salvos now is replying with one gun…. We are being fired upon by a Kumo-type cruiser on our port quarter…. *Preston* exploded dead ahead, distance 300 yards. Almost simultaneously, ship [the *Gwin*] received 4.7 caliber hit which entered forward starboard side of #2 engine room."

The shell exploded in the vicinity of the control station, killing six men on the upper level, filling the engine room with steam, and driving the crew out of the gun mount 4 handling room. "General lighting is out in guns 4 and 5 but they still have power and battle lighting."

Fellows also noted that safety links securing the deck-mounted torpedoes had failed and some of the "tin fish" had fallen overboard.

Although smoke billowed from her wounds, and her torn-up decks were awash in bodies and blood, *Gwin* stayed in the fight despite flooding in her forward compartments. Then Fellows had to make a hard turn to keep from hitting the burning *Preston* and felt his ship nearly lifted out of the water. Fellows wrote, "[*Preston*'s] depth charges exploded right after we had passed her and gave the ship quite a shaking up."

Gwin then received a hit that put a jagged, two-foot hole on her starboard side and caused two 600-pound depth charges on deck to split open. Luckily, they did not explode.

At 34 minutes after midnight, November 15, Fellows reported that his "ship is still firing at flashes in the lee of Savo Island, using guns one, two, and five. One of the [U.S.] battleships has destroyed the cruiser firing on our port quarter. Torpedo crossed astern, coming from starboard, missing stern by about 30 yards. *Benham* has disappeared from formation."

Kondo believed, without confirmation, that the American force had been defeated, so shortly before 1 AM he sailed off temporarily to the northwest to allow his bombardment force to come closer and plaster Henderson Field. Suddenly, Japanese lookouts discovered the presence of both *Washington* and *South Dakota*.

The Japanese opened fire and launched torpedoes in the direction of the American dreadnoughts, which replied with their main guns. Kondo's flagship *Kirishima* was hit by nine 16-inch and 40 5-inch shells and put out of action. She soon capsized and slipped beneath the waves, carrying almost 200 sailors to their watery grave. Kondo was saved and taken aboard another ship.

Within the first five minutes, the Americans hit and sank *Niizuki*, killing Admiral Akiyama. The three American cruisers fired almost 1,500 shells at the enemy force but the enemy destroyers picked out *Helena* from her muzzle flashes and hammered away at her.

At dawn on the 15th came a cessation of the battle, with both sides having suffered greatly. Dead and burning ships floated on the sea along with numerous bloated bodies. *Washington,* unscratched, and *South Dakota,* battered and bruised, headed back to Noumea.

The battle resembled Nelson against the French and Spanish at Trafalgar in 1805, except that sail and wood were replaced by steam and steel. In the free-swinging brawl against the superior enemy force, two American destroyers (*Preston* and *Walke*) were sunk and *Benham* had much of her bow blown off. *Gwin*, although severely damaged and with only one operational engine, was the only destroyer to survive more or less intact. She began rescuing men from *Benham*.

Gwin, at a reduced speed of five knots, tried towing the disabled *Benham* back to Espiritu Santo but the two slow-moving ships presented an attractive target, and so *Benham* had to be abandoned, her crew transferred, and then scuttled.

Lieutenant Commander Fellows reported that at 5:45 PM his ship "fired on *Benham* with main battery. Numerous fires were kindled before one salvo caused a tremendous explosion, which apparently broke the ship in two abaft the stack. Explosion appeared to be torpedo warheads. Ship sank with bow and stern rising up and touching as she went down amidships."

Like two bloodied, battered, and exhausted boxers, the battle's survivors limped back to their ports. During the two Naval Battles of Guadalcanal, the U.S. had lost the cruiser *San Francisco* and seven destroyers. Admiral Callaghan was dead. *South Dakota* had been damaged.

The Japanese had lost two battleships (*Hiei* and *Kirishima*), one heavy cruiser, two destroyers, 11 transports, and 64 aircraft. The Americans had lost a total of 1,732 sailors and airmen killed. The number of Japanese sailors lost was at least 1,900, with an estimated 20,000 soldiers killed aboard the transports.

With Fellows' ship hors de combat, it was off to Noumea, New Caldonia, for repairs. But his ship was too badly damaged for repairs to be effected locally, so Fellows and *Gwin* left Nouméa and struck a 5,300-nautical mile course for the shipyards at Mare Island, near San Francisco, for an extensive overhaul. While ashore, Fellows received the Navy Cross, the Navy's second highest award for valor, for his calm and cool command of his ship during the chaotic night battle.

Another *Gwin* sailor, Machinist's Mate 1st Class Earle C. Johnson of Manchester, New Hampshire, also received the Navy Cross for his actions on November 15, but it was a posthumous award because he died of his wounds.

Despite the losses, the Americans managed to prevent the Japanese from retaking Guadalcanal or putting Henderson Field out of action. In retrospect, the Naval Battles of Guadalcanal were one of the major turning points of the Pacific War.

But the fight was not yet over for *Gwin*.

Early in March 1943, with repairs and sea trials having been successfully completed, and with new crewmen reporting on board to replace those who had been killed or injured, *Gwin* left Mare Island and joined a Pearl Harbor-bound convoy, arriving there on March 28. Fellows' ship

was then assigned escort duties, which led her back to the Solomons and eventually to Tulagi Island on June 4, 1943.

