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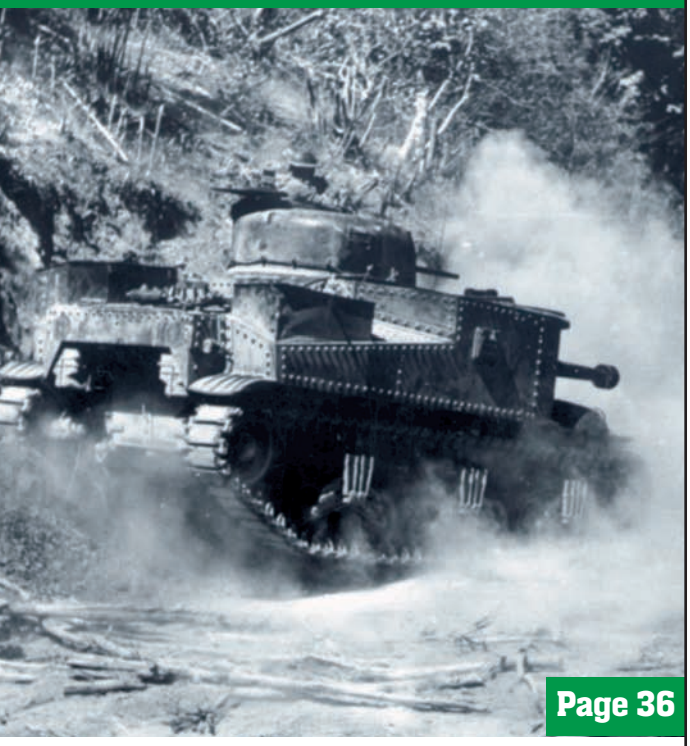

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COVER: American infantryman T/SGT Johnny Jonak looks cautiously over a hedgrow in Normandy. See story page 18. Photo: National Archives

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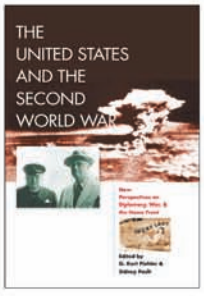

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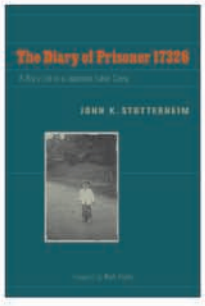

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Digging Up History

NOT LONG AGO I was watching one of my all-time favorite war movies—*The Great Escape,* starring Steve McQueen, James Garner, Richard Attenborough, James Coburn, Charles Bronson, and many others.

If you're not familiar with it, the movie is a fictionalized account of an actual event: the breakout in March 1944 of Allied prisoners of war from Stalag Luft III near Sagan, Poland, 100 miles east of Berlin.

Despite renewed interest in the subject after the film came out in 1963, the tunnels remained undisturbed over the decades because the camp site was behind the Iron Curtain and the Soviet authorities had no interest in its significance.

But not long ago British archaeologists received permission from the Polish government to excavate it and bring to light its remarkable secrets.

How the breakout was accomplished remains nothing less than astounding. For months some 600 prisoners (10,000 POWs were housed there) worked in the greatest secrecy digging four tunnels (nicknamed "Tom," "Dick," "Harry," and "George"; "George" was begun under seat 13 in the camp theater.) In time, "Harry" became the main escape tunnel and all work was focused on finishing the passageway, over 110 yards long.

To shore up the "Harry" tunnel 30 feet below ground in soft sand, the POWs scavenged 4,000 boards from 90 bunk beds and used 635 mattresses, 62 tables, 34 chairs, and 76 benches. Diggers used stolen shovels, 2,000 knives, and 2,000 spoons. Even a trolley system was built to carry out sand and to move tunnelers back and forth down the tunnel's length. To provide air to the diggers, a ventilation duct system ingeniously crafted from 1,400 used powdered-milk containers (known as "Klim tins") was employed.

On the night of the great escape, March 24-25, 1944, 200 preselected prisoners, allocated consecutive numbers, gathered in Hut 104 to make their way down the tunnel, each a few minutes apart. The leaders were dressed in German uniforms or specially tailored civilian outfits crafted by tailors among the prisoners and equipped with compasses, maps, and false identification papers.

Only 76 Allied airmen managed to leave the camp before the alarm was raised when escapee number 77 was spotted emerging outside the wire.

Tragically, only three of the 76 made it to safety. Another 50 were recaptured and executed by firing squad on Hitler's orders. He was furious after learning about the breach of security, and "Harry" was sealed by the Germans after the audacious breakout.

A couple of years ago, a group of British archaeologists got permission to excavate the prison-camp site and find the tunnels. Using ground-scanning radar, what they found was remarkable; all four tunnels and a treasure trove of artifacts were located.

One of a handful of ex-RAF airmen invited to watch the excavation was Gordie King, a former RAF pilot, who operated the bellows pump providing fresh air on the night of the escape, and who was 140th in line to use "Harry" and therefore missed out.

King said only German-speaking officers were given disguises and papers. He remembered sharing final words with many of the escapees, wishing them luck, and complimenting them on "their impressive disguises. It was quite exciting." Watching the tunnels being unearthed, though, brought back strong emotions. "This brings back such bittersweet memories," he said, wiping away tears.

As I've said before, the war spawned millions of stories. The story of the Great Escape is one of the most dramatic ones.

—Flint Whitlock, Editor

70th ANNIVERSARY D-DAY TRIP

In the last issue I mentioned that I will be the study leader on a week-long, 70th anniversary Smithsonian Institution tour of D-Day sites in England and France from September 6 to 13, 2014. Because of overwhelming response, the Smithsonian has laid on a second tour that will take place from May 16 to 23, 2014. If you want to learn more, call (855) 330-1542 or go to www.smithsonianjourneys.org/tours/D-day-tour. I'm sure that these will be very exciting and emotional tours, with memories to last a lifetime.

WWII History Quarterly

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The M-3 "Grease-Gun" showcases Yankee ingenuity at its ugly best.

AS AMERICA GEARED up for war, the economy of building a wartime army was overwhelming. Tanks, aircraft, soldiers and weapons—all would consume huge resources, and manufacturers were challenged to reduce costs wherever they could. The arms industry was one area where the designers showed great creativity and were able to place function over form to accomplish their mission.

One of the more expensive (and iconic) weapons at the start of the war, the Thompson submachine gun, became a prime target for cost savings. In 1939, the M-1928 A1 Thompson cost the government more than $200 each—more than four times the monthly wages paid to a typical soldier. By 1942, design and production changes had brought the Army's price down to around $75, and the final M1A1 variant hit a low price of $45 per copy by 1944.

National Archives

Resting in a German house after a patrol, GIs keep their weapons, including two M-3 "Grease Gun" submachine guns, close at hand.

Even so, in 1941 this was excessively expensive for a single weapon, so the War Department sought out a cheaper solution. That solution, the M-3 "Grease Gun," came in at around $18.50 each, a savings of 90 percent.

As the war came closer to American shores, the U.S. Army Ordnance Board considered what was happening in Europe on the weapons front, including the German MP40 Schmeisser and the British Sten gun, and initiated a study to develop its own easy-to-make submachine gun. Early in 1942, the Army submitted a list of requirements for the new weapon, and Ordnance solicited a list of requirements from both the infantry and cavalry branches for a shoulder-fired weapon with full- or semi-automatic fire capability, in caliber .45 ACP.

The list of requirements from each branch were then reviewed and modified at Aberdeen Proving Ground, and a tentative specification released to bidders. The initial T-15 specification of 1942 was for an all-metal weapon of stamped sheet-metal construction to fire the Army's standard pistol cartridge (.45 ACP); to be designed for inexpensive production with a minimum of machining; and featuring both semi-automatic and fully automatic fire ability; a cyclic rate under 500 rounds per minute; and the ability to place 90 percent of all shots fired (from the standing position in full-automatic mode) on a 6x6-foot target at the combat range of 50 yards. The standard to which the new weapon's performance was to be compared was the M-1928A1 Thompson, the "Tommy Gun."

General Motor's Inland Manufacturing Division in Dayton, Ohio, was just one of several companies that took on the challenge of developing this new weapon. Inland's design team was already involved in the production of the M-1 carbine, so the chief engineer made this a personal project to plan for tooling and production.

The original War Department specs were simplified in late 1942 to remove the semi-automatic fire capability, and to propose an option to convert the weapon's original caliber to the commonly available 9mmx19 pistol round that was used by both the Axis and Allied forces. The new specification for this dual caliber weapon was numbered T-20.

Five prototype models of the .45 T-20 and five 9mm conversion kits were built by GM's Inland Manufacturing prototype shop and submitted for testing in November. At the Ordnance Department trials, the GM submission completed the endurance test with only two failures to feed in over 5,000 rounds fired. In the accuracy portion of the tests, the GM design scored an admirable 97 out of 100 possible hits on the 6 x 6-foot target. Then the real trials began.

Airborne Command, the Amphibious Warfare Board, the Infantry Board, and the Armored Forces Board were all


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encouraged to look at the best of the new designs. Each branch was told to independently test the T-20 prototype weapons, to see if this new, inexpensive weapon would meet their needs. All four review boards rated the basic GM design as "acceptable," with similar suggestions and concerns.

All liked the short, handy size and reduced overall length, but all found fault with the GM-designed magazine and feed system, apparently due to the short, wide follower in the magazine that tended to tip or jam under hard use. The cocking handle was deemed too fragile, and the magazine could be difficult to fully load.

In spite of these faults, the T-20 was formally approved by the Ordnance Department for production in December 1942 as the "U.S. Submachine Gun, Caliber .45, M-3."

The contract to build this new weapon was issued to the parent organization (GM), which proposed that the Guide Lamp plant in Anderson, Indiana, be the fabrication location, as they were familiar with metal stamping and welding operations and were not working at capacity (according to WPB inspectors). In 1942 this factory was producing blackout lights for Army trucks, M-2 HMG barrels, and parts for the P-39 Airacobra aircraft. With this contract, the Guide Lamp plant was at full capacity, with only 16 percent of the plant capacity dedicated to M-3 production.

When the exclusive contract was given, Guide Lamp produced a total of 606,694 of the M-3 variant sub-machine gun in 1943 and 1944. With no significant changes, the T-20/M-3 was produced as submitted. Even the balky 30-round magazine was put into production as submitted in the interest of expediency. Because of the prework done by the team at Inland, the first guns were able to be submitted for inspector approval within 45 days of the contract.

It was planned that the "Grease Gun" (so called because of its resemblance to the type of tool used by mechanics to lubricate a vehicle's chassis and axles) or "Buck Rogers Gun" as it was nicknamed by the soldiers, would be produced in numbers sufficient to cancel orders for the more expensive Thompson submachine gun and to allow the Army to remove the Thompson from frontline service.

Due to production delays, design changes, and tooling problems, however, the M-3 never achieved its full potential during World War II, and purchases of the Thompson continued until February 1944.

Considering the much longer service life, it is no surprise that the Allies put more than 1.5 million Thompsons into wartime service, outnumbering the M-3 by nearly three to one.

What did the Army get?

This new and inexpensive M-3 SMG used many automotive production-line processes to keep costs under control. Like the German MP40, the receiver was made of two deep sheet-metal stampings welded together to form the tube for the bolt. The small parts of the firing mechanism were steel stampings, castings, and pressings, with only three machined parts in the whole weapon. The barrel had to be rifled from formed steel tubing, the face of the bolt had to be precision ground, and the threads to retain the barrel were ground, but the balance of the gun was stamped, pressed, and welded.

The magazine was formed from sheet stock, and even the sights were stampings. (A creative note: The sights on the M3 were finished in the test-firing stage when a special drill bored the peep sight hole to align with where the gun put the bullets—not trying to move the sights to meet the point of impact after the fact.)

In the field, the weapon could be disassembled without tools for cleaning or conversion to 9mm. It was simple to work on, reliable, and cheap to build and feed. The firing rate was about half that of the Thompson, firing 300 to 400 rounds per minute, which allowed the individual soldier to stay "in action" longer.

Combined with the lighter weight of the weapon (eight pounds as compared to the Thompson's 13+ pounds), the GI armed with an M-3 Grease Gun could carry more ammo and stay in the fight longer that one carrying the venerable M-1928 A1.

In combat, the GIs laughed at the ugly duckling. It lacked the fit and finish of the Tommy Gun, and had none of the "image" that came with the Thompson (which had been used by both gangsters and the FBI in the 1920s and 30s). But

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: The American soldier at right covers two Germans captured north of Lorient France in August 1944 with his M-3 submachine gun. RIGHT: Corporal Carlton Chapman, a member of the African American 761st Tank Battalion, peers out from the hatch of his Sherman tank. His M-3 Grease Gun is visible at top. OPPOSITE: This M-3 "Grease Gun" submachine gun and 30-round stick magazine was made by Guide Lamp, a division of General Motors. Although inexpensive to manufacture, the .45-caliber weapon packed a powerful punch.

when the chips were down, the "Greaser" did its job. Dirt didn't bother it (except that pesky magazine), it was short and handy, and threw enough of the man-stopping .45 ACP rounds that it could help decide a fire fight.

As one GI said, "I hated that gun when they gave it to me. It wasn't as sharp looking as my Thompson, and looked like a leftover from the parts locker. But when I needed it, that gun never let me down. I didn't clean it in combat—I just loaded it and drug it through the mud … and it kept shooting."

In 1945, the Guide Lamp factory manufactured a simplified M-3 A1 submachine gun before production contracts were canceled with the end of the war. A total of 15,000+ were produced, but few saw combat in World War II. During the Korean conflict, the Ithaca Gun Company in Ithaca, New York, produced another 33,000 complete M-3 A1 guns, as well as manufactured thousands of parts for the repair and rebuilding of existing M-3 and M-3 A1 weapons.

The Army originally intended this weapon to be a disposable one—repair parts were not initially ordered or even in the supply system until the end of World War II. The plan, if it broke, was simple: drop it and pick up another. The majority of the failures in combat with this simple gun were related to the magazine, which remained an issue for its entire military career.

The 9mm conversion kit was not widely used, and it is estimated that approximately 1,000 kits were produced by the Rock Island Arsenal and by Buffalo Arms, as well as another 1,000 completed weapons produced by Guide Lamp. The kit consisted of a 9mm barrel, a revised bolt, and a magazine adapter that would permit the use of Commonwealth Sten-magazines. Another variant was produced upon request for OSS use that fitted a silencer to the original barrel. These weapons were built with sound suppressor components produced by High Standard on a Bell Labs design.

However, like many weapons of this era, the M-3 lasted longer in service than anyone thought it would. The Russian Army was provided with a large quantity as part of the U.S. Lend-Lease aid program, but the lack of ammunition left most of them in storage for most of their life. A copy (in 9mm) was produced for the Argentine Army through the 1970s, and was in service long after that time. Several units in the first Gulf War reported for duty with the M-3 or M-3 A1 "Greaser" as an individual-protection weapon for tank-recovery vehicle crews.

A DoD inventory in 1996 showed that more than 1,000 still remained in the depots. Unfortunately for the historical

community, few of these have seen the light of day, and examples of the M-3 are seldom seen outside of museums.

The M-3 Grease Gun filled its intended role as an inexpensive, reliable weapon in a wartime economy. It used existing technologies and production methods in new ways to solve a problem and fill a need. While never as popular with the troops as its predecessor, it served the American GI and others around the world for 50 years, and serves as an example of what can be done when there is a need. □

Famed Hollywood director Frank Capra turned Nazi propaganda films into a powerful weapon of war against America's enemies.

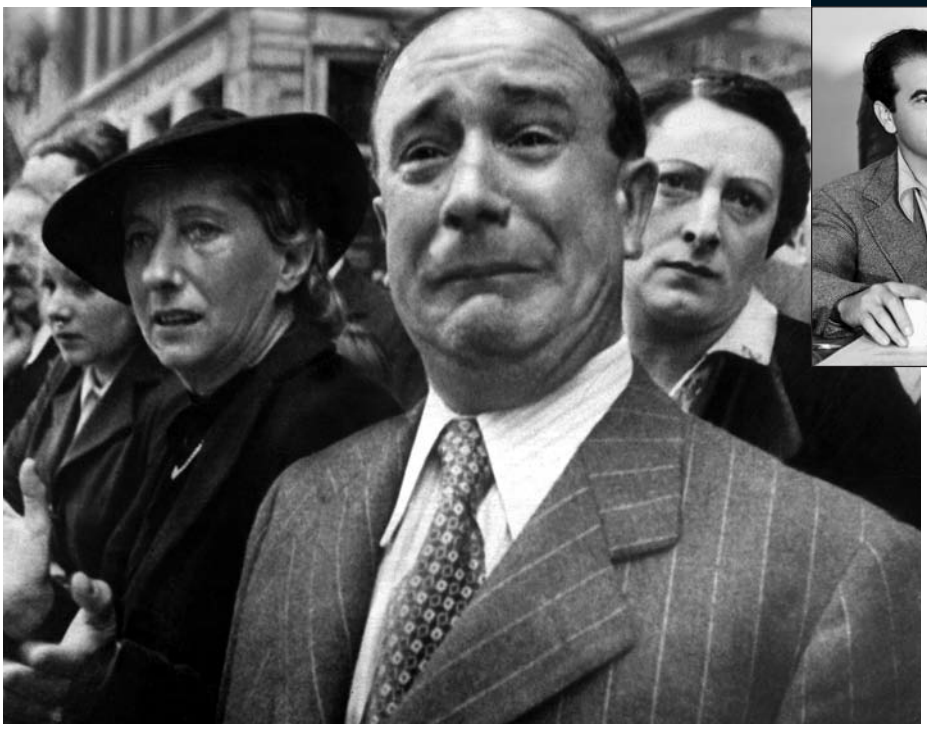
IN HIS 1971 AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *The Name Above the Title,* prestigious Hollywood film director Frank Capra claimed that on Monday morning, December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, two U.S. Army Signal Corps officers came to the Warner Brothers Studios soundstage where he was editing his film *Arsenic and Old Lace.*

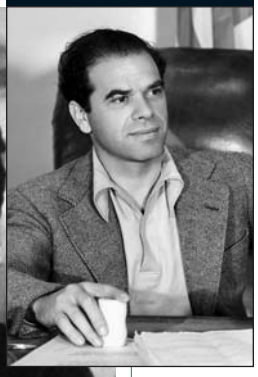
He said that the officers then swore him into the Signal Corps and that he asked for and received an extension to finish his film. Then he received, on February 5, 1942, a telegram directing him to proceed to Washington, D.C., six days later.

Unfortunately, little of this appears to be true. Two officers did go to Hollywood on December 9, but they did not come to swear Frank Capra into the Army. The officers, Colonel Richard I. Schlosberg and Captain Sy Bartlett, were in Hollywood for a one-day series of discussions on the expansion of the wartime film training program. The two men met with Colonel Darryl. F. Zanuck, supervisor of Army Signal Corps training films.

Zanuck, the head of 20th Century-Fox, like all the other Hollywood studio moguls, was commissioned a colonel in the Army Signal Corps. Swearing Capra into the Army on December 8, 1941, was not on the agenda.

What came up later relating to Capra began with a telephone call made on December 9, by Brig. Gen. Frederick H. Osborne, chief of the Morale Branch of the War Department (later called the Information and Education Division of Special Services). Osborne had been contacted by Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall regarding a series of films Marshall urgently wanted made to teach American soldiers just why they were fighting.





A still from Frank Capra's film, *Divide and Conquer,* the third film in the Why We Fight series, shows French civilians watching as the French Army leaves France from Toulon Harbor in 1940, later to become part of the Free French forces. BELOW: Frank Capra

The evidence about what happened next regarding Capra's enlistment is complex, but the bottom line was that Capra agreed, on December 12, to accept a major's commission and join the Army Signal Corps. Capra would then make the films Marshall urgently wanted: the now famous *Why We Fight* series.

Capra was ordered to active duty on January 15, 1942, but was given an extension to complete *Arsenic and Old Lace.* Capra was actually sworn into the Army on January 29, 1942. He did not take his oath on a film studio soundstage as he claimed in his autobiography but was sworn in at the Southern California Military District Headquarters in Los Angeles. With the exception of receiving an extension to allow him to complete *Arsenic and Old Lace,* the rest of Capra's account of his enlistment is apparently totally untrue.

The question arises as to why a brilliant motion picture director, the winner of six nominations and three Academy Awards for best direction for *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), and *You Can't Take it With You* (1938), as well as the Directors Guild of America's D.W. Griffith Award in 1958, and three honorary doctorates, would write such an autobiographical fantasy? Why was the man who was personally awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by General Marshall on the day of his military discharge on June 15, 1945, creating a fantasy about his enlistment some 15 years after the event?

It is not known why Capra wrote this egocentric story, but it was thought to be due to emotional problems dating back to his grim early childhood. Because of untrue sections in *The Name Above the Title,* some critics have wrongly attacked the entire autobiography. With watchful reading, there is much

ABOVE: A U.S. Army Signal Corps film crew, including many who had once worked for Hollywood studios as civilians, shoots a scene for a training film. Hollywood fully supported the war effort and worked tirelessly to ensure victory. RIGHT: The title frame of the Why We Fight series, seen by millions of GIs as part of their indoctrination. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall felt the films were vital in providing soldiers with needed motivation to face the enemy.

that can be learned about Capra and the genuinely important work he did that is not available from other sources.

Francesco Rosario Capra was born in Bisacquino, Palermo, Sicily, on May 18, 1897. He suffered a painful birth—born frail, badly dehydrated, and not expected to live. The story handed down by Capra's family was that little Francesco was left to die while friends and relatives spent their energies caring for his mother, doing this until her father, Capra's grandfather, came to Francesco's rescue. It is presumed that his timely intervention saved Francesco's life.

Capra suffered through a bleak childhood. He spent his first six years with his family on a Sicilian farm. In May 1903, Capra's father scraped up enough money for the family to immigrate to America. The family sailed from Palermo to Naples. Then, on May 10, 1903, their ship set sail for the United States. Francesco and his family suffered through a nightmarish steerage crossing before landing in New York harbor on May 23.

Capra later said of his Atlantic crossing: "There's no ventilation, and it stinks like hell. They're [the family] all miserable. It's the most degrading place you could ever be."

The family then endured a ghastly railroad trip across the United States to the Southern Pacific Railroad Station in downtown Los Angeles. Capra recalled: "For the kids, the train was the worst. The seats were wooden, and that's where you were seated day and night. They locked the cars so you couldn't move around, and you slept there...."

They arrived in Los Angeles on June 3, 1903. Frank saw his father bend down and kiss the ground when the family left the train.

Capra, according to some, personified the rags to riches American dream. It allegedly began when he sold newspapers on Los Angeles streets at the age of 12 and then extended to his enjoyment of extreme wealth when he became a renowned film director.

However, rags to riches ignored a dark side in Capra's psyche. One Capra associate said, "Capra was always coming to America." Given his difficult ship and train trips to and across America, this was not a good thing to have been seen about him. Another associate said,"Capra was driven by self-doubt as much as his belief in the power of the 'little man.'"

One thing was certain, however. Capra, the sickly child and unhappy little immigrant boy who initially hated America because of his childhood misery, the man who changed parts of the story of his life in his autobiography to make himself appear more important than he really might feel, grew to love his adopted country deeply and would do everything he could to help the United States win World War II. Whatever Capra's personal demons, the work that he would be doing for the Army held his demons at bay and allowed him freedom to fight ogres of a different kind—the ones that had been unleashed by Germany and Japan.

In May 1941, the Nazis' 114-minute propaganda film *Sieg im Westen* (*Victory in the West*) played to enthusiastic audiences in Manhattan's Yorkville District of New York City, then an area with a large ethnic German population.

Sieg im Westen, produced by the German Army High Command, merged two themes, the first a prologue that narrated a Nazi version of European history and the origins of World War II, and the second that graphically illustrated the power of the Nazi blitzkrieg in Western Europe in the spring of 1940.

The movie was spliced together with sections from Leni Riefenstahl's 1934 epic German propaganda documentary *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*) and current German military newsreel footage. The film's purpose was to illustrate the aggressive boldness of the German blitzkrieg and the superiority of German arms. The film also claimed that German military power was needed because Germany was not permitted to live in peace.

Arch Mercey, the assistant to Lowell Mellett, the director of the U.S. Office of Government Reports, wrote to his boss

after viewing the film: "The applause…is amazing. Hitler naturally enough draws the most applause, but there is plenty for the parachutists, dive bomber pilots, and advance guards."

The Nazis also produced a second propaganda documentary, the 69-minute *Feldzug in Polen* (*Campaign in Poland*), a film that depicted the 1939 German invasion of Poland and the ethnic Germans living in Poland as a downtrodden minority. There was much more in the way of propaganda, and the film was regularly given to and screened by German overseas minorities to express the German point of view.

The U.S. government had absolutely nothing to compare with films such as these either in quality or quantity. In 1941, it produced a total of 25 films on national defense, but the American film industry, extremely reluctant to give away any theater time, refused to show any government film that was more than three minutes in length.

In addition, the film industry's certainly misnamed Motion Picture Committee Cooperating for National Defense demanded to see the outline and script of each government film before passing judgment on whether it would allow the film to be shown in theaters. Mercey wrote Mellett: "The Committee is exercising a censorial power over the government at the moment."

The American government had been certain for some time that war was coming—and soon. When the Selective Training and Service Act, the first peacetime military conscription act in American history, was implemented on September 16, 1940, it triggered a growing apprehension about the motivation and morale of the new conscripts. Renowned Kansas newspaper editor William Allen White wrote Lowell Mellett that the new conscripts "haven't the slightest enthusiasm for this war or this cause. They are not grouchy, they are not mutinous; they just don't give a tinker's dam."

The government's concern spread to the highest military levels. General Marshall read a May 1941 *Atlantic Monthly* article by Stewart Alsop, "Wanted: A Faith to Fight For." Alsop expressed deep concern that while the German soldier had a powerful cause for which to fight and die, the American soldier did not.

Capra, left, with fellow director John Ford, a commander in the U.S. Navy. Like Capra, Ford created wartime documentaries; he also headed the photographic unit of the Office of Strategic Services.

A worried Marshall was quoted saying, "We've got to tell our young men why they're in uniform. They're going to fight seasoned soldiers who've got a thing going for them, a superman thing, and their soldiers believe it. And we haven't got that."

This was why Frank Capra became involved. The Army Morale Branch established earlier to provide military indoctrination failed miserably. General Marshall blamed the "the deadly effects of prepared lectures, indifferently read to troops.... Troops found these lectures to be baffling, bewildering, or just plain boring."

Frank Capra left for active duty with the Signal Corps on February 11, 1942, and arrived in Washington three days letter. He came into a city heavy with depression regarding the American chances for winning World War II.

Capra was loud in his scorn of defeatism; he quickly went to work producing ideas for scripts and immediately ran into tenacious resistance from the Signal Corps' bureaucracy. There were obviously many senior Signal Corps officers who wanted to keep the status quo.

Capra believed these officers wanted to shove him aside. He became convinced when he was abruptly transferred from the Signal Corps into the Morale Branch of the War Department. He was now commanded by Maj. Gen. Frederick H. Osborne, under whom he would report directly to Colonel Edward Lyman Munson, Jr., the head of the Information Services Branch, a unit consisting of departments for news, radio, pamphlets, and film.

Capra protested the transfer; he claimed he was a victim of office politics and jealousy. He insisted he was a moviemaker who knew little of morale, but nobody listened to his protests.

"You are the head of the film section, Major," Munson said, when he met Capra. He smiled. "In fact, you are the whole film section."

Capra recalled his reply: "Colonel Munson, as a fool who turned his back on Camelot, I don't feel like jumping up and down over heading a one-man film section."

Capra recalled the twinkle in Munson's eye when Munson replied:

"Well, welcome to fantasy land. Here, have some coffee and meet the other Mad Hatters."

It wasn't fantasy land. Capra later learned from Munson that his transfer was not office politics but was ordered from the highest levels. He learned that General Marshall did not feel the Signal Corps could make the type of film he strongly felt the Army needed. On the contrary, he was well aware the Signal Corps officers would fight to keep everything as it was.

It was against this background that Capra was ordered to report to Marshall because the general wanted to speak to him privately. Capra, a Catholic, later commented wryly, "Not being a military man, I didn't … realize that this was tantamount to a private audience with the Pope."

Munson escorted Capra through apparently miles of Pentagon corridors to a door labeled "Chief of Staff." Munson explained the rules to a suddenly nervous Capra. Capra was to give his name to the guard inside when he went in, and then, when the guard gave him permission to enter, Capra was to walk directly into the inner office without knocking. Munson stressed that Capra was not to salute. If Marshall was busy, Capra was to walk to the chair at the side of Marshall's desk and quietly sit down. He was to do nothing else. Capra, now very nervous and alone, did as Munson ordered.

Capra (right), now a colonel in the Signal Corps, discusses the editing of the documentary *Tunisian Victory* with a member of the British Army Film Unit, February 1944. Capra was one of three co-directors on the Anglo-American film project.

Even though he had been nervous, the film director in Capra later observed that General Marshall "could be cast [in a film] as a sad-eyed Okie watching his soil blow away." Capra's legs were trembling, but they were moving as he walked into Marshall's private office. He later recalled what one sergeant said: "Morale is what makes your feet do what your head knows just ain't possible."

Capra and Marshall were alone together for a considerable time, and there is absolutely no reason to doubt Capra's autobiographical report of their conversation. Marshall spoke frankly. He told Capra that America would raise a large army, about eight million men, and the Army had to make soldiers out of boys, who for the most part had never held a gun.

These boys were to be uprooted from civilian life, sent first to Army camps for training and then shipped to various war zones, and finally into combat. The reasons why they were fighting were often vague or blurred in their minds. Capra later recalled Marshall saying that in a short time America would have a huge citizens' army in which civilians would outnumber professional soldiers some 50 to one.

Would these draftees survive the rigors they would be put through? Marshall's answer was "yes," but only if these boys knew the reasons why they were fighting. Marshall laid down the bottom line when he told Capra, "And that, Capra, is our job—and your job."

After the meeting, Capra walked into a lavatory, entered a stall, and closed and

locked the door. He recalled wanting to be completely alone, to think things through. He knew he didn't have the foggiest idea how to make a wartime documentary. He had no organization, a very small budget, nothing except a direct order from Marshall and, shortly after that, a newly painted sign on his door reading, "Major Frank Capra, Orientation Film Section." As Capra later reported, "I was that section."

As the weeks went by, Capra successfully struggled to fight office politics and build his organization but fought unsuccessfully to find a "hook" on which to tie everything together for his *Why We Fight* films. He and the men who were joining his now-expanding unit spent hours in the New York City Metropolitan Museum of Art, studying captured or confiscated Nazi films.

In April 1942, Capra suddenly found his answer. Coming directly from a showing of *Triumph of the Will,* it had been staring him in the face all the time. This was the film that Hitler claimed was "a totally unique and incomparable glorification of the power and beauty of our movement."

Riefenstahl's film begins when Hitler's solitary plane is seen flying, almost magically, through a beautiful German sky and then descending through the clouds to land in Nuremberg. Hitler had come to a Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg, a huge event put together to honor the Nazi movement to generate praise for the party's leader, the Nazi Aryan superman, Adolf Hitler.

At first Capra, sitting in the darkened theater, was stunned. He was staring at a film that "fired no gun, dropped no bombs. But as a psychological weapon aimed at destroying the will to resist, it was just as lethal."

"My God," Capra told one of his new workers, "I can't compete with that."

He was wrong. Some time later, Edgar (Pete) Peterson II, a young filmmaker who worked under Capra at Warner Brothers on *Meet John Doe,* joined Capra's unit.

"Let their own films kill them," Capra told Peterson. He wasn't joking.

His idea was to take the Nazis' own films and revise, replace, or delete scenes as needed. Importantly, he would rewrite the narration and replace the Nazi soundtrack with his own. He would shoot a few new scenes as needed and add animation for effect. He would change the poisonous snake into a reptile that bites its own tail. While Capra's solution was miraculous in its simplicity, its implementation would not be easy. Hundreds of miles of film would have to be viewed, reprocessed, and reedited. It would require thousands of hours of work.

Capra began his work with a vengeance. His script went for the Axis jugular and spared no irony, rested on no subtleties. He asked actor Walter Huston to do the new narration; Huston's powerful voice had been used in many of Capra's Hollywood movies. His narration is filled with nationalist and racist rhetoric which smears pitiless German "Huns" and "blood-crazed Japs."

The narration also praised the courage and sacrifice of the British, Soviets, and Chinese. Realistic sound effects and a powerful musical score intensified and embellished the dramatic *Why We Fight* scenes.

The first *Why We Fight* film, *Prelude to War,* for instance, had six of Hollywood's finest film music composers working on the soundtrack. Capra was not apologetic about its powerful script. America was at war; in 1942, it was not certain if she would win.