On June 21, *Gwin* sailed back into harm's way, this time with Task Unit 32.8.3 en route to the Western Solomons and Rendova Island, dubbed the "Malta of the Pacific," 200 miles northwest of Guadalcanal. Three days later she arrived at Lunga Point to begin antisubmarine patrols, which included the Japanese-held northern side of New Georgia Island, which resembles a fat comma.

On June 29, *Gwin* and eight other destroyers were assigned to screen Task Unit 31.1.3, consisting of various transports destined for assault landings on Rendova Island. This was to be the first step in Operation Cartwheel, the American conquest of New Georgia.

The next day, the U.S. Army and Navy began an operation to take the island away from a small Japanese garrison (less than 300 men) at Munda Point. The U.S. Army's 172nd Infantry Regiment of the 43rd Infantry Division, along with an attached group of Solomon Island commandos, had little problem swamping the defenders.

As the troops were wading ashore, *Gwin* also assisted by firing at suspected Japanese positions well hidden by jungle foliage, then stood on guard to keep enemy aircraft at bay. Unfortunately, Japanese gunfire from shore batteries on Rendova returned fire and struck *Gwin* at 7:06 AM, killing three men and wounding seven.

That afternoon, a flight of 30 Japanese planes tried to attack the invasion fleet but most were shot down. *Gwin*'s gunners helped to increase the total by knocking three of the torpedo bombers out of the sky. The Japanese continued on July 1 to attack the American beachhead at Rendova, but their efforts were unsuccessful.

With Rendova now secure, it was time for the Americans to move against the Japanese on New Georgia, just a few miles north of Rendova, across the Blanche Channel.

Despite the best efforts of the U.S. Navy, though, the Japanese were able to reinforce their garrison on New Georgia and stymie efforts by American ground

Flames belch from USS *Denver*'s guns during a night battle in Kula Gulf, Solomon Islands, March 5-6, 1943. Four months later, *Gwin* would be sunk in the same Kula Gulf area.

troops to advance toward the airfield at Munda Point. While the infantry was having difficulties slugging it out in the fetid jungle, the Navy prepared once more to interdict the nightly runs of Japanese troop transports coming down from Rabaul, nearly 500 miles to the northwest.

One of those nightly runs of 10 destroyers left Buin on July 4, 1943, with orders to steam through Kula Gulf and deposit 2,600 Imperial Japanese reinforcements at Vila Point on the southern coast of Kolombangara, which was being used as a staging area for Japanese infantry before moving across the Roviana Strait to reinforce the New Georgia garrison. Leading this convoy, designated the 3rd Destroyer Squadron, was Rear Admiral Teruo Akiyama aboard the *Niizuki*.

On July 4, a new task group, designated Task Group 36.1, under Rear Admiral Walden L. Ainsworth, was assembled to halt Akiyama's force. *Gwin*, along with *Radford* (DD-446), rendezvoused with three American cruisers (*Honolulu* [CL-48], [CL-49], and the patched-up *Helena*) to escort seven destroyer-transports to Kula Gulf northeast of Kolombangara, where they would land American troops at Rice Anchorage on the northern shore of New Georgia.

The opposing naval forces were on a collision course but did not yet know it.

Shortly before 2 AM on July 5, the task group's radars lit up as Akiyama's 3rd Destroyer Squadron was picked up at a range of nearly 25,000 yards.

But Japanese radar had already discovered Ainsworth's force 16 minutes before the American radar spotted Akiyama's ships, and a salvo of 14 1,036-pound Type 93 Long Lance torpedoes was launched at a range of 11 miles; the American destroyer USS *Strong* (DD-467) was hit by one at port amidships with such force that it blew out both sides of her hull and all but broke her back. Japanese shore batteries also targeted the dying *Strong*; all but 46 of her men were saved after the ship sank beneath the waves.

At dawn on July 5, Rear Admiral Ainsworth, after having conducted a heavy cruiser bombardment against shore targets at Vila, was forced to retire because both fuel and ammunition were running low. As the group was retiring, the men of the *Gwin* spotted a life raft with five sailors from the sunken *Strong* and brought them to the anchorage south of Lengo Channel at Guadalcanal, where they were transferred to USS *American Legion* (APA-17) for evacuation. *Gwin* then returned to station.

Meanwhile, the Japanese had not yet given up their efforts to blow the Americans out of the Solomons. Returning the next night to Vila with a second echelon of infantry reinforcements was Rear Admiral Akiyama, with his flag again on *Niizuki*.

At 10 PM on July 5, General Quarters and Battle Stations were sounded aboard *Gwin*, and all hands raced to their assigned positions. At 42 minutes past midnight on the 6th, Ainsworth notified all his ships that an enemy force of at least six vessels had been spotted by radar. A half hour later, the two sides collided in another wild night battle that has become known as the Battle of Kula Gulf.

Within the first five minutes, the Americans hit and sank *Niizuki,* killing Admiral Akiyama. The three American cruisers fired almost 1,500 shells at the enemy force but the enemy destroyers picked out *Helena* from her muzzle flashes and hammered away at her.

Several torpedoes then slammed into *Helena*'s side and she began sinking and spewing oil. The destroyers *Radford* and *Nicholas* (DD-449) came to the aid of her crew and began plucking more than 750 oil-covered sailors out of the water while continuing to blast away at the enemy.

ABOVE: The cruiser USS *Helena*, center, fires during the battle of Kula Gulf, July 1943, just before she was torpedoed and sunk. BELOW: Oil-covered survivors of the torpedoed USS *Helena* are taken aboard USS *Nicholas* after the Battle of Kula Gulf, July 5, 1943. *Gwin* returned to the scene of the battle the next day and rescued 87 more sailors before *Helena* sank.

By 2:30 AM, the main action was over. The Japanese had managed to land 1,500 reinforcements at Vila and then took off to the north. The Americans also retired. A naval historian wrote, "Ainsworth led his forces out of Kula Gulf, believing that he had scored a decisive victory in the Pacific. Most historians, however, believe the battle was a draw with neither side truly gaining an upper hand. American forces suffered the loss of *Helena* while the Japanese lost the destroyers *Niizuki* and *Nagatsuki*, but were still able to deliver more than 1,500 troops and 90 tons of supplies to Kolombangara."

At dawn on July 6, *Gwin* and *Woodworth* returned to the scene of the battle and rescued 87 sailors before *Helen*a keeled over and sank beneath the waves.

The skipper of the doomed *Helena*, Captain Charles P. Cecil, later sent a message to Fellows: "The personnel of the USS *Helena,* whom you helped so much, wish you to know that we shall remember your ship and her personnel with all the gratitude of which we are capable as long as we live. You may rest assured that everyone on the beach that morning offered up at least a silent prayer, when the *Gwin* lay to, waiting for our boats. There are no words to describe the weight which was lifted from our hearts.

"That, though, was far from being all. The efficiency with which we were cared for on board was only equaled by your kindness. At the time, all was accepted somewhat as a matter of course. Since then, we have wondered whether a much larger ship could have handled us with equal dispatch and thoroughness. Please accept our most sincere thanks, as we salute a fighting ship which took time out for an act of mercy."

On the 11th, *Gwin* stood out for Rendova Island to maintain patrol. She returned to Purvis Bay the following day, refueled, and rejoined Task Group 36.1, again commanded by Ainsworth, which had been

reassembled and made up of Cruiser Division 9 (*Honolulu, St. Louis,* and New Zealand Navy cruiser HMNZS *Leander*), along with 10 destroyers (*Gwin, Radford, O'Bannon, Buchanan* [DD-484], *Jenkins* [DD-447], *Maury* [DD-401], *Nicholas* [DD-449], *Taylor* [DD-468], *Ralph Talbot* [DD-390], and *Woodworth* [DD-460]). Lt. Cmdr. Fellows' destroyer was ninth in the line of 13 ships that sailed into Kula Gulf early on the morning of July 13, 1943.

Their mission was to protect the amphibious landings that had been made a few days earlier on New Georgia's northern shore, but their fate called for a different role.

Coming down the Slot from the Upper Solomons early on July 13 were more than 1,000 Japanese troops loaded onto four transports under the escort of one light cruiser (*Jintsu*) and five destroyers. As with the previous convoy, they were to be landed at Vila on Kolombangara.

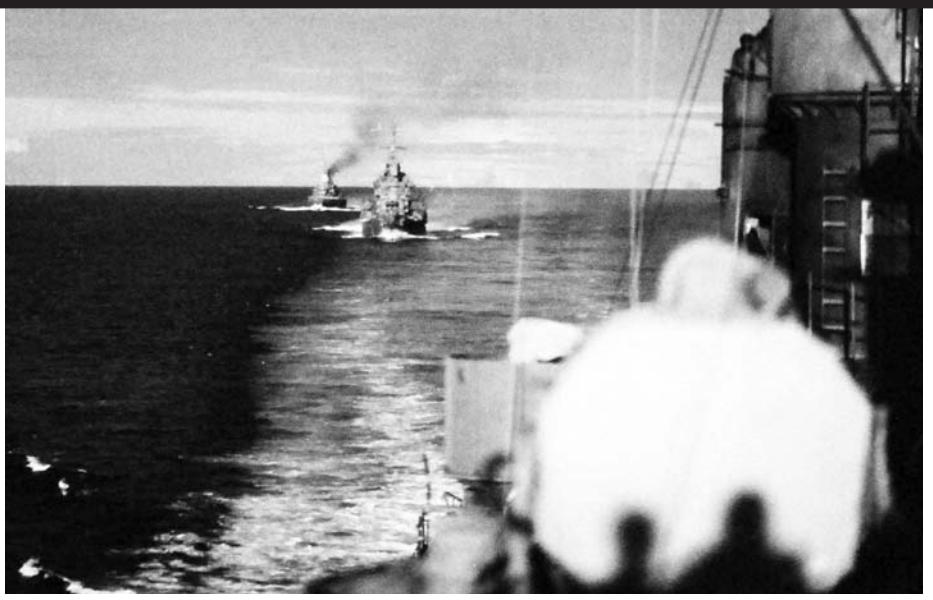
Ainsworth thought he had achieved surprise, but the Japanese convoy, under the command of Vice Admiral Shunji Izaki, was well aware of the Americans' presence and was prepared to do battle.

At 1 AM, the two sides clashed in Kula Gulf at a point about 20 miles east of the northern tip of Kolombangara, and it was every bit as wild and bloody as had been the battle in the Slot the previous November.