The Walt Disney Studios were contracted to produce the animated portions of the films. The Disney organization did much to animate certain concepts to make the film powerful and exciting—not to mention clearly understandable to an audience of GIs whose intelligence varied considerably. For example, weak amoeba-like Polish units were shown encircled then devoured by superior predatory Nazi bacteria. The films were made even more pertinent by Disney's animated maps, which depicted all Axis and Axis-occupied territories in funereal black and dark grays.

In three years until the end of the war, the Capra organization produced seven pictures for Marshall's *Why We Fight* series and many other military films. The *Why We Fight* films are, in order: *Prelude to War* (1942), *The Nazis Strike* (1943), *Divide and Conquer* (1943), *The Battle of Britain* (1943), *The Battle of Russia* (1943), *The Battle of China* (1944), and *War Comes to America* (1945).

Each film ends powerfully with a quotation from General Marshall: "No compromise is possible and the victory of the democracies can only be complete with the utter defeat of the war machines of Germany and Japan."

This quotation, including the underlined "utter defeat," is shown on screen followed by a ringing Liberty Bell. Over this is superimposed a large letter "V" for Victory accompanied by a stirring soundtrack playing patriotic or military music.

In addition, Capra also produced a series of four films dealing with the military aspects at the end of the war and into peacetime. They were made in 1945, and are titled *Two Down and One to Go*, *Here Is Germany*, *Know Your Enemy—Japan*, and *Your Job in Germany.*

Eventually the Army changed Capra. The egocentric Hollywood director who wanted his "name above the title" wrote to his officers in 1942, "Most of you were individuals in civilian life. Forget that. You are working for a common cause. Your personal egos and idiosyncrasies are unimportant. There will be no personal credit for your work, either on the screen or in the press. The only press notices we are anxious to read are those of American victories!"

This military Capra surprised many of his Hollywood associates; they had only known the pretentiousness of his Hollywood persona. Brig. Gen. Frank McCarthy, Marshall's secretary during World War II and later the producer of the 1970 Oscar-winning film *Patton,* summed up the World War II Capra in a few words: "He was a team player. He displayed no self-interest at all."

However, Capra's lack of self-interest would have to change soon. On June 14, 1945, Colonel Capra, the assistant chief of an Army Pictorial Service unit, was emptying his desk because the next day he would be formally discharged from the Army.

His commanding officer, Brig. Gen. Edward Lyman Munson, Jr., unexpectedly came into his office, and told him that General Marshall needed him at once. Capra, expecting more work, complained that he was being discharged; Munson ignored Capra's complaint, so Capra "high-tailed it" to Marshall's suite.

He was immediately ushered into Marshall's private office by Frank McCarthy. What happened next and its final outcome are best put into Capra's words 26 years after the event.

In *The Name Above the Title,* he appeared to relive the event: "I … [went into Marshall's inner office] then stopped as if I had been shot. Facing me and standing at attention was a line of beribboned generals … all were grinning at me. Two Signal Corps photographers raised their cameras." General Marshall was presenting Capra the Distinguished Service Medal.

Capra continued, "And now General Marshall … is going to pin that great honor on *me* [Capra's italics]. Camera bulbs flash … I feel like a bum … I flush with shame … I walk down the hall … like a zombie... [I] go into the first washroom … into a cubicle … lock the door … sit on the toilet seat … and cry like a baby."

Capra's discharge from the Army brought on a sudden upsurge in his emotional difficulties, which appeared to have been kept under control because he was active in the Army. It is thought by some that his problems had been kept in cold storage by his knowledge of what he was doing for the American war effort. This cold storage vanished when the war ended.

As if to underscore the loss of all of the creative juices that had been expended during the war, Capra's postwar films were poorly received. One critic called them "Capra-corn," while another called them "sentimental and flabby." Two of these films were remakes of his prewar films. Capra retired from filmmaking after completing *Pocket Full of Miracles* (1961), a remake of his 1933 production *Lady for a Day.*

Capra's later years were difficult. He failed at restarting his film career then suffered a series of minor strokes some years before his death, which put him under 24-hour nursing care. He died in his sleep from a heart attack in his La Quinta, California, home on September 3, 1991, at age 94.

He is still remembered by Americans, who were inspired by his *Why We Fight* films, as a man who put his heart and soul into his work to help the Allies win the war. □

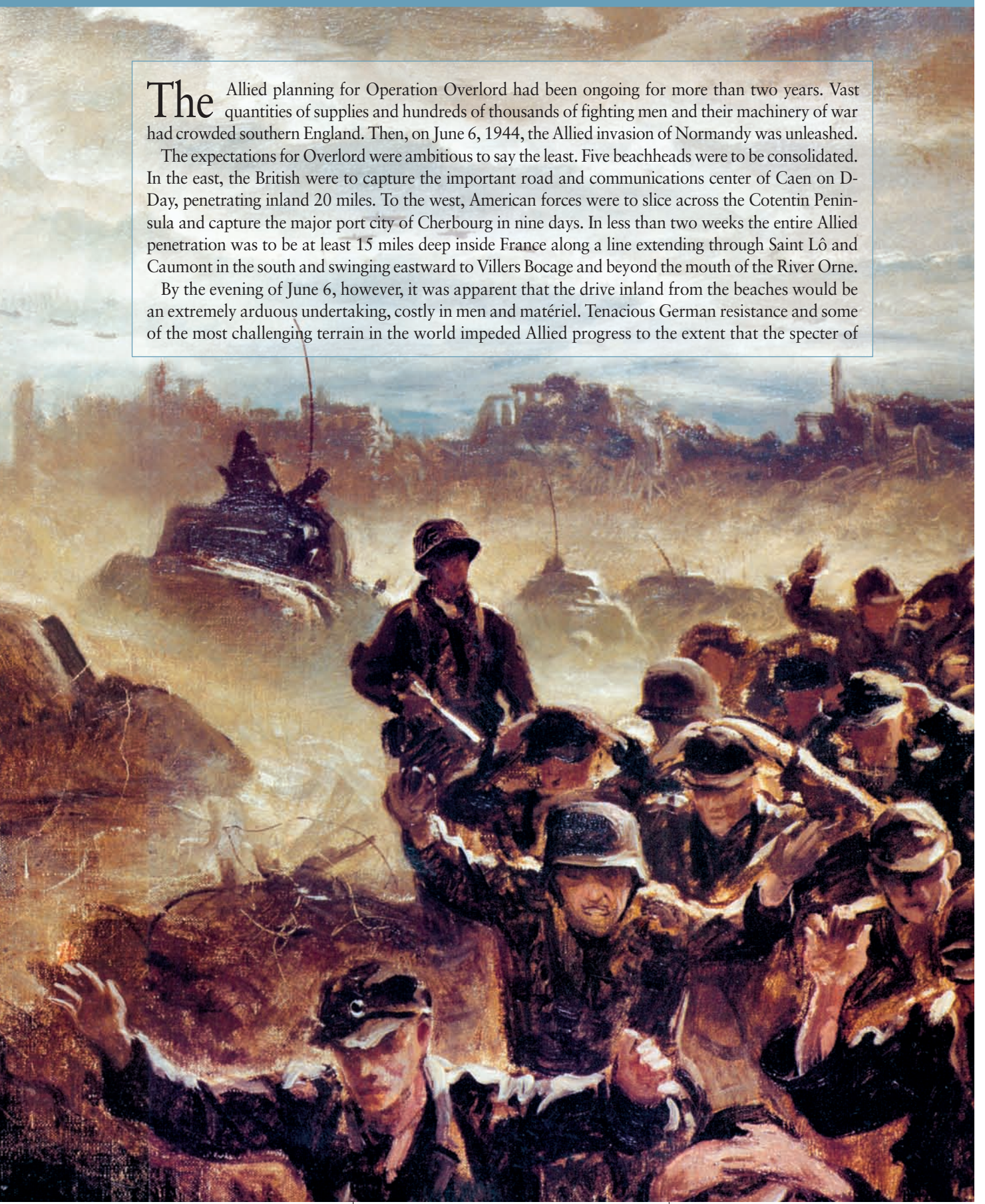
U.S. Army Art Collection

Ogden Pleissner, an artist and war correspondent for *LIFE* magazine, captured American tanks advancing through the bombed-out city of St. Lô as German prisoners are marched to the rear.

Deadly COBRA STRIKE

After weeks of trying to break out of Normandy's hedgerow country, Omar Bradley's Operation Cobra propelled U.S. forces onto open ground and across France.

BY MICHAEL E. HASKEW



The Allied planning for Operation Overlord had been ongoing for more than two years. Vast quantities of supplies and hundreds of thousands of fighting men and their machinery of war had crowded southern England. Then, on June 6, 1944, the Allied invasion of Normandy was unleashed.

The expectations for Overlord were ambitious to say the least. Five beachheads were to be consolidated. In the east, the British were to capture the important road and communications center of Caen on D-Day, penetrating inland 20 miles. To the west, American forces were to slice across the Cotentin Peninsula and capture the major port city of Cherbourg in nine days. In less than two weeks the entire Allied penetration was to be at least 15 miles deep inside France along a line extending through Saint Lô and Caumont in the south and swinging eastward to Villers Bocage and beyond the mouth of the River Orne.

By the evening of June 6, however, it was apparent that the drive inland from the beaches would be an extremely arduous undertaking, costly in men and matériel. Tenacious German resistance and some of the most challenging terrain in the world impeded Allied progress to the extent that the specter of

Map © 2014 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

OPERATION GOODWOOD: As late as five weeks after Overlord, British and Canadian troops had not advanced much beyond their June 6 front lines, but a week later were making good progress.

stalemate became quite real to senior commanders, who had pinned their hopes on a quick breakout from the extended beachhead in Normandy and rapid movement across open country, where tanks and armored vehicles could operate freely.

Cherbourg fell to troops of the U.S. VII Corps, under Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, on June 27, two weeks behind schedule, and Caen was still in German hands at the end of the month; the British and Canadian soldiers of Lt. Gen. Miles Dempsey's Second Army did not enter the town until the afternoon of July 9. Casualties were heavy. British losses neared 4,000 men, and the Germans lost at least 6,000 killed, wounded, or captured. Civilians died in great numbers as well.

Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, commander of all German forces in the West, and Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, commander of Army Group B, had deployed the bulk of their armored forces in the defense of Caen, realizing that the plain to the south of the town offered open country and rapid maneuver, while the terrain to the west and south was ideal for prolonged defensive operations and required fewer resources to hold the Americans at bay.

By early July, several German counterattacks had done little but to temporarily stabilize the front in Normandy. The Americans were bogged down and, although the British possessed most of ruined Caen, the Germans still held the high ground of Bourguébus ridge, where their artillery commanded the approaches and presented a significant obstacle to a breakout.

Still, both Rundstedt and Rommel realized that future offensive operations would only further deplete their limited resources. The troops of the German Seventh Army, under General Paul Hausser, and Panzer Group West, commanded by General Heinrich Eberbach, had been hammered by Allied ground forces, air power, and naval gunfire.

Hitler refused to transfer troops of the Fifteenth Army, 200,000 strong, from the Pas de Calais. The highest echelons of the German command remained convinced that Normandy was but a diversion and the main invasion effort was yet to come. Operation Fortitude, the creation of the fictitious First U.S. Army Group (FUSAG) around Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., had succeeded beyond the Allies' wildest hopes and caused Hitler to withhold the resources that might have brought about a different outcome in Normandy.

Following a failed counterattack against the British and Canadians around Caen on July 1, Rundstedt telephoned Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, chief of the high command in Berlin. When Keitel asked what could be done to alter the deteriorating situation, Rundstedt bluntly replied, "Make peace, you fools! What else can you do?" Rundstedt was relieved the following day and replaced by Field Marshal Günther von Kluge.

Along with the stiff German defense, the land itself was a prominent adversary in the Allied effort. The hedgerows, or bocage, were mounds of earth with drainage ditches running alongside that stretched for miles between pastures and farmlands in Normandy. Centuries old, the hedgerows were often several feet thick with trees growing 15 to 20 feet high on top of them. The bocage was excellent terrain for defense.

The Germans concealed machine guns, antitank weapons, and snipers throughout the area, and the narrow country lanes became death traps to advancing GIs. Casualties were extremely high, and a day's progress was often measured in yards. Armored vehicles were more or less restricted to the dirt roads and became easy marks for hidden enemy weapons.

General Walter Bedell Smith, chief of staff to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, remarked that in the south of Normandy "every small field was a fortress, every hedgerow a German strongpoint." Indeed, the soldiers of the First U.S. Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, discovered just how horrific such close-quarter combat could be in early July. (Bradley led First Army in the Normandy campaign until August 1, 1944, when he became commander of Twelfth U.S. Army Group.)

After the fall of Cherbourg, Bradley reoriented the bulk of First Army southward and focused on two major objectives, the crossroads town of Saint Lô on his eastern flank and the village of Coutances about 15 miles to the west where five roads converged. Bradley amassed the strength of three corps, Collins's VII in the center, Maj. Gen. Troy Middleton's VIII on the right, and Maj. Gen. Charles Corlett's XIX to the left. Eventually elements of 10 armored and infantry divisions were committed to the effort to take Coutances and Saint Lô and gain control of the highway that linked the towns.

The First Army offensive jumped off on July 3, and the going was rough from the start. Foul weather and determined German defenders ground the advance to a halt, and in 17 days of fighting the Americans suffered 40,000 casualties. The offensive faltered well short of Coutances, while Saint Lô fell to troops of the 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th

ABOVE: A Sherman tank raises a cloud of dust as it races past a disabled German PzKpfw IV tank during the Operation Goodwood advance, July 19, 1944. BELOW: In the shadow of a Normandy hedgerow, American troops lob 81mm mortar shells at the nearby enemy.

Both: National Archives

Division on the afternoon of July 18. The bulk of First Army was now drawn up along the Saint Lô -Periers road, and Bradley conceded that the effort could go no farther. However, by that time he was already contemplating a renewed offensive to finally break out of the hedgerow country.

Bradley had spent hours in his headquarters tent poring over a giant map of Normandy and the surrounding countryside. He concluded that the best prospect for a breach of the German defensive positions lay in the concentrated use of air power to pulverize a rectangular area about 3½ miles wide and 1½ miles deep just beyond American lines along the Saint Lô-Periers road.

As soon as possible following the aerial bombardment, Collins's VII Corps would strike. The 9th and 30th Infantry Divisions were to plunge through the weakened German lines and open the shoulders of a three-mile-wide corridor through which the 3rd and 2nd Armored Divisions and the motorized 1st Infantry Division would race. The initial objective was Coutances. German forces would be encircled and squeezed between the vise of VII and VIII Corps.

After reaching Coutances, the potency of the German resistance and momentum of the attack would be assessed, and American forces might indeed roll forward another 30 miles to Avranches, where the open country of Brittany stretched eastward.

The coordinated air-ground effort was code-named Operation Cobra. Originally set for July 18, bad weather forced several delays, and Cobra did not get under way until the morning of July 25.

Eisenhower was enthusiastic about Cobra, as was General Bernard Montgomery, commander of 21st Army Group and all Allied forces in Normandy, who had called a conference at his headquarters in Creuilly on July 10. It was there that Bradley first broached the idea of Cobra with Montgomery and Dempsey. Montgomery knew that Bradley needed time to resupply and reallocate his forces; therefore, he initially proposed that the British in the Caen sector continue to keep the vast majority of German armor and mobile reserves occupied, drawing them away from the Americans to allow the greatest potential success for Cobra.

At the conclusion of the July 10 meeting, Dempsey suggested that the British might do more than simply serve as the immovable base for the upcoming offensive. Second Army might launch another offensive of its own. Montgomery agreed and ordered Dempsey to plan for an attack, codenamed Operation Goodwood, which would involve the troops and armor of three corps.

In the center of the thrust, three armored divisions of the British VIII Corps—the Guards, 7th, and 11th—would attack toward Falaise and the open plain of Brittany. The Canadian II Corps was to secure the portion of Caen that remained in German hands near the River Orne and the surrounding high ground. Meanwhile, XII Corps was to conduct preliminary operations as a diversion. Montgomery and Dempsey concluded that if Goodwood

National Archives

ABOVE: Lt. Gen. Leslie McNair, commander of U.S. Army Ground Forces, died when an errant American bomb fell into his foxhole during Cobra, July 25, 1944. BELOW: German SS troops leap over barbed wire and take cover during their stubborn defense of Caen.

were completely successful, the British offensive might reach beyond Falaise and as far south as Argentan.

Air power was expected to play a critical role in Goodwood, and more than 2,100 planes, heavy bombers of the U.S. Eighth Air Force and Royal Air Force Bomber Command along with the tactical fighter bombers of the U.S. Ninth Air Force, opened the offensive on the morning of July 18, dropping more than 8,000 tons of bombs on German positions. Royal Navy warships in the Bay of the Seine added their guns to the effort.