While the opposing destroyers dashed about like unleashed pit bulls, the three Allied cruisers took *Jintsu* under concentrated fire from their main guns and the torpedoes launched by the destroyers and blew her apart. Admiral Izaki and most of her crew went down with her at about 1:45 AM.

During the fight, *St. Louis* and *Honolulu* (the latter being Ainsworth's flagship) were both seriously damaged, and *Leander* was hit by a Long Lance torpedo from one of the enemy destroyers and knocked out of action. Twenty six men in the boiler room and the gun mount directly above it were either killed instantly or listed as missing. Escorted by *Radford* and *Jenkins,* the crippled *Leander* was forced to retire from the battle.

The American destroyers, still darting about in the dark, lived up to their reputations as being feisty and fearless, thrusting at their Japanese counterparts with torpedoes and 5-inch gunfire. *Gwin* was in the center of the action and ahead of *Honolulu*.



USS *Honolulu* (foreground), HMNZS *Leander*, and USS *St. Louis* steam toward Kula Gulf on July 12, 1943, where *Gwin* would be sunk during the Battle of Kolombangara.

At 2:09 AM on the 13th, Fellows had to maneuver hard right to avoid another torpedo headed toward *Gwin*, but five minutes later *Gwin* shuddered as jagged pieces of her flew into the black sky; she had been hit by a Long Lance torpedo in her port quarter, knocking out her steering gear and after engine room. All radio transmitters were also knocked out and the main deck was awash.

The Navy's official history of *Gwin* says, "Four Japanese destroyers, waiting for a calculated moment when Ainsworth's formation would turn, launched 31 torpedoes at the American formation. His flagship *Honolulu,* cruiser *St. Louis,* and *Gwin*, maneuvering to bring their main batteries to bear on the enemy, turned right into the path of the deadly Long Lance torpedoes. Both cruisers received damaging hits but survived. *Gwin* was not so fortunate. She received a torpedo hit amidships in her engine room and exploded in a burning white heat, a terrible sight."

Another naval historian wrote, "Men had been instantly slain in the destroyer's engineering spaces where the thunderbolt exploded. Others who were trapped in wrecked compartments died in gusts of live steam or were drowned by the inrushing sea. A brave effort was made by a party led by Ensign G.E. Stransky, USNR, to control a vicious ammunition and oil fire. Searing heat and suffocating oil-smoke scorched and blinded them, but they succeeded in squelching the flames."

The three Allied cruisers, escorted by *Buchanan* and *Woodworth,* then retired, leaving *Gwin* on her own, save for *Ralph Talbot,* which stood by to assist.

The efforts to save the listing, burning, dead-in-the-water *Gwin* went on into the afternoon as Lt. Cmdr. Fellows calmly directed his crew to fight the flames, but it was a losing battle. After ordering "abandon ship," he removed himself and his crew to *Ralph Talbot.*

At 9:30 the next morning, Fellows and crew watched with sadness as the brave *Gwin* was scuttled.

Someone aboard *Ralph Talbot* recited the service for burial at sea as the destroyer pumped shells into *Gwin*, taking her down in 15 seconds along with the bodies of two officers and 59 men. *Gwin* had valiantly fought her last fight, and her survivors choked back tears watching her disappear.

One of her crewmen said, "She was a great ship, but we knew she'd been living on bor-

rowed time. I guess all of us lived on that kind of time in the Solomons."

The Battle of Kolombangara came with a heavy price tag attached: 89 Americans were killed, 61 of them on the *Gwin*. In addition to the loss of *Jintsu* and Admiral Izaki, more than 480 Japanese lost their lives. Nonetheless, the Japanese escaped with all their destroyers and were able to land 1,200 men at Vila.

To *Gwin*'s commander, Admiral Ainsworth later sent the following message: "My heart is very full over the loss of our *Gwin* after her gallant fight against terrible odds, but again you have evened the score by sinking four to six Jap ships. Once more I desire to express my unbounded appreciation and respect for the fighting ability of every officer and man in this force.

"You had proved that you had no equals when it come to putting it out and now in the battle off Kolombangara, you have proven that you can take it with a grin and wade in for more punishment. Our hats are off to the black gang and the repair parties…. Congratulations and a better than 'well done' to each and every one."

For his leadership during the especially trying ordeal, Commander John B. Fellows, Jr., was awarded the Silver Star. His commendation states, "He fought his ship with deadly accuracy and unyielding determination, contributing to the sinking of four and probably six Japanese vessels…. With the utmost courage and efficiency, he directed the damage control, and with his gallant command, worked valiantly for seven hours in a desperate but futile attempt to save his vessel."

ABOVE: The cruiser USS *St. Louis* firing during the Battle of Kolombangara, July 13, 1943. BELOW: After captaining *Gwin*, Fellows was assigned to the destroyer USS *Twiggs*, shown here, six months before she was sunk off Okinawa with all hands lost. By that time, Fellows was on shore duty.

Returning to the United States after the battle, Fellows had a short shore leave and then was given command of a newly commissioned destroyer—USS *Twiggs* (DD-591). Luckily for him, she was a training ship and he sailed with her out of Norfolk, Virginia, until March 1944; no more combat for Fellows. *Twiggs* wasn't so fortunate, though, for on the night of June 16, 1945, during the Battle of Okinawa, a kamikaze crashed into her, and she sank with all hands.

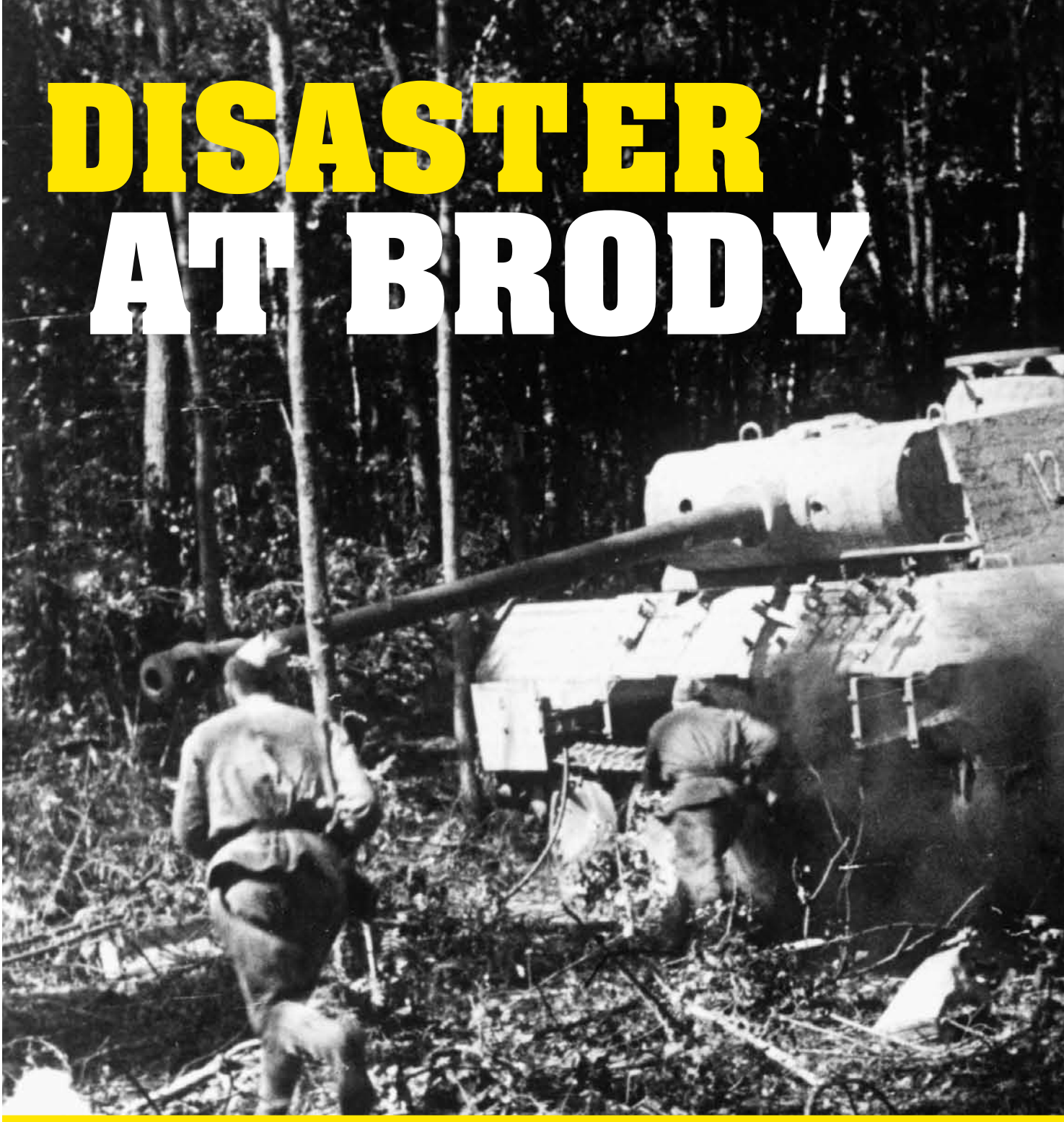
John B. Fellows, Jr., remained in the Navy and held a variety of positions. His last assignment was as Commander, Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS), Mediterranean Sub Area. He and his wife Harda had a son Michael and a daughter Sanna. He retired in 1959 with the rank of rear admiral and passed away on March 30, 1974, proud in knowing that he and his ship had done their part to win the war for the Allies.

Historians have argued whether the result of the Naval Battles of Guadalcanal were a tactical victory for the Japanese or the Americans, but one wrote, "The American victory in the Second Naval Battle of Guadalcanal effectively ended any hope the Japanese had of wresting control of the island back from the United States…. Never again would the Imperial Navy attempt to deliver a knockout blow to Henderson Field. Never again would the 'Tokyo Express' operate with impunity. It took an old-fashioned gunfight between two armored giants to secure the seas around Guadalcanal, now—finally—American-owned."