Confronting the British were the 13 divisions of Panzer Group West, organized into four corps, under Eberbach. These troops held a 70-mile line with the bulk of their strength, five divisions at the front and five in reserve, around Caen. Eberbach arranged his defenses in three lines to a depth of 1,200 yards. The 88mm guns of the III Flak Corps were positioned to deliver devastating artillery fire, and rocket launcher brigades supported each corps.

Although he expected a British attack, Eberbach was surprised that Montgomery moved with such speed on the 18th. When the VIII Corps armor rolled forward, the tanks made good progress. Only when they reached the concentrated German antitank and artillery positions along the third defensive line was their momentum slowed. British problems were compounded by the narrow field of maneuver afforded the tanks and the tenacious defense put up by German infantry and armor in small towns and villages, upsetting the offensive's timetable.

By late morning, Eberbach had committed four infantry and four armored battalions of the 21st Panzer and the 1st SS Divisions to deal with Goodwood. The 13 PzKpfw V Panther tanks of the II Battalion, 1st SS Panzer Regiment engaged 60 British tanks southeast of the village of Soliers and destroyed 20 of them. Kluge finally received help from the Fifteenth Army, when the 116th Panzer Division was released as reinforcement.

The Germans successfully prevented a direct breakthrough but had given ground and exhausted their reserves in the effort to contain Goodwood. The British lost 270 tanks and 1,500 casualties on July 18, renewed the attack on the 19th, and lost another 131 tanks and 1,100 killed, wounded, or captured, and then ground to a halt on the 20th as heavy rains turned roads into rivers of mud. The 500 tanks lost during Goodwood amounted to 36 percent of the entire British armored force available in Europe. One armored regiment had lost 57 of its complement of 61 tanks.

In exchange for the butcher's bill, the Canadian II Corps had cleared all of Caen and moved modestly onto the plain southeast of the town, while the VIII Corps had managed to gain control of 34 square miles of territory.

To this day, controversy surrounds the true intent of Operation Goodwood—to achieve a breakout or to erode German combat efficiency in order to aid the American Cobra offensive. Montgomery may well have attempted to hedge his bet on the outcome. Prior to July 18, he had assured Eisenhower that the eastern flank of the German line would "burst into flame." The "whole weight of air power" might bring about "decisive results." Then, on the evening of July 18, he raised the stakes by issuing a battlefield communiqué that asserted, "Early this morning British and Canadian troops of Second Army attacked and broke through into the area east of the Orne and southeast of Caen."

Four days earlier, Montgomery had written to Field Marshal Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff: "And so I have decided that the time has come to have a real 'showdown' on the Eastern flank ... into the open country around the Caen-Falaise road." Nevertheless, Montgomery sent an aide to the War Office to explain vaguely that the object of Goodwood was to "muck up enemy troops" and "at the same time ... to take advantage of ... the enemy ... disintegrating."

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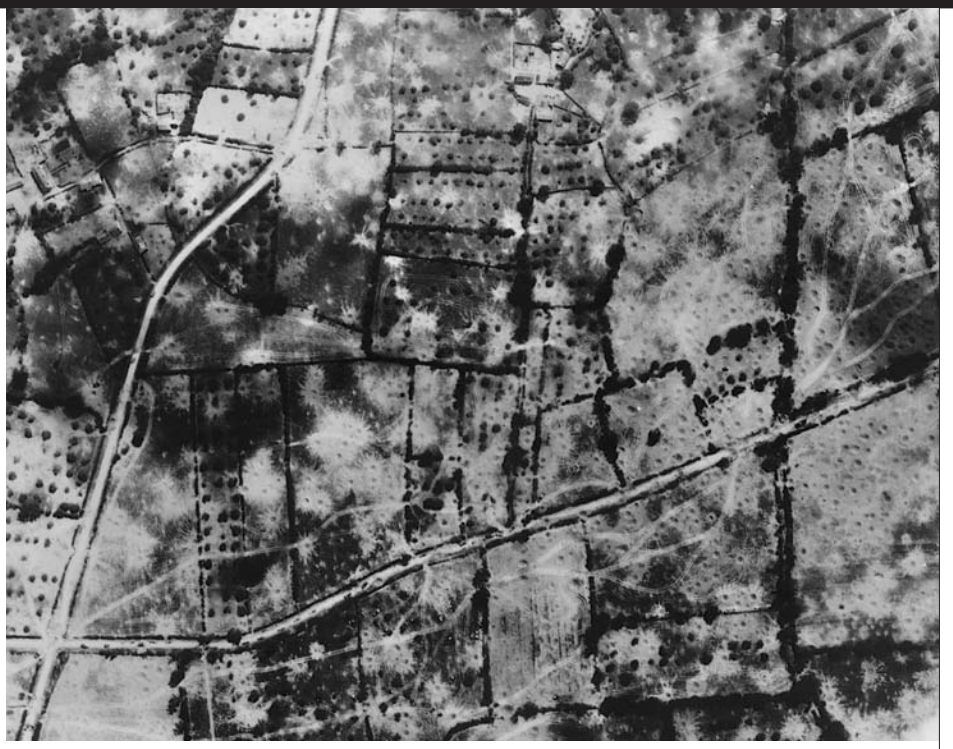


National Archives

Aerial photo of the Normandy countryside after the U.S. Air Force's—carpet bombings shows hundreds of bomb craters—bombs that inadvertently killed and wounded American troops.

Despite the fact that Goodwood succeeded in rendering as many as four German divisions ineffective by the time Cobra was launched and depleted German armor substantially, Eisenhower had expected more. The furious supreme commander came close to relieving Montgomery, and there was plenty of support for such a decision from senior commanders both British and American. Among Monty's leading detractors was Air Chief Marshal Arthur Tedder, the deputy supreme commander, who alleged that Montgomery had never actually intended a breakthrough and had misled Eisenhower. A group of senior British officers urged Montgomery's removal due to a "serious lack of fighting leadership."

In the end, Eisenhower chose to retain Montgomery, writing a letter to the 21st Army Group commander expressing his disappointment that the hoped-for breakout "did not come about." Eisenhower further urged Montgomery to renew offensive operations in support of Bradley's offensive. The hope for an Allied breakout in the summer of 1944 now depended substantially on the success of Operation Cobra.

On July 12, Bradley stood before his staff and corps commanders and raised the curtain on Cobra. He said bluntly of the Germans, "If they get set again, we go right back to this hedge fighting, and you can't make any speed…. This thing must be bold." Bradley further explained that a rapid breakout from the "slugger's match" in Normandy was to be achieved with the aid of "three or four thousand tons of bombs."

"Lightning Joe" Collins's VII Corps staff went to work. Since the 9th and 30th Infantry Divisions had both been depleted by weeks of combat, Collins requested the 4th Infantry Division for added strength during the ground phase of Cobra, and under his direction the plan of attack evolved.

"The Cobra plan in final form," wrote historian Martin Blumenson, "thus called for three infantry divisions, the 9th, 4th, and 30th, to make the initial penetration close behind the air bombardment and create a 'defended corridor' for exploiting forces, which were to stream westward toward the sea. The motorized 1st Infantry Division, with CCB (Combat Command B) of the 3rd Armored Division attached, was to thrust directly toward Coutances. The reduced 3rd Armored Division was to make a wider envelopment. The 2nd Armored Division, with the 22nd Infantry attached, was to establish blocking positions from Tessy-sur-Vire to the Sienne River near Cérences and, in effect, make a still wider envelopment of Coutances."

Bradley counted on the saturation bombing to soften up the German positions considerably, and on July 19 he traveled to the headquarters of Air Chief Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory, the overall air commander, to discuss the plan. Bradley stressed the need for a "blast effect" and suggested the use of 100-pound fragmentation bombs and nothing heavier to avoid the deep cratering of roadways and routes of advance that had hindered earlier Allied offensive efforts in Normandy.

He further suggested that the bombers take a lateral approach to the designated area, flying parallel to the American line rather than over the heads of the ground troops. This would allow the bombers to operate with the sun at their backs. Finally, Bradley compromised with the air leaders, agreeing to lengthen the distance the troops would be pulled back from the bombing zone from 800 yards to 1,200. Still, this left virtually no margin for error for the bombardiers; the air commanders had originally requested a distance of 3,000 yards.

The saturation bombing was to begin 80 minutes prior to the jump-off of the ground offensive. The first to go in would be 350 fighter-bombers that would strafe and bomb the area for 20 minutes. Then, 1,800 heavy bombers of the Eighth Air Force would deliver their payloads for the next hour. Another 350 fighter-bombers were to hit the area again for 20 minutes, and the final blow was to be delivered by 396 medium bombers against the southern half of the rectangle in a 45-minute air assault. Altogether, with 500 fighters flying top cover, 2,500 planes were to attack the designated area for two hours and 25 minutes, dropping 5,000 tons of ordnance.

Stretching across the path of Operation Cobra was the German LXXXIV Corps under General Dietrich von Choltitz. The LXXXVI Corps consisted of the under-

strength remnants of several divisions, including the 243rd, 91st, 77th, 265th, 2nd SS Panzer, 17th SS Panzergrenadier, 5th Parachute, Panzer Lehr, and others. Along with the adjacent II Parachute Corps, the number of German defenders in the area approached 30,000.

Panzer Lehr, holding a three-mile front along the Saint Lô-Periers road, was in Cobra's crosshairs and would receive the brunt of the Allied aerial bombardment. At full strength, Panzer Lehr was authorized to field 15,000 men and 200 tanks and armored vehicles. Battered in Normandy, the division could muster only about 2,200 fighting men and 45 armored vehicles as Cobra neared.

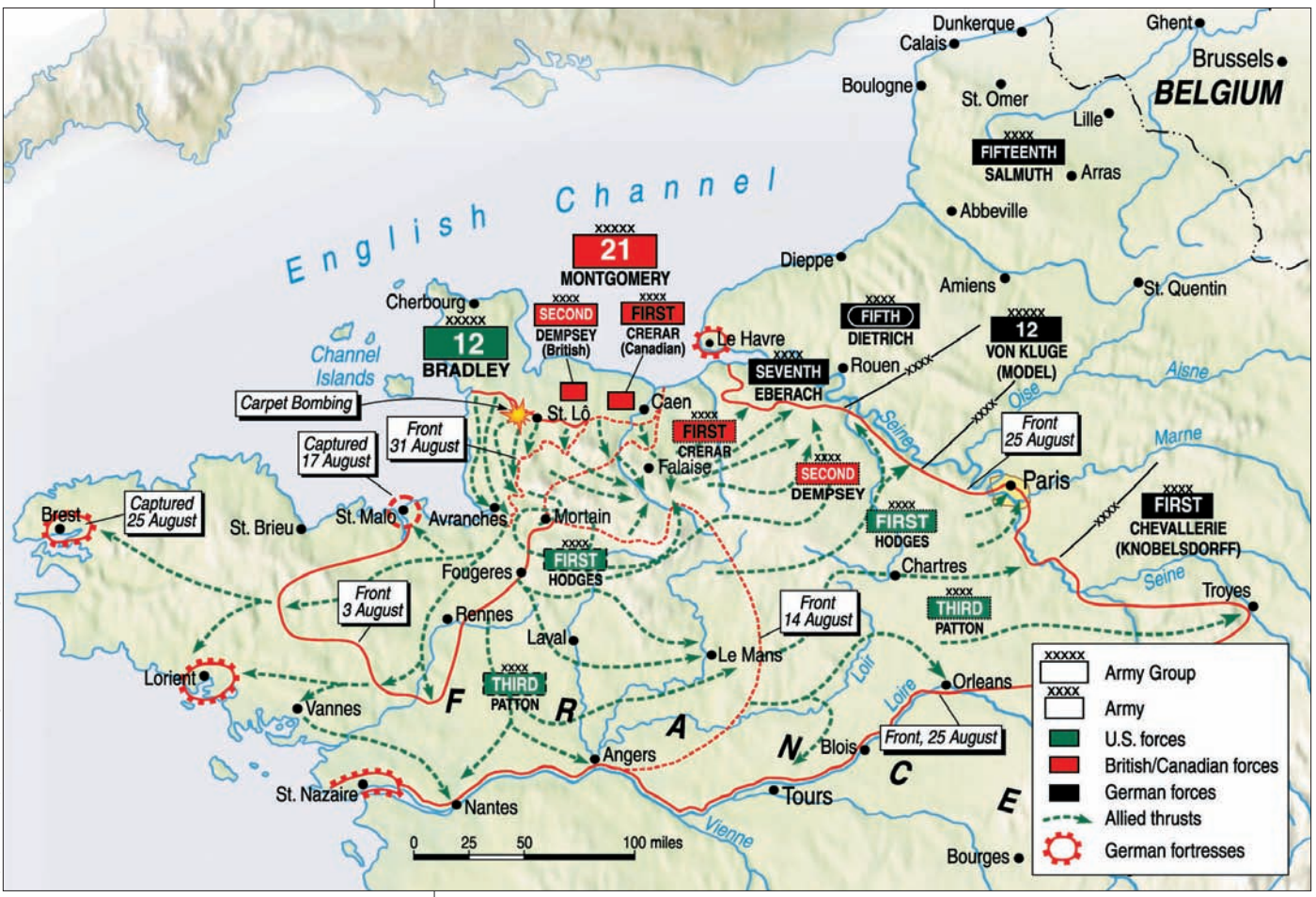
The Germans' troubles in Normandy worsened on July 17 when Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel, returning to Army Group B headquarters in La Roche Guyon after a meeting with 1st SS Panzer Corps commander Sepp Dietrich in St. Pierre-sur-Dives, was seriously injured when a Spitfire from RAF 602 Squadron strafed the open Horch staff car near Livarot and caused it to crash. With Rommel hors d'combat, the German Army in the West lost one of its ablest leaders.

Since the opening act of Operation Cobra was the aerial phase, Leigh-Mallory retained the right to set the starting time. Bad weather began to clear on July 23, and the air marshal ordered the bombers to begin taking off the following morning. Soon afterward, the weather soured again as clouds obscured the target area, and Leigh-Mallory, who had flown to Normandy to observe the bombardment, cancelled the mission. The order, however, came too late for several of the leading flights to get the word. Nearly 400 planes dropped 685 tons of explosives. Tragically, a number of the bombs fell short, killing 25 and wounding 131 soldiers of the 30th Division.

Bradley was appalled when he learned that the bombs dropped were considerably heavier than the 100-pound fragmentation types he had requested. The bombers had also approached the rectangle directly over the troops rather than parallel to them. When he inquired of Leigh-Mallory as to the source of the deviations from his understanding of the plan, Bradley was told that the line of flight was changed intentionally. Approaching laterally, said Leigh-Mallory, placed the bombers on a path that was too narrow, forcing them to fly too close together while also exposing them to German anti-aircraft fire for a prolonged period.

An hour before the bombers arrived, American troops had pulled out of their positions along the Saint Lô-Periers road as ordered. When the movement was observed by

OPERATION COBRA: July and August 1944 saw the battle of Normandy change from static to highly mobile warfare in northwest France.



BELOW: Although his cause is lost, a camouflaged German paratrooper (Fallschirmjäger), equipped with rifle, stick grenade, and binoculars, waits for the Americans to arrive. LEFT: An American Sherman tank sweeps past an upended panzer on a country lane in Normandy. German armored forces suffered huge losses during Cobra.

Both: National Archives

the Germans, Maj. Gen. Fritz Bayerlein, commanding Panzer Lehr, ordered his own troops into the vacated area. As the bombs fell, he expected an attack. However, the fighting that took place was only with Collins's troops attempting to retake the ground they had given up as a precaution against errant bombs.

Bayerlein was satisfied that he had parried a significant thrust and moved additional troops into the positions the Americans had held, placing them directly in the path of the coming Allied air bombardment, now rescheduled for 11 AM the next day, July 25.

Bradley was still stinging from the changes to the air operation that had occurred without his knowledge. Nevertheless, he agreed that the renewed bombardment would be carried out on the terms that Leigh-Mallory specified. The bombers would come in above the American ground troops and enter the rectangle through its broad side. This time, 2,350 heavy bombers, medium bombers, and fighter-bombers were to deliver more than 4,000 tons of bombs.

To minimize the risk of another "friendly-fire" incident, the bombardiers were instructed not to release any bombs until they had cleared the Saint Lô-Periers road. A weather-monitoring aircraft was to be aloft, and if possible the heavy bombers would come in low to sight their targets visually for better accuracy.

The 522 guns of the U.S. VII and VIII Corps along with the four infantry and two armored divisions involved in the ground assault were scheduled to commence a heavy artillery bombardment in support of the Cobra offensive. A total of 170,000 shells were allotted for the barrage.