And it was the men of the *Gwin,* and all the other ships engaged in the battles, who had paid for the victory in the seas around Guadalcanal in blood. □

Michael Fellows is a retired U.S. Army colonel, Vietnam War veteran, past president of the Broomfield (CO) Veterans Memorial Museum, and son of the Gwin*'s skipper, John B. Fellows, Jr.*

DISASTER AT BRODY

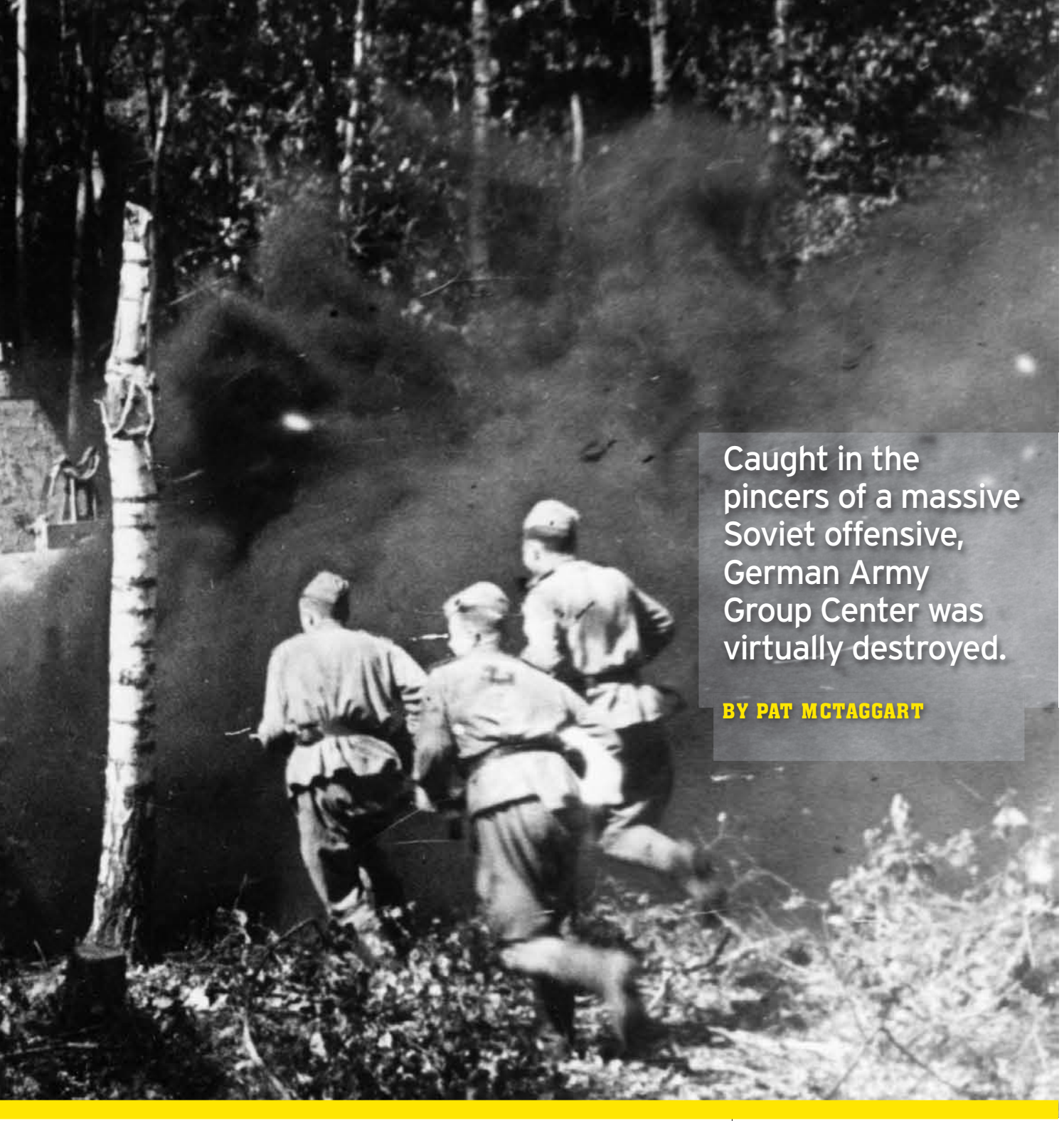


The German Army found itself facing a massive challenge in the spring of 1944—the possibility of a war on three fronts. In 1943, the Allied invasion of Italy diverted several sorely needed divisions from the Eastern Front, and the inevitable invasion of the continent by Allied forces in Great Britain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

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

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

All Photos: National Archives



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

BY PAT MCTAGGART

was finally established, anchored in the middle by Lake Peipus.

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

The German front in southern Russia also suffered a series of hammer blows during the winter and into the spring of 1944. In December 1943 and January 1944, the

In hot pursuit of retreating German forces who, moments before, abandoned their burning tank, Red Army troops advance on the double during their successful offensive in southern Russia in the summer of 1944.

1st and 2nd Ukrainian Fronts attacked Field Marshal Eric von Manstein's Heeresgruppe Süd (Army Group South) from their strong bridgeheads on the Ger-

man side of the Dniepr River.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Between 70,000 and 100,000 men stepped forward to volunteer for the new division. Those who were not chosen for the 14,000-man unit, but were still physically acceptable, were incorporated into five new regiments of police. In the summer of 1943, the unit

ABOVE: Heinrich Himmler inspects the 14th SS Division Galizien. The unit began recruiting volunteers from western Ukraine in May 1943. LEFT: Commander of the 14th SS Division, Fritz Freitag, took official command of the unit in April 1944.