Flying in groups of 12, the heavy bombers arrived over the target area on the morning of the 25th. The medium bombers then swept in with their high- explosive and fragmentation bombs. The fighter-bombers carried their bombs and a significant amount of napalm, jellied gasoline that burned furiously and clung to any surface with which it came in contact.

Cloud cover once again forced adjustments in bombing altitude. As ordnance fell, clouds of dust spewed skyward and the earth convulsed. Due to difficulties maintaining formation and because the bomber crews had been told to avoid hitting the Saint Lô-Periers road, a number of bombs missed their mark in several directions. One lead aircraft dropped its payload prematurely, and nearly 80 medium and heavy bombers followed suit.

For the second straight day, bombs fell on American soldiers, this time killing 111 and wounding 490. Among those killed was Lt. Gen. Lesley McNair, the commanding general of U.S. Army Ground Forces. McNair had come to the area as an observer and was slated to assume command of the fictitious First U.S. Army Group (FUSAG) to maintain the deception of Operation Fortitude. (General Patton was reassigned to command of the U.S. Third Army, which was to be activated on August 1.)

Bradley wrote, "The ground belched, shook and spewed dirt to the sky. Scores of our troops were hit, their bodies flung from slit trenches. Doughboys were dazed and frightened.... A bomb landed squarely on McNair in a slit trench and threw his body 60 feet and mangled it beyond recognition except for the three stars on his collar."

The news of McNair's tragic, unnecessary death was withheld from the media, and he was buried in secrecy to preserve the integrity of Fortitude.

Famed war correspondent Ernie Pyle was with soldiers of the 4th Division when the bombers appeared. He described the scene: "And then the bombs came. They began like the crackle of popcorn and almost instantly swelled into a monstrous fury of noise that seemed surely to destroy all the world ahead of us…. A wall of smoke and dust erected by them grew high in the sky…. The bright day grew slowly dark from it…. Many times I've heard bombs whistle or swish or rustle, but never before had I heard bombs rattle. I still don't know the explanation of it. But it is an awful sound. We dived. Some got into a dugout. Others made foxholes and ditches…. There is no description of the sound and fury of those bombs except to say it was chaos, and a waiting for darkness."

Bayerlein and Panzer Lehr were also

stunned by the ferocity of the American bombardment. Bayerlein recalled, "Back and forth the bomb carpets were laid, artillery positions were wiped out, tanks overturned and buried, infantry positions flattened and all roads and tracks destroyed. By midday the entire area resembled a moon landscape, with the bomb craters touching rim to rim.... All signal communications had been cut, and no command was possible. The shock effect on the troops was indescribable. Several of my men went mad and rushed around in the open until they were cut down by splinters. Simultaneously with the storm from the air, innumerable guns of the American artillery poured drumfire into our field positions."

Panzer Lehr sustained more than 1,000 dead, wounded, or incapacitated by the bombing, roughly one-third of the troops manning the main defense line or positioned nearby. Only about a dozen tanks and tank destroyers remained operational, and three of Bayerlein's forward command posts were obliterated. A parachute regiment attached to the division was killed or wounded to a man.

Although a regiment of the 9th Division and a battalion of the 30th Division were still busy digging out casualties from the errant bombs, the three spearhead divisions of VII Corps moved forward promptly at 11 AM and initial progress was good. An assault battalion of the 330th Infantry Regiment that had been detached from the 83rd Division for Cobra advanced 800 yards in 40 minutes. Then the Germans who survived the crippling air assault shook off their malaise and manned their weapons. The American advance was slowed by a surprising volume of enemy fire, and, just as in earlier operations, the presence of bomb craters that made the ground difficult to negotiate.

The immediate objectives of the Cobra penetration were the towns of Marigny and St. Gilles, about three miles beyond the shattered German lines. Pockets of resistance held up the Americans' progress, and on the right of VII Corps the 330th Regiment was halted several hundred

American footsoldiers and armor pass a destroyed panzer. Cobra was marked by lightning advances that made George Patton and Third Army household names in America.

yards from its initial objective, an intersection along the Saint Lô-Periers road. Troops of the 9th Division came up short of most of their early objectives after advancing beyond the saturation bombing zone and failed to reach Marigny.

In the center, two battalions of the 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Division drove along a 2,000-yard front. One of these advanced a mile and a half. The second ran straight into a well-defended German position in an orchard. It took two hours for 18 tanks that had temporarily lost contact with the infantry to come up and blast the Germans from among the apple trees. Seven hundred yards south of the Saint Lô-Periers road, two German tanks with infantry support had dug in along a sunken lane. The panzers were knocked out with bazooka fire, and the 8th Infantry battalion executed a double envelopment of the enemy position. Once again, however, it took tanks to blast the way clear so that the Americans could change direction and reach the edge of the village of la Chapelle-en-Juger.

The 30th Division was tasked with opening the road to St. Gilles for the armored thrust that was to come soon and to take control of crossing points along the Vire River. On the left, troops of the 30th Division jumped off but were soon forced to take cover when they were once again struck by friendly fire from the fighter-bombers. Then, as they crossed the Saint Lô-Periers road, the troops ran into a trio of Panther tanks and supporting infantry. Three Sherman tanks fell victim to the Panthers, and a double envelopment by the infantrymen uncovered more German strongpoints. Finally, a coordinated effort by the Americans succeeded in knocking out a dozen German tanks and armored vehicles.

Another 30th Division objective was the capture of the town of Hébécrevon, but the going was slow as the Americans were obliged to cross streams, and landmines prevented tanks from using the roads. It was midnight before soldiers of the 119th Infantry Regiment were guiding their supporting tanks through the town's streets and around bomb craters in the pitch-black darkness.

Although the ground attack on July 25 had advanced beyond the Saint Lô-Periers road, there was a general mood of disappointment among American commanders. The bombing seemed at best to have disrupted the German defenses in only a portion of the target area, and the penetration of the enemy defenses had roughly been about two miles—considerably short of expectations. Eisenhower promised never to use heavy bombers again in direct support of ground troops.

In his postwar memoir *Crusade in Europe,* Eisenhower recalled that Operation Cobra was launched seven weeks after D-Day from a line that the Allies had expected to gain by D-Day+5. He seemed to share the doubts that other senior commanders expressed—that Cobra was destined to become another Goodwood. Bradley, however, refused to take counsel of his own doubts.

Eisenhower wrote of Cobra, "Progress on the first day was slow, but that evening General Bradley observed to me that it was always slow going in the early phases of such an attack and expressed the conviction that the next day and thereafter would witness extraordinary advances by our forces. The event proved him to be completely correct."

On the evening of July 25, the Americans simply could not comprehend the fact that, after a hard day of fighting, the Germans were on the verge of collapse. Their defensive line from Lessay to Saint Lô had been breached in seven locations. Hausser and Choltitz committed reserves to stop the American advances, but neither realized that Panzer Lehr had been so badly mauled and that Hébécrevon had fallen to the 30th Division. Meanwhile, a renewed attack by the Canadians south of Caen diverted the attention of Kluge, who maintained for a time that the strongest attack was yet to come and would be launched by Montgomery.

On the morning of July 26, the American infantry divisions were still struggling toward their objectives of the first day, but Collins gambled and ordered the armored columns to advance anyway. The task of clearing roads of their own troops and of the Germans to the extent of their penetrations added to the tactical burdens of Maj. Gens. Manton Eddy of the 9th Division and Leland Hobbs of the 30th Division.

The motorized 1st Infantry Division and Combat Command B of the 3rd Armored Division, under Maj. Gen. Clarence Huebner, attacked toward Marigny but were unsuccessful in wresting high ground around the town from the Germans that afternoon. Marigny was not in American hands until the morning of July 27. To the east, the situation developed solidly in the Americans' favor. Early on the 26th, the 2nd Armored Division, under Maj. Gen. Edward Brooks, headed toward St. Gilles.

Although his original mission was to guard the southern flank of the Cobra offensive, Brooks was determined to advance. With Colonel Charles Lanham's 22nd Infantry Regiment attached, Combat Command A (CCA) of the 2nd Armored, led by Brig. Gen. Maurice Rose, spearheaded the drive, passing through the 30th Division and crossing the Saint Lô-Periers road, where a Sherman tank was blown up by antitank fire. Undeterred, Rose pressed ahead and encountered only sporadic resistance.

Shortly after noon, fighter-bombers destroyed four PzKpfw IV tanks and a tank destroyer that had held up the CCA column for a short time, and within a few hours the Americans had taken St. Gilles. While the infantry of the 30th Division cleared pockets of resistance, Rose pressed ahead along the St. Gilles-Canisy road. Panzer Lehr had been responsible for the defense of the road, and its virtual destruction during the bombing left the route uncontested. Combat Command A did not encounter appreciable resistance until it reached the town of Canisy. Tactical air support once again helped to clear the way.

The advance of CCA continued through the night. Finally, Rose ordered a halt about 2 AM on the 27th along a road junction north of le Mesnil-Herman. Combat Command A had lost fewer than 200 men, three Sherman tanks, and two trucks. At the end of Rose's run, there was no doubt that the German front had been significantly penetrated.

All day on the 27th, elements of the 2nd Armored Division fought to extend their protective positions on the eastern flank of the Cobra advance route, while the 1st

Both: National Archives

A column of American tanks rushes into the city of Avranches to knock out pockets of resistance, August 1, 1944.

ABOVE: An American rifleman glances back at the photographer as his unit enters the shot-up town of Argentan, August 20, 1944. OPPOSITE: As if to underscore the savage fighting in and around the Falaise Gap, German corpses and the remnants of a destroyed convoy in the "Corridor of Death" litter the French landscape.

Division and CCB of the 3rd Armored Division continued their struggle to clear Marigny and the surrounding high ground to open the way for the main thrust of the Cobra exploitation phase: the capture of Coutances.

The fall of Coutances would trap thousands of German soldiers between VII and VIII Corps, which were already exerting pressure southward. The Germans had reacted to the threat of encirclement, falling back with a defensive line facing eastward and consisting of elements of the 2nd SS Panzer Division, 353rd Infantry Division, 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division, and a handful of paratroopers still fighting as infantry. Unable to capture Coutances on the 27th and cut off the German withdrawal, the 1st Division was obliged to turn south and take up the role earlier played by VIII Corps, exerting pressure on the Germans south of the road from Coutances to Saint Lô.

Despite some concerns about the lingering German defense of Coutances, it became apparent to Bradley on the evening of July 27 that a significant breakthrough had been achieved. Rather than slowing down to consolidate his gains, Bradley decided to maintain Cobra's offensive momentum. "Things look really good," he informed Eisenhower. Bradley ordered his corps commanders to allow the enemy "no time to regroup and reorganize his forces" and to "maintain unrelenting pressure" on the Germans.

Bradley ordered General Corlett and XIX Corps to attack aggressively west of the River Vire and take the high ground between Avranches and Falaise, denying the Germans its use in the event they intended to establish a new defensive line against the growing threat of the encirclement of the Seventh Army in Normandy. Montgomery's forces around Caen continued their attacks in support of Cobra.

Significantly, with Third Army set to become operational on August 1 and VIII Corps being reassigned to it, Bradley gave Patton control of the corps ahead of schedule. On July 28, Patton sent the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions through the Cobra breach and Coutances fell to the troops and tanks of the 4th Armored late that day. Most German units were in headlong retreat, and operational integrity was disintegrating. The only appreciable resistance in Coutances was offered by a rearguard detachment and petered out by evening.

With hardly a pause, Patton worked with Middleton to get the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions farther south, toward Avranches, the gateway to Brittany. Middleton believed that only light resistance stood in his way, and German soldiers were beginning to surrender in large numbers. The capture of Avranches and crossings over the River See would open Brittany to the Allied advance, finally freeing Bradley's forces from the constricting hedgerow country.

Both armored divisions sped southward. At Bréhal, about 16 miles north of Avranches, Combat Command B of the 6th Armored Division encountered a log roadblock that was blasted by a flight of four fighter-bombers. Eventually, the lead Sherman tank rammed the barricade, and the column resumed its advance. By the evening of the 29th, the 6th Armored had advanced 12 miles and lost two killed and 10 wounded.

In the 4th Armored sector, combat engineers bridged the River Sienne, and the division's Combat Command B crossed in two columns. One column ran into stiff German resistance on the afternoon of July 30, losing eight half-tracks, suffering 43 casualties,

and destroying two German tanks before halting.

To the west, the other column pressed ever closer to Avranches. About 3½ miles north of the town, the Americans passed within a few hundred yards of the Seventh Army command post, and General Hausser barely eluded capture. As daylight faded, the western column found a pair of bridges intact across the River See and entered Avraches, which was undefended.

When Middleton confirmed that Avranches had been taken, he acted swiftly, ordering reinforcements forward to seize bridges across the River Sélune near the town of Pontaubault, four miles farther south. Possession of these bridges would allow any American force exploiting the breakthrough to move rapidly into Brittany. With that task completed, the VIII Corps had sustained fewer than 700 casualties from July 28-31, while capturing more than 7,000 prisoners. The 4th Armored Division had advanced 25 miles in 36 hours.

On the morning of July 31, Kluge knew the game in Normandy was over. "It's a madhouse here," he told General Günther Blumentritt, chief of staff of the German high command in the West. It was "Riesensaurei," or simply one hell of a mess. "You can't imagine what it's like," Kluge continued. "Commanders are completely out of contact."

Blumentritt responded that headquarters wanted a detailed description of the new defenses being prepared in Normandy. "All you can do is laugh out loud," Kluge responded. "Don't they read our dispatches? Haven't they been oriented? They must be living on the moon. Someone has to tell the Führer that if the Americans get through at Avranches they will be out of the woods, and they will be able to do what they want. It's a crazy situation."

Since Bradley had chosen to watch Cobra develop and respond accordingly, it is reasonable to conclude that the deployment of an appropriate force to exploit the breakthrough into a breakout would be determined by the relative success of the operation. Twenty thousand Germans had been taken prisoner during the six days of Operation Cobra. The German Seventh Army was a shambles, and the German left flank had collapsed.

Finally, on August 1, Patton's Third Army was officially activated. In accordance with a previously agreed command reorganization, Bradley became the commander of the U.S. 12th Army Group, and Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges took command of the U.S. First Army. Montgomery retained control of the British and Canadian forces of 21st Army Group, now attempting to push southward toward Falaise.

Both: National Archives

Seeing the tremendous opportunity that had suddenly arisen, Bradley confirmed to Patton that Third Army was to roll through Brittany to Renne in the southwest and through Fougéres in the southeast. To the west, Third Army was to take the Breton ports, including Brest, Lorient, and St. Nazaire. When the word was passed, Patton's command rode hell for leather.

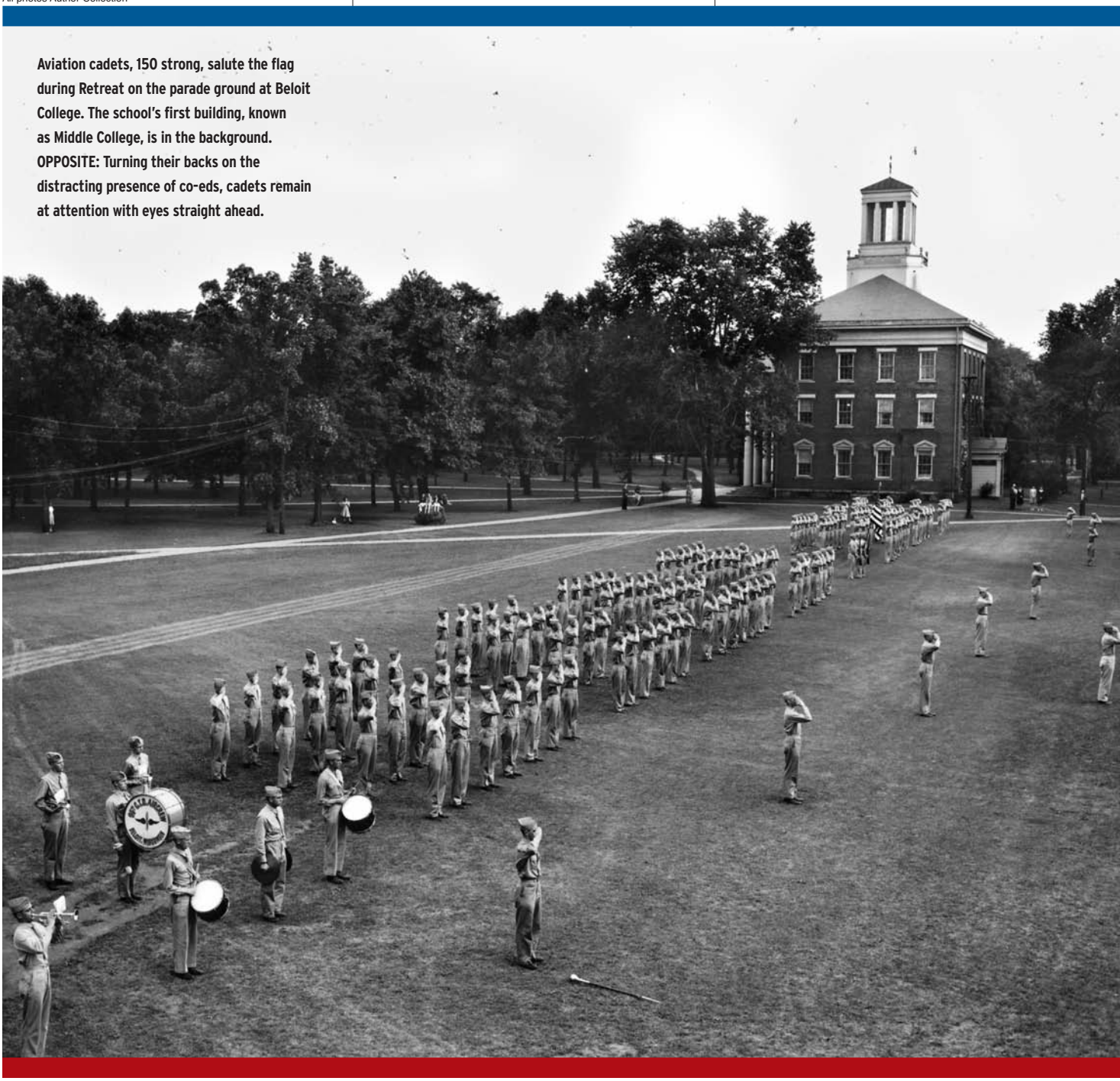
VIII Corps sped 200 miles to the west and reached Brest in less than a week. In eight days, Patton had taken Le Mans, almost halfway to Paris. By August 18, in a sweeping turn to the northeast, his spearheads had captured Chartres, just 20 miles from the River Seine. A week later, Third Army units had bypassed Paris and crossed the Seine. At the end of the month, Patton was at Verdun, less than 200 miles from the German frontier.

Halted only by a dwindling supply of gasoline, Third Army's stunning dash across France had covered 400 miles, liberated 50,000 square miles of territory, and bagged thousands of German prisoners. By the time the fuel began to flow again in early September, the Germans had taken advantage of precious time and patched together stronger defenses.

Meanwhile, in late August Allied tactical air power and the troops of the U.S. First Army, the British Second Army, and the Canadian First Army had pressed the remnants of the German Seventh and Fifth Panzer Armies into a small pocket. In an immense slaughter at Falaise and Argentan, more than 10,000 Germans were killed and another 50,000 captured, while over 200 tanks were destroyed. The battle in Normandy was over.

Hard fighting lay ahead; however, weeks of Allied frustration were erased. The defeat of Nazi Germany had become inevitable. Operation Cobra, Bradley's bold stroke, proved to be the pivotal command decision of World War II in Western Europe. □

All photos Author Collection



Aviation cadets, 150 strong, salute the flag during Retreat on the parade ground at Beloit College. The school's first building, known as Middle College, is in the background. OPPOSITE: Turning their backs on the distracting presence of co-eds, cadets remain at attention with eyes straight ahead.

AN AMERICAN COLLEGE GOES TO WAR

The sacrifices made by American men and women in uniform during World War WII are legion. The contribution made by the workforce of our nation's industries, exemplified by the image of "Rosie the Riveter" with riveting gun in hand, is also well known by most Americans. What are less familiar are the contributions made by U.S. colleges and universities both in preparation for and during the war. This is the story of one of the150 colleges that answered the call.

Even before the United States was officially involved in World War II, the Army Air Force (AAF) Aviation Cadet Training Program was running at maximum capacity. After the attack on Pearl Harbor it was clear that even more pilots would be needed. Men were signing up in droves to enlist in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, and, with the lowering of the draft age to 18, all of the services were increasing their size at an unprecedented rate.

The problem facing the AAF, however, was not just a need for manpower. The AAF needed qualified manpower—men who had the aptitude to successfully pass all three phases of aviation cadet training. In early 1942 two changes were made by the AAF to ensure that a sufficient supply of candidates would continue to be available for the Aviation Cadet Training Program.

Beloit College was one of 150 schools that hosted the Army Air Force's Cadet Training Program from March 1943 to March 1944.

BY PATRICIA OVERMAN

First, the two-year college requirement was dropped because the number of men with two years of college had been depleted. Second, the Aviation Air Forces Examination was redesigned to test for aptitude instead of knowledge. These two changes resulted in a tremendous increase in the pool of qualified candidates.

To keep these candidates from being drafted by other branches of the military while they were waiting to be called to service, a third change had been implemented: the formation of the Air Corps Enlisted Reserve (ACER). This program allowed the AAF to hold men eligible for the Aviation Cadet Training Program in reserve until they could start their training.

While ACER solved one problem, it created another. More men than anticipated were passing the Aviation Cadet Examination, and many of these men were left in limbo as it was taking as long as six months before they could be placed in training.

At the time, the AAF's training facilities had room for 10,000 men per month, but they were gaining 13,000 men per month, resulting in an increase every month of 3,000 men either waiting at home or continuing in their civilian jobs. Not only were the men complaining about not getting called to duty, this perceived hording of manpower did not please either the Selective Service Board or the War Manpower Commission. As a solution to this predicament, General Henry H. ("Hap") Arnold, commander of the Army Air Forces, proposed the College Training Program.

It took 60 weeks to transform a cadet into a pilot. However, only 28 percent were completing the program. One reason was failure to keep up with the academic and critical thinking demands. General Arnold believed that while men were waiting for placement in the Aviation Cadet Training Program, continuing education would help reduce that failure rate. Potential cadets would no longer just wait for

available placement in the aviation cadet training program but would be called to active duty and assigned to a College Training Detachment.

The goal of the college program was to graduate these men with the same level of knowledge; an equal and high standard of education to increase retention during the next three rigorous phases of the cadet's aviation training.

This purpose, stated in an Army Air Force memorandum of the day, was mandated to the colleges: "The College Training Program contemplates the assignment of students to college training for a period of five months, designed to prepare the student educationally to understand the basic principles of mechanics, physics, mathematics and political geography, combined with physical and military training considered essential to operate and navigate modern high-powered aircraft in combat.

"The curriculum varies both in scope and in purpose from the normal curriculum of educational institutions, and in its treatment the purpose should be clearly kept in mind by all concerned in order that the time of the students and their efforts will not be wasted in work which does not contribute to the purposeful intent, that of educationally equipping each student to understand the basic principles behind the operation and navigation of the weapon as the 'military airplane.' Without an understanding of the principles outlined in the curriculum, these students become a hazard to scarce and expensive equipment, as well as to the lives of highly trained personnel."

All of this was to be accomplished in a maximum of five months. The 150 colleges accepting the cadets would need to prepare the cadets for this challenge, and those colleges would be administering the Army's version of "education on steroids."

The Army used several very specific criteria for selecting a college for their Air Crew Cadets. Beloit College, a small (enrollment about 1,200) school in Beloit, Wisconsin, was one of the qualifying colleges for this program because it met five of the most important criteria: first, an excellent faculty and curriculum; second,

Captain Charles R. Manning, commanding the 95th CTD at Beloit, holds the flag for staff members and school administrators to admire. Beloit College was one of 150 schools nationwide that hosted the Army Air Force (AAF) Aviation Cadet Training Program.

dormitories; third, a mess hall (cafeteria); fourth, athletic facilities; and fifth, close proximity to an airport, Machesney, just across the state line in Rockford, Illinois.

Beloit College, founded in 1847, was also a good candidate because it had a history with the government and America's defense: in World War I the college was used as a training station. In addition, the college had already been proactive in the current war effort when, in 1939, the college's Board of Trustees voted to participate in the Civil Aeronautics Program by providing a ground school to prepare college students for further flight training.

A faculty committee was appointed by College President Irving Maurer to discuss all national-defense problems that related to faculty and students and to explore ways in which the college could be useful to the government's defense program. In early 1941 Professor Philip Whitehead, chairman of the faculty group, sent letters to the Wisconsin Militia, the XI Corps Army Area located in Chicago at Camp Grant; the president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and the president of the United States offering their facilities and the services of Beloit College to the National Defense Program.

As the Beloit College faculty began working with the government in support of national defense, a majority of the student body was going in the opposite direction. They considered themselves "isolationists" and not only voted overwhelmingly to stay out of the war effort but to offer Beloit College as a place where men could go to avoid enlistment under the Deferred Enlistment Program.

An article in the student newspaper demonstrated this point of view:

"This brings to mind the question of military training in the smaller colleges which are without the jurisdiction of state legislatures. Shall schools such as Beloit maintain units of the Reserve Officers Training Corps? We think not.

"Until a more vital need than the existing is proven to us, we recommend no change on our campus. Here remains one sanctuary for civilian life in all its carefree glory in a world surrounded by conscription and preparedness. We would far rather suffer the sight of worn-out saddle shoes and corduroy shirts than have the nattiest of uniforms paraded before us every day of the year."

After the events of December 7, 1941, the student body did an about-face. There was even a place on campus to enlist, and the men of Beloit stood in line to sign up.

On February 20, 1943, Beloit opened its doors to the 95th College Training Detach-

ment (CTD)—the first detachment of 150 Army Aircrew Cadets, soon to be 300 strong. These were the men who would become the pilots, bombardiers, and navigators who would crew the bombers, fighters, and troop carriers—the men who would put their lives on the line for America's freedom and for their comrades. Many would make the ultimate sacrifice.

The Army had to make physical changes to the college to accommodate the cadets. The estimated startup cost was $6,111 and included building alterations, equipment additions, and activating an infirmary. Dorms were remodeled to handle bunk beds, extra study desks (for supervised study in individual rooms), lockers, dressers, and bookshelves. Gym classes for cadets were moved to the Walter Strong Memorial Stadium to accommodate the enhanced obstacles needed to meet Army specification (the wall and pits). Physics classes had to be expanded. Fifty percent of Beloit's facilities were used by the 95th CTD.

The total strength of the 95th CTD was 300. This number was divided into five squadrons of 60 cadets each. The squadrons were further divided into two flights of 30 cadets. Which flight a cadet was placed in was determined by his academic test score. Cadets who scored the highest were in the same flight and graduated out of the CTD in two months. Those with the next lower test scores were in a flight that graduated after three months, and so on, with those having the lowest passing scores remaining in the CTD for five months. The cadet's official title was Aircrew Student (though they were still referred to as "cadets") and they were addressed as "Mister."

When the cadets arrived each month in groups of 60, they were first addressed by the president of Beloit College, Bradley Tyrrell: "We hope you will feel that Beloit is your school, and thus can become 'Alma Mater' to you as she has to thousands of other students over the years. All these sons and daughters of Beloit will be watching your progress here with loyal and friendly interest—your future achievements with pride and gratitude."

They were then addressed by their commanding officer, Captain Charles Manning: "As you enter the College training phase of your aircrew training, your status in the Army has changed from a "GI" soldier to a full-fledged Aviation Student and potential flying officer.... It will be a tough grind for many of you and some of you will fail to make the grade.... The high standards of discipline, honor, leadership, and military bearing have characterized the men of the Army Air Forces since its beginning.

"I know you are proud of these standards and will keep them constantly before you throughout your Army career. To all of you, on behalf of the officers and non-commissioned officers of the 95th College Training Detachment, I say best of luck and happy landings."

Sixteen men met the needs of the cadets, from food, to pay, and 280 hours of basic military indoctrination; military etiquette, leadership, Articles of War, hygiene and sanitation, infantry drills, ceremonies, inspection, and even guard duty (The men guarded their own dorms, though some wondered just what threat they were guarding against. To them the greater threat was to the women's dorms.) In addition to the program's commanding officer, Captain Manning, commandant for students was Lieutenant William Manning (no relation) and later 2nd Lt. Marshall Sipkins. The detachment adjutant was 2nd Lt. John Dewland and the tactical officer was 2nd Lt. William G. Anketell.

Noncommissioned officers were in charge of military tactics and drills. From Sergeant Jack Butler and Sergeant Joe Oleszycki the cadets learned the art of square corners on the parade ground. Close-order drills were conducted during inclement weather on the side streets bordering the college. The residents watched their drills from the comfort of their yards.

Army personnel overseeing the program set forth requirements within the curriculum. Since these men belonged to the military 24/7, class time could be increased, thereby allowing more instruction in the areas needed most for the war effort. As an example, physics was increased by two hours a week, focusing on mechanics, heat, electricity, and light.

ABOVE: Maintaining a rigid military bearing, cadets march out of Morse-Ingersoll Hall, one of their classroom buildings, October 1943. BELOW: Beloit College Training Detachment staff (l–r): 2nd Lt. William J. Manning, 2nd Lt. William G. Anketell, 2nd Lt. John J. Dewland, Captain Charles R. Manning, summer 1943.

Because Beloit was a liberal arts college, art was an important component of the curriculum. The Army embraced this concept wholeheartedly and designed their curriculum around the study of camouflage.

A day's schedule had the cadets up at 6 every morning and starting class at 8.

Every evening began with Retreat, then several hours of study, some of which was supervised, and ended with uniform preparation for the next day. On Saturday, after morning classes, a two-hour inspection was held. On Sunday the cadets attended church.

With the exception of church, the cadets had "open post" late Saturday afternoon through Sunday. Cadets in their last two weeks prior to graduation attended flight training on Saturday afternoon as well as during the week.

In the early stages of the program the faculty determined that the cadets were not keeping up with the rigid demands of the AAF. Upon successful completion of the program, the cadets from Beloit College were transferred for their Aviation Cadet Training Program to the Army Air Forces Western Flying Training Center (AAFWFTC) at Santa Ana, California.

Therefore, there was constructive and open communication between the faculty and headquarters personnel at Santa Ana. On June 19, 1943, after the graduation of one cadet Squadron, Ivan M. Stone from the Department of Geography sent a letter to Major S. Joseph De Brum acknowledging the "wisdom" of the Army to include geography into the curriculum, as many of the men were lacking in this area. Mr. Stone did, however, go on to suggest that the men were in need of more sleep:

"The Army should be complimented in allowing the various colleges to substantially prepare their outline of the instruction in Geography.... The materials supplied to us were adequate, and I have no criticism from that quarter. All together, the men in the course were bothered and diverted from their primary task of learning by too many diversions of sundry sorts.

"There was regularly evidence that the men had not received enough sleep to permit them to get the most out of the class hour—they were often present in flesh only, and had to fight to stay awake. Obviously, this constitutes a waste of time so far as progress in the academic subject is concerned."

Captain Charles Manning, the commanding officer of the detachment, commented on their rigorous training: "There is little in the life of the aviation cadet to bring back nostalgic memories of the informal days of 'Joe College.' The life is rough from early morning until late at night, and always there is the strict military discipline making soldiers from all...."

Even with all these demands on the cadets, only 3.8 percent failed to go on to the AAFWFTC. Some asked to leave and others who could not meet the standards were immediately transferred; they went on to ground training or to other Army organizations.

The largest impact to the college was on the faculty's time and responsibilities. Increased class time also meant increased faculty responsibility. The faculty absorbed and implemented all the required changes. At least 75 percent of the faculty took on extra work, giving freely of their time and knowledge to instruct the cadets. The faculty did this without complaint, devoting much of their personal time.

The extra workload also affected the flexibility for civilian classes as was revealed in regular announcements: "The athletic department now carrying a tremendously increased load, will find it impossible to reschedule classes for afternoon times as was done last fall."

Faculty teaching math, geography, physics, and athletics were now teaching specific information required by the AAFWFTC. Among these were map reading, including aerial; supplementary mathematical material; quantitative and qualitative problem solving in physics, etc.

The continuing communication between Santa Ana headquarters and Beloit College included informing the faculty how the graduating cadets were testing at Santa Ana. The scores were given back to the Beloit College faculty with the request to improve the training in the areas where cadets were consistently receiving low scores.

As an example, the Army requested that greater emphasis in the geography classes be placed on: "1. Latitude and Longitude; understanding world grid and location of points by geographic co-ordinates. 2. Measurement of distance; nautical miles, statute miles, and kilometers as well as conversions. 3. Map Projections; types, properties and their uses. 4. Conventional Map Signs and Symbols."