While taking shelter from a Soviet artillery bombardment, a group of German soldiers wait anxiously in a narrow trench before receiving orders to either advance or retreat.

underwent training in the General Government (what was now left of Poland). April 1944 found the unit at Neuhammer, Silesia, for more training.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

While the Germans looked elsewhere for signs of an impending attack, the Russians

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

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

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

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

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

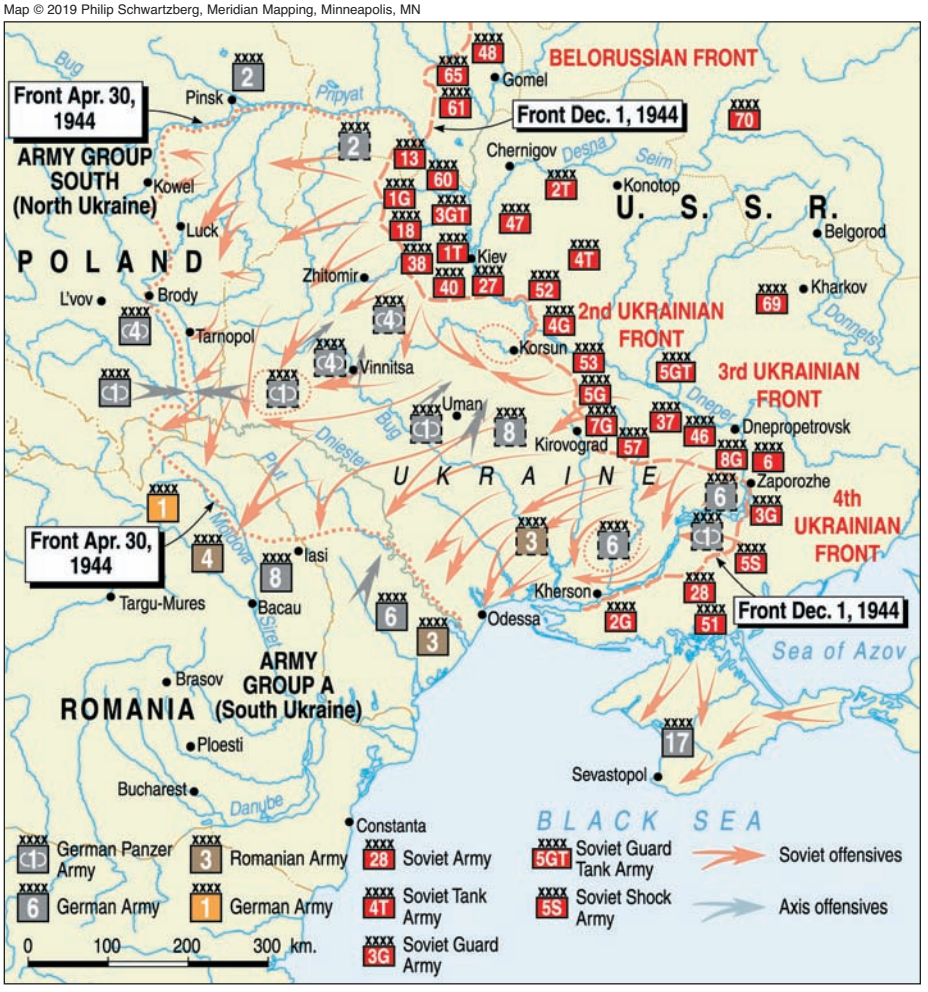
Appealing to Hitler's distaste for defensive warfare, Model proposed using the corps for a preemptive strike against the Soviet forces opposing him. Although Model's attack would never be carried out because of swift-moving events elsewhere, the LVI Panzer Corps was passed from Busch's to Model's control.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

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

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

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

German commanders on either side of Heeresgruppe Mitte listened nervously to reports of the rout. If something was not done to stop the Soviet steamroller, their own flanks would be untenable. Knowing Hitler's penchant for standing fast, the German generals not yet under attack knew that they would face the impossible dilemma of disobeying



Badly outnumbered, Army Group South and Army Group A—the latter on the border between Romania and Ukraine—faced an overwhelming onslaught by Red Army forces. The town of Brody can be seen beneath the word "Poland" on this map.

ABOVE: Field Marshal Walter Model (left), commander of German Army Group North Ukraine, confers with General Arthur Hauffe, commander of the XIII Army Corps, near the Ukranian town of Brody, near L'vov, in 1944. LEFT: Red Army soldiers go door to door in a village on the Russian steppe to root out German snipers, September 1944.

Hitler's no-retreat order or sacrificing their men for no sound military purpose.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

porated into the 1st Ukrainian Front to give it an added punch.

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

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

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

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

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

In the first crucial year of the war, Konev commanded the Kalinin Front, defending the vital approaches to Murmansk. When the Soviets regained the initiative in 1943, Konev proved himself as a skillful and resourceful commander on the offensive. His reputation for conducting successful operations came close to that of the master himself—Marshal Georgi Zhukov.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Hauffe's sector, Konev struck the Germans at their weakest points, the divisional boundaries. Lasch's 349th was hit at its juncture with the neighboring 357th Infantry Division. Another Russian attack sliced through the 96th Infantry Division in an adjacent sec-

A battery of Soviet 76mm guns of a 2nd Belorussian Front artillery unit fire a barrage at German positions. With a range of 12,000 yards (nearly seven miles), these guns could hit targets well behind German lines.

tor. Konev poured more units through the gap, extending the penetration to about 10 miles behind the German lines.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

make a small break in the German line.