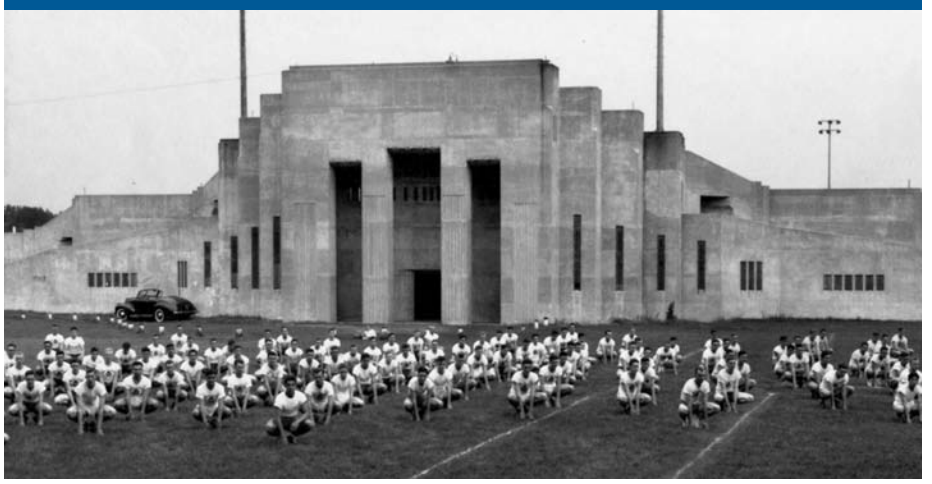
It was recommended that a passing grade of 90 percent be required of all cadets in these particular phases of training (a passing grade for the Army was usually 70 percent). These constant evaluations were taken in stride by the faculty and were applied to the best of their ability.

The cadets outnumbered the noncadet male population at Beloit, but those men on campus who were not serving actively were all slated in some way for the war effort. Some were Marine and Navy Reservists awaiting their call to active duty. Others were deferred because their educational major was essential to the war effort. The cadets, however, were the only men under the direct control of the military. The cadets were required to march, singing or chanting to keep the cadence, from class to class.

The intertwining of military indoctrination and education throughout the cadets' day proved to be a very successful method of implementing military training and preparation for Army discipline. This was enforced by unexpected inspections that occurred between classes and was observed by civilian students. The civilian students would stop to watch as the cadets, never taking their eyes from the back of the head of the cadet in front of them, marched by. Cadets, for their part, got very good at using their peripheral vision to evaluate the female population on campus.

The fraternities took turns graciously inviting the cadets to their formal dances where their favorite local band would play. On the cadets' first dance they were introduced to the female students, one at a time. The women were lined up and a faculty member would begin the introduction to the first women in line and that woman would introduce the cadet to the women next to her and so on down the line. Usually, by the end of the line, the cadet's name did not sound familiar even to the cadet.

ABOVE: 95th CTD cadets "chat up" co-eds on the steps of Chapin Hall, the cadets' main mess hall.
BELOW: Cadets engage in physical training outside Walter Strong Memorial Stadium, summer 1943.
Some 1,100 cadets were enrolled in the program at Beloit during its one year of existence.



The cadets reciprocated with their formal graduation dances, which occurred once a month. The civilian students especially enjoyed the cadets' dances for two reasons; the 95th CTD had a dance band that was very good, and the female students were permitted to stay past their curfew to attend the whole evening. This was an occasion when the cadets put aside their military bearing for one night before going to Santa Ana and another step toward war.

In mid-September 1943, "mixers" were added to the social curriculum. Almost all of the civilian students were now women. Twice a month 19 women were chosen to attend a mixer with each flight of cadets.

The cadets also made an impact on the community. The citizens of the City of Beloit suddenly found themselves visiting the college in the evenings. Army experts, who trained the cadets, frequently put on evening exhibitions such as demonstrating Jiu-jitsu or the modern method of self-defense used by the Army. The citizens took special pride when watching the cadets drill or listen to a bugle call when striking the colors.

Today the area that was Machesney Airport is a shopping mall, but from March 1943 to March 1944, Fred A. Machesney, owner of the airport, and his civilian staff took the 95th College Training Detachment Cadets under their wings, literally. With direction from the AAFWFTC, Machesney, Chief Flight Instructor R.S. Day, and nine Civil Aeronautics Authority-qualified instructors gave the cadets their first taste of flying.

This flight training occurred two weeks prior to a cadet's graduation. For the cadets, this was what it was all about. The cadets were bused to the airport, a little over 20 miles south of Beloit College. Awaiting them were 11 Piper Cub model J-3 trainer airplanes, as well as a new official title, Aviation Student.

They were also now granted $10,000 worth of flying insurance and flight pay, 50 percent of their basic pay, which was $50 a month. Cadets were now making the extravagant amount of $75 a month!

During this training the cadets learned elementary flight maneuvers, landing, and traffic procedure on an airfield 2,800 feet by 2,100 feet. The landing area was an unpaved grassy strip. The airport buildings were remodeled to add a "ready room" where daily ground instruction was held.

All cadets received the necessary air training, which included 10 hours of flying instruction and 10 hours of ground instruction. All flight instruction was headed by Mr. Day, and all classroom and flying instructions were given in a military fashion. Military forms, records, and rules and regulations were all taught by the various instructors. All cadets kept a rating book documenting their progress and deficiencies.

Inspections were conducted by military officers from AAFWFTC and feedback was given at a round table discussion with the flight instructors. The instructors reported that these discussions were a great aid. It was also reported that the relationship between the 95th CTD and the flight instructors "was the best ... a benefit to all participants."

The Army Air Force had no interest in

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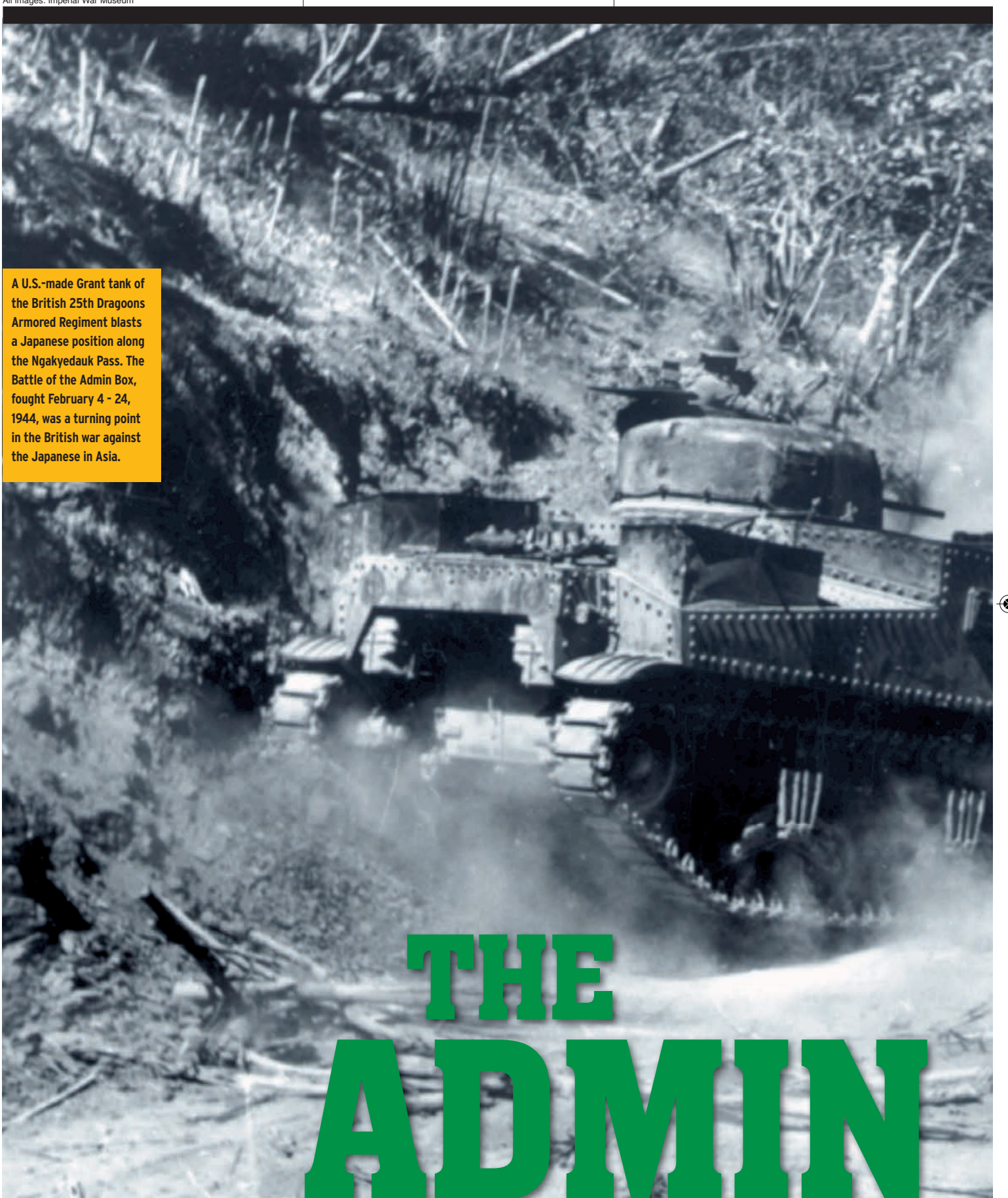
All images: Imperial War Museum



A U.S.-made Grant tank of the British 25th Dragoons Armored Regiment blasts a Japanese position along the Ngakyedauk Pass. The Battle of the Admin Box, fought February 4 - 24, 1944, was a turning point in the British war against the Japanese in Asia.

THE ADMIN

The Japanese use tested tactics, but the British have learned from experience.

BY WILLIAM B. ALLMON

BOX 1944

In the misty early morning of February 4, 1944. Thousands of Japanese troops marched silently through the jungle in the first move of their counter-offensive against the British-Indian XV Corps attempting to advance south in the Arakan region of Burma. If the counter-attack is successful, it could set up a successful invasion of India by the Japanese, who hoped to instigate a revolt of Indians against their British colonial masters. Officially called the battle of Ngakyedauk Pass, but referred to as the "Admin Box" by the British press, it foretold much of what was to come. A great deal lay in the outcome, and if the past was any predictor of the future, the Japanese would have their way.

Starting with the fall of Singapore, Malaya, and the capture of 130,000 British, Indian and Australian troops by the Japanese on February 15, 1942, followed by a long, painful retreat through Burma by the British led Burma Corps (Burcorps) commanded by Major General William Slim, in March and May 1942 British and Indian troops suffered one reverse after another opposing Japanese troops. During the retreat through Burma the British were outnumbered by the Japanese, untrained for jungle operations, and lacked communications and air support.

By contrast, the Japanese were trained and equipped for jungle warfare. Moving through the jungle, they would outflank British positions and cut off their lines of communication; when the British pulled back, they were cut to pieces by Japanese attacking from out of the jungle. "There was a sickening feeling that the Japanese always seemed to be one move ahead," student of the period and author Bryan Perrett wrote, "and that they were always able to obtain local air superiority."

By May 1942, Burcorps was thrown out of Burma, losing most of its tanks and motor vehicles, 28 out of 48 artillery pieces, and 13,463 casualties. The Japanese suffered 4,597 killed and wounded, did not pursue Burcorps into India. The monsoon season soon began, bringing British and Japanese operations, except for patrols, temporarily to an end.

General Sir Archibald Wavell, commander in chief of British forces in India, realized that despite many difficulties he needed to launch a limited offensive against the Japanese to build morale in India, which had deteriorated due to Japanese victories in Malaya and Burma. Wavell decided to concentrate operations in the region of Arakan in southern Burma, near India's Bengal province.

In 1942, the Arakan was a jungle covered region on the south western Burma coast, centered on the 90-mile long Mayu Peninsula, bounded by the Naf River on the west and Mayu River on the east. A mountain range, also called Mayu, cut through the peninsula, with peaks 2,000 feet high. On the west side of the range is a small coastal strip crisscrossed by tidal creeks, swamps and rice fields, which became knee deep in water during the monsoon season.

Because there were few all-weather roads, except for a lateral one running across the peninsula, operations in the region could only be held during the dry season from October to May. "The obstacles to a campaign in Arakan are manifest," a British general who fought in the region recalled. Despite this, Wavell decided it was the place to mount his offensive. Its immediate objective was to capture Akyab Island, to provide a fighter base for future Royal Air Force attacks against targets inside Burma.

ABOVE: A British captain and his Sikh company wait in ambush for the Japanese in this painting by British soldier Anthony Gross. OPPOSITE: Sikh of the 7th Indian Division slug it out against the assaulting Japanese in the Ngakyedauk Pass area.

Thus on September 21, 1942, the First Arakan operation began as the Indian 14th Division, commanded by Major General W.L. Lloyd, advanced south from India along the Mayu Peninsula. After a slow start the operation went smoothly. By January 1, 1943, Lloyd's troops bad reached Foul Point on the tip of the Peninsula, and a second brigade was across the Mayu River attacking the village of Rothedaung close to Akyab Island. Determined to hold Akyab's airfield, the Japanese reinforced their mainland positions and established a series of strong points with camouflaged bunkers. These bunkers, well dug in, with interlocking fields of fire, were impregnable to shellfire, and the Japanese could call artillery fire on attacking British and Indian troops.

Throughout January and February 1943, 14th Division made a series of frontal attacks against these positions, only to be beaten off with heavy casualties. Lloyd's division was reinforced with fresh, untrained troops from India, until it grew to 9 brigades—which were sent into the lethal meat grinder without success.

By March 1943, despite its best efforts, the 14th Division had made no headway in its attacks on the Japanese positions. Lloyd committed the same mistakes the British had made earlier in Burma: keeping his troops on the roads, instead of sending them into the jungle, leaving them split and exposed to Japanese attacks; and wasting them in frontal attacks on Japanese positions.

With the British offensive stalled, the Japanese counterattacked, falling on British lines of communication, rolling up their left flank and driving them from the coast. "In war you have to pay for your mistakes," General Slim later wrote, "and in the Arakan the same mistakes had been made again and again until the troops lost heart. "

On May 11, 1943, Slim, now commanding the Indian XV Corps, assumed command of the Arakan Operation. For the second time in a year, he presided over a British retreat, withdrawing the 14th Division back to India for rest and refitting. For the second time, the Japanese did not follow up their victory.

Allied morale fell as the Arakan force, after losing 2,500 killed, wounded and missing, pulled back into India. "It was clear," a British officer wrote, "that before any offensive operations could be undertaken, all arms, and particularly the infantry, needed a period of inten-

sive training in the special tactics required to meet the Japanese in a terrain which hereto they had proved themselves supreme."

Even before the start of the First Arakan Campaign, Slim had begun training his XV Corps troops based on lessons he learned during the withdraw from Burma. To defeat the Japanese, Slim believed, no attempt should be made to hold long continuous supply lines that the Japanese could cut at will. In a directive issued to XV Corps division commanders, Slim made it clear his units must become used to having Japanese in their rear, and the troops should "regard not themselves, but the Japanese, as surrounded."

In the future, British and Indian troops cut off by Japanese attacks would not retreat, but hold their ground and be resupplied by air until relieved. Slim's ideas were not restricted to defense; he thought the British should seize the offensive from the Japanese. "If the Japanese are allowed to hold the initiative they are formidable," he wrote. "When we have it, they are confused and easy to kill."

Following the Arakan campaign, XV Corps pulled back to India's Ranchi Province, and began training for future Operations. "Training in Ranchi was continuos and active," Slim recalled. "There were infantry battle schools, artillery training centers, cooperation courses with the RAF, experiments with tanks in the jungle, classes in marksmanship arid river crossing, and a dozen other instructional activities."

On October 15, 1943, Slim, now a full general, became commander of the 14th Army, consisting of his XV Corps, Lt. Gen. Sir Montague Stopford's XXXIII Corps, and Lt. Gen. Sir Geoffrey Scones IV Corps. After assuming command, Slim set about overcoming the problems of health, supply and morale in his army.

As the 1943 monsoons died away, patrol activity by British, Indian, African and Gurkha troops increased along 14th Army's front, especially in the Arakan. As his troops became better trained in jungle warfare, Slim began testing them in a series of carefully planned minor battles against advanced Japanese positions.

With the idea of giving them every advantage, Slim's troops used battalions to attack Japanese platoons, and brigades with tanks and aircraft support to attack companies. Replying to criticism that such operations were "using a steam hammer to crack a walnut," Slim said, "If you happen to have a steam hammer handy and you don't mind if there's nothing left of the walnut, it's not a bad way to crack it." At this stage of his army's training, Slim believed they could not

risk even small failures. "We had very few," he wrote, "and the individual superiority built up by successful patrolling grew into a feeling of superiority within units and formations. We were then ready to undertake larger operations."