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

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

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

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

The German withdrawal started well enough, but a fighting retreat is a plodding affair. With Katukov's 1st Guards Tank Army now making good progress against the 4th Panzer Army, Konev unleashed Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army, which had been pulled out of the line after supporting the infantry attacks on the 14th. Like Katukov's units, Rybalko's tanks and

ABOVE: Torching whole villages as they retreat, German soldiers give ground in the face of the Soviet juggernaut rolling forward in summer 1944. The Germans lost huge numbers of men to the pursuing Red Army and air force. OPPOSITE: Dead German gunners lie sprawled beside their wrecked antitank weapons after heavy Soviet armor has swept them aside.

mechanized infantry slipped through the still narrow gaps in the 1st Panzer Army line. The two Guards Tank armies now formed the prongs of a massive pincer, inexorably moving toward each other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hauffe was not about to wait for the infantry ring to close any tighter. The Soviet armored units had indeed linked up on the previous day, but there were still gaps in the enemy lines. Contacting General Hermann Balck, commander of the neighboring XLVIII Panzer Corps, Hauffe suggested that his corps attempt a breakout to the south. In conjunction with the attempt, he asked Balck to strike the Soviets, driving north to try and punch a hole in the outer Russian lines. The plan seemed militarily sound, but the distance that the XIII Army Corps had to travel to meet Balck was approximately 25 miles. In addition, the area that had to be traversed was a mixed terrain of swamp and heavy woods. Hauffe's men would also have to cross the West Bug River before a linkup could be achieved.

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

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

A young Ukrainian officer, Lubomyr

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

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

Especially hard hit was Waffen Grenadier Regiment 31, which had already lost its commander as well as a large portion of its officers. Before the regiment could totally fall apart, its remnants were dispersed to other units in the division in hopes that fighting morale would return to its battered survivors. While the integration of forces was taking place, other Ukrainian units were pushed out of the village of Opaky, a strong defensive position in the line.

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

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

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

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

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

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

On July 22, General Hauffe was killed. Later that day, General Lindemann was captured by the Russians, but his division continued to fight on. Throughout that fateful day, the XIII Army Corps struggled to make its way to freedom. Embedded in a group

of about 800 men from the Galizien and the 361st Infantry Division, Freitag and most of his staff managed to link up with attacking forces from the XLVIII Panzer Corps. Other small groups of the Galizien made it to a breach made by a Kampfgruppe of the 8th Panzer Division.

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

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

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

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

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

Buchenwald

Continued from page 73

tion marches into the countryside.

American officers tried to determine the exact number of persons who died during Buchenwald's nearly eight years of operation, but it was no easy task. According to SS documents, 33,462 died in Buchenwald and another 23,083 in Buchenwald's satellite camps. Normally fastidious record-keepers, the Nazis were obviously overwhelmed by the task of recording so many deaths and became sloppy in their accounting practices.

Among those executed before 1944, thousands were listed as "transferred to the Gestapo," their true number and fate unknown. After 1941, more than 8,000 Soviet POWs were executed en masse and anonymously; their names were not even recorded. Furthermore, prisoners arriving from other camps and selected for immediate execution were not entered into the camp registers.

The commandant, Hermann Pister, was captured by the Allies and put on trial for war crimes. Sentenced to death, he cheated the hangman by dying of a heart attack. The camp's first commandant, Karl Otto Koch, was executed by an SS firing squad on April 5, 1945, for corruption and embezzlement. His wife, Ilse Koch, implicated in the tattooed human-skin artifacts scandal, was sentenced to life in prison but committed suicide in 1967.

Finally, once the official visits were over, the corpses were removed from the camp and buried at the top of the Ettersberg, where the Americans also forced some 200 Germans to dig seven large mass graves, disinter 500 decomposed corpses, and rebury them. An American officer overseeing the burial detail had little pity on the Germans, who were complaining of the heat and the stench. "Dig, you sons of bitches," is all he told them.

Patton probably would have said the same thing. □

This article is adapted from the author's 2014 book, Buchenwald: Hell on a Hilltop.

Weaponry

Continued from page 9

countries as the American armed forces switched first to the M14 (with a 20-shot magazine and 7.62x51mm NATO-standard ammunition) and then the AR-15 as the standard rifle.

The government-run Springfield Arsenal closed in 1968 but a private company, licensed to call itself Springfield Armory, Inc., began operations at its Geneseo, Illinois, facility. Using the exact blueprints and identical specifications as the original

John Garand (center) and Brig. Gen. Gilbert H. Stewart, head of the Springfield Armory, discuss the M1 with Maj. Gen. Charles Wesson (right), the Army's Chief of Ordnance.

Springfield Armory, the company today manufactures M14 rifles and M1911 .45 caliber pistols.

Today a used M1 Garand can be purchased for as little as $500-$1,000, although an M1 National Match M1 Garand once presented to then Senator John F. Kennedy in 1959 sold at auction in 2015 for $149,500. Another, previously owned by Mr. Garand himself (it was a gift at his retirement ceremony in 1953), sold in 2018 at Rock Island Auction for $287,500. It bears serial number one million. Many M1s can be purchased today through the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP).

As one M1 Garand enthusiast said, "It is not a perfect weapon, but the rifle's legend is woven into the fabric of our nation." □

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