By November 1943, as a result of Slim's efforts at improving morale and training, and the superhuman efforts by Maj. Gen. A.J.H. "ALF" Snelling, his chief of administration, to improve the lines of communication, the 14th Army was far better prepared to begin operations in Burma.

This was especially true in the Arakan, where XV Corps, under Lt. Gen. Sir Philip Christison, was preparing a limited offensive to capture the port town of Mungdaw and the only all-weather road in the area. To do so, Christison had three and a half divisions at his disposal: Maj. Gen. H.R. Briggs's 5th Indian Division, Maj. Gen. F.W. Messeryv's 7th Indian Division, Maj. Gen. C.E.N. Lomax's 26th Indian Division, in reserve, and two brigades of Maj. Gen. C.G. Woolner's 81st West African Division. Because Slim was determined that XV Corps should have armored support, Lt. Col. H.C.R. Frink's 25th Dragoons Armored Regiment, equipped with M-3 Grant medium tanks, was also included in the offensive. In all the XV Corps had 46,000 men.

To capture their objectives, and defeat two Japanese divisions, the 54th and 55th with 28,000 men in the Arakan, Slim's plan called for 5th Division to advance along the western half of the Mayu Range, while the 7th Division moved along its eastern side. At the same time both 81st Division brigades would move down the Kaladan Valley further to the east, threatening the Japanese right flank.

Starting on December 1, Christison began edging forward into the Arakan against light Japanese opposition. As XV Corps advanced, the difficulty in transporting supplies in a rugged, jungle-covered region became more apparent. In order to move its supplies from the west to the front, 7th Division had to use mules and porters crossing a path over Goppe Pass, then by boat on the Kalapazin River, leaving the division without motor transport or field artillery. Messervy wanted an alternative to Goppe Pass, and ordered Brigadier M.R. Roberts, commanding the division's 114th Infantry Brigade to find one.

"THE NIGHT WAS ALIVE WITH TRACERS, EXPLOSIONS AND FLAMES FROM BURNING SIGNAL TRUCKS."

After a brief search, Roberts decided the Ngakyedauk Pass, a 10-mile area bounded by

Taung Bazar on the north, the Mayu Range to the west, the Mungdaw-Buthidaung road to the south, and the Arakan Hills on the east, was the best alternative to Goppe Pass. The pass was already crossed by a narrow footpath, which the British had initially declared could not be converted into a road. "But a road there had to be," Slim wrote, "and, poor as it was, this pass was the only hope in making one." Roberts sent in the 4th Battalion/14th Punjabi Regiment of his brigade to defend the pass, while 7th Division's engineers, using hand tools and bulldozers, began cutting a road.

By mid-December they established a jeep track, enabling medium artillery to move through the pass into the Kalapazin Valley, where the 7th Division was now facing heavy Japanese counter attacks. By Christmas, the road could carry tanks and trucks, and General Messeryv set up his headquarters east of the pass. The 7th Division established its main administration and supply point, or "Admin Box," on the eastern side of Ngakyedauk Pass, in a mile long and 1,200 feet wide clearing, surrounded by high, jungle covered hills. In the center was a small scrub covered hill 200 yards long and 100 feet high, known as "Ammunition Hill" because of the ammunition dumps around it.

Stores of gasoline, supplies and ordinance were hidden in other parts of the Box. The clearing also contained 7th Division's transport, main dressing station (MDS); main motor maintenance section, brigade and division workshops, and ordinance field park. By the end of December 1943, the Goppe Pass route was abandoned in favor of the road over Ngakyedauk Pass. "Over this pass, christened the 'okeydoke' by the British soldier," Slim recalled, "flowed the vehicles, stores and equipment needed for the 7th Division."

The XV Corps captured Mungdaw on January 9, 1944, and both divisions met heavy Japanese resistance around the Burmese villages of Letwedet and Razabil. Brigg's 5th Division attacked Razabil on January 26, following a heavy air bombardment by American Consolidated B-24 Liberator and RAF Vultee Vengeance bombers. British and Indian troops of the 161st and 123rd Infantry Brigades moved forward supported by tanks of the 25th Dragoons.

Despite bombing, shelling and tank support, the infantry only captured part of Razabil Village. Finally, on January 30, the attacks were called off and both brigades ordered to consolidate their positions. Christison shifted the weight of his attack to the east side of the Mayu Range by redeploying 25th Dragoons tanks, some artillery, and Brigadier Geoffrey C. Evans 9th Infantry Brigade from 5th Division, into 7th Division's front. Christison planned to use Brigadier W.A. Crowther's 89th Brigade from 7th Division in a wide turning movement down the Kalapazin River to break through Japanese defenses at Buthidaung, and thus end the stalemate in front of Razabil.

While XV Corps regrouped, patrols discovered small parties of Japanese troops northeast of Buthidaung. From mid-January, both Slim and Christison were certain that the Japanese would counter-attack. Slim recalled, "Signs were now becoming clear that this would be much more than a local affair in Arakan but rather something of the nature of a general offensive in Burma."

Slim felt the counter attack would be an encircling movement around XV Corps' left flank. Christison's reinforcing 7th Division suited Slim's idea of meeting the Japanese attack when it came, and he ordered it to continue. At the same time, Slim ordered Lomax's 26th Division to be ready to move quickly into the Arakan to reinforce XV Corps, and Snelling to assemble supplies and aircraft to resupply XV Corps by air.

While Slim prepared for what might occur, the Japanese were readying their counter stroke. In order to destroy XV Corps, the Japanese 28th Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Shozo Sakurai, would launch an attack in the Arakan, code-named "HA-GO," or "Operation Z." According to the plan, Lt. Gen. Tadashi Hayana's 55th Division would send a force under Maj. Gen. Tokutaro Sakurai to capture the village of Taung Bazar, then cross the Kalapazin River to attack 7th Division's rear; another regiment, led by Col. S. Tanahashi, would take the eastern end of Ngakyedauk Pass and block all rescue efforts; and a force under Col. Tai Kubo would cross the Mayu Range and sever 5th Division's supply lines. When both divisions tried to fight their way out, they would be cut to pieces. The Japanese high command hoped XV Corps would be so badly mauled it would be unable to help defend against the main offensive against India set for later in the year.

ABOVE: Lt. Gen. Sir Philip Christison commanded the British XV Corps at Admin Box.
OPPOSITE: As seen from Ammunition Hill, the Admin Box comes under fire from Japanese artillery.

Like all Japanese plans, HA-GO depended on a strict timetable under which the destruction of XV Corps was to be accomplished in 10 days; and on the speedy capture of the supply area at Ngakyedauk Pass.

At 11:00 p.m., February 3, 1944, Maj. Gen. Sakurai's column, comprising Col. Tanahashi's 112th Regiment, the 55th Engineer Regiment, and the 145th and 213th Battalions, set off under cover of darkness towards Taung Bazar. At 4 in the morning, February 4, sounds of marching feet and braying of pack mules was heard at 114th Brigade headquarters, where they were mistaken for RIASC (Royal Indian Army Service Corps) resupply details heading to the forward units.

After a forced march, the Japanese emerged from the jungle at nine in the morning, crossed the Kalapazin River in captured boats, and quickly overran Taung Bazar. With the village in his hands, Sakurai turned Tanahashi's regiment south toward 7th Division's rear, and the Admin Box. "It was now imperative for Tanahashi that the Box be taken quickly," author William Hickey wrote. "Without British ammunition and rations, Tanahashi's position would quickly become precarious."

At 3:30 in the morning of February 6, the 2nd Battalion of Tanahashi's regiment moved through the thick early morning mist towards 7th Division headquarters near the Admin Box. Slipping through the widely scattered posts defending division headquarters, the Japanese cut telephone wires, set up machine guns, and attacked.

"The night was alive with tracers, explosions, [and] flames from burning signals trucks," recorded one witness, along with "the shouts of rampaging Japanese infantry [which was] like the sound of a football crowd at a cup tie." Messeryv's headquarters staff held the Japanese off in fierce hand-to-hand fighting.

A squadron of Grant tanks from 25th Dragoons left the Admin Box at first light to assist Messeryv's headquarters. The tanks were delayed by mud left over from heavy rains. Then they discovered the mud made it impossible for them to maneuver on the hill slopes and they withdrew. With Japanese mortars firing into his headquarters, Messeryv ordered his staff to retreat to the Admin Box. They split into several groups, one led by Messeryv, and made their way into the jungle.

During the confusion following the attack on 7th Division's headquarters, Christison instruc-ted Brigadier Evans to leave his 9th Brigade with what troops he could spare, take command of the Admin Box, organize its defenses, and hold it to the last. After receiving his orders, Evans, along with A and C Companies of Lt. Col. G.H. Cree's 2nd West Yorkshire Regiment, plus A and C Squadrons of the 25th Dragoons, headed to the Admin Box.

When he arrived, Evans found a mixed bag of troops in the Box. He had only the two 2nd West Yorkshire companies, and tank squadrons of 25th Dragoons, along with six batteries of artillery, with 20 guns in all, as combat units. The remaining 8,000 men in the box were support troops, the "odds and sods" as they were known. "The manpower consisted very largely of Indians of the ancillary services," Lt. Col. Cree remembered. "They were armed and had been basically trained in the use of their weapons. But the most that could be expected of them was purely static defense; they were untried in battle and

ABOVE: As the battle rages, British troops scramble up a heavily shelled hillside on the Admin Box's perimeter. RIGHT: A Japanese medic tends to a wounded (and well-camouflaged) soldier while his Burmese assistants chop coconuts and offer them to other injured Japanese, casualties of the British advance into Burma.

untrained in anything but simply firing out of a trench."

In order to use his infantry more effectively, Evans positioned the West Yorks' C Company on high ground north of Ngakyedauk Pass, while A Company was placed with 25th Dragoons tanks to form a counter attack force. The "odds and sods" were assigned positions along the perimeter. "Clerks, signalers, postmen, muleteers, canteen staff, civilians, sanitation orderlies—all grabbed rifles, dug in, and prepared to fight," one author wrote. To these troops, Evans gave one simple order: "Your job is to stay put and keep the Japanese out."

As preparations to defend the Box proceeded, General Messeryv and his group reached the Box. It was then early afternoon. Using a radio borrowed from 25th Dragoons, Messeryv established a new division command post south of Ammunition Hill, and resumed command of the 7th Division, allowing Evans to remain in command of the Admin Box garrison.

B Company of the 2nd West Yorkshire, along with two companies of the 8th Gurkha Rifles Regiment, arrived on the morning of February 7, and took up position on the eastern side of the Box. The perimeter consisted of a series of small defensive posts held mostly by administrative troops, except at the south east and south west corners where the road entered the pass; held by the Gurkhas and West Yorkshires respectively. Most of the artillery was deployed south of Ammunition Hill. The 25th Dragoons Grant tanks were held in reserve in two harbors on each side of Ammunition Hill, with A Company of the 2nd West Yorkshire, the infantry reserve, located on the hill's west side, along with 7th Division and garrison headquarters.

The Japanese launched their first attack on the Box at dusk; attacking the eastern side first, where they were repulsed by the Gurkhas after heavy fighting. Another battalion from Tanahashi's regiment attacked the main dressing station, guarded only by a section from the West Yorks and 20 walking wounded. Overwhelming the defenses, they murdered 40 British and Indian wounded in their stretchers, and forced the Indian Army medical officers to hand over their supply of quinine, morphine and other drugs. Then they murdered the medical officers, wrecked the hospital and dug in. A few patients and one medical officer escaped from the MDS, and reported the massacre.

At eight in the morning of the 8th, Evans sent A Company of the West Yorkshires, with a troop of Grant tanks in support, to retake the MDS. Fighting through the broken, brush covered area, the West Yorks drove the Japanese back. When A Company finished clearing the hospital area on February 9, they found only three survivors of the casualties who'd been in the hospital when it was overrun. These men were transferred to a new dressing station inside the perimeter.

The barbaric massacre at the MDS proved counter-productive to the Japanese. "British and Indian troops retained few illusions about their opponents, but they had respected them as soldiers," author Bryan Perrett wrote. "Now they saw them as merely dangerous animals, to be exterminated with every means at their disposal."

Having been cut off from their supply routes on February 7, and being ordered to stand fast, the air supply operation was ordered. Beginning on the 8th , Douglas C-47 Dakota transports of RAF Troop Carrier Command took off from their airfields in India to resupply XV Corps by air. It was just the beginning. Over the next five weeks, despite Japanese fighters, small arms and anti aircraft fire, Troop Carrier Command flew 714 sorties, delivering 2,300 tons of supplies to the 7th and 81st Divisions; 5th Division received the bulk of its supplies through the port of Mungdaw.

While air supply to the Box went on, Japanese attacks continued. At dawn on February 9, Japanese mountain guns on Hill 315 near the eastern side of the Box fired on Ammunition Hill, setting the ammunition stored their on fire. In response, Evans sent the West Yorks B Company, led by Major A.C. Dunlop, with a troop of Grants to counter attack, while working parties brought the fires under control. B Company stormed the hill under supporting fire from the tanks, driving the Japanese off.

After clearing the hill, the West Yorks found the body of a Japanese officer; on him was a map containing detailed plans of the HA-GO offensive. "Thanks to the Japanese

habit of carrying orders and marked maps into action, we had an almost complete picture of their general plan," Slim said later. The captured map showed the Japanese were far behind schedule; they had not captured any guns or supplies, and the British had not panicked or retreated as expected.

Inside the Box, life gradually settled into a daily routine. "At dusk we all stood-to for an hour, sometimes two; then followed the long night of double sentries, continual watchfulness and the expectation of a full scale attack," Col. Cree recalled. "No night ever passed without an affair of some sort on some part of the perimeter."

Because of British superiority in artillery and tanks, the Japanese attacked mostly at night. Infantry encounters along the perimeter were hard fought, at close quarters with bayonets and small arms fire. Often the Japanese would attempt to unnerve the defenders by shouting orders or screaming for help in English or Urdu. "This created tension, but the technique was now familiar and the enemy's difficulty with the letter 'L,' which he pronounced as 'R,' was a certain giveaway," Bryan Perrett wrote.

During the day, the Japanese made good use of their mortars, a few 105-mm howitzers, and a few Model 92 70-mm mountain guns, in shelling the crowded perimeter. British guns inside the perimeter returned the Japanese fire. The 8th (Belfast) Heavy AA-Regiment's four high velocity 3.7-inch guns were highly effective against Japanese fighter-bombers, and lethal against targets in the surrounding hills. A battery of 5.5-inch howitzers of the 6th Medium Artillery fired at targets 400 yards from their positions. When asked by radio their situation, they replied, "Fine, but drop us a hundred bayonets."

Under continuous harassing fire by day, and infantry attacks by night, life inside the Box was difficult. "The dust, the foul water and the abominable, eternal stench are memories which will long linger," Col. Cree recalled. "Comfort, sleep, and even rest were foreign to us."

After the first days of the siege, the troops inside the Box realized that, having been forced into a stand-up fight, the Japanese soldiers of the 55th Division were poor battle practitioners. Their attacks were poorly coordinated and covered ground where attacks had failed before. Due to their lack of coordination, Evans was able to commit his reserves where there were needed, and could defeat any lodgment by point blank fire of 25th Dragoons' tanks. Although obsolete in the European theater, the Grant was highly effective in jungle fighting; its sponson-mounted 75-mm gun fired high explosive rounds, while its turret-mounted 37-mm gun flayed the jungle with man killing canister rounds. Tanahashi's men did not have tanks or anti-tank guns to counter 25th Dragoons' Grants, and their artillery, although effectively used, could not match Evans's artillery support.

By February 14, HA-GO was fatally behind schedule. By now, Tanahashi's men were living off unhulled rice and roots, having consumed the last of their rations. Hayana's division was coming under increasing pressure from the 26th Division attacking from the north and Brigadier T.J. Winterton's 123rd Brigade from Briggs's 5th Division attacking from the west. But Hayana, with what Slim called "typical dull Japanese ferocity," continued attacking the Admin Box instead of bypassing it and gambling on capturing supplies elsewhere.

Under pressure from Hayana to overcome the Box, Tanahashi on the evening of February 14 launched an all-out attack with all three battalions of his regiment. "The night throbbed with screams, rifle fire, and shell fire," Louis Allen wrote. But "Tanahashi could wrest no decisive victory in the face of determined resistance." At one point, a Japanese tank destruction party tried to reach the 25th Dragoons' tank harbor east of Ammunition Hill across open paddies. They were met by a hail of machine gun fire and were all wiped out. "The night was brilliant with star shells," an eyewitness wrote, " and the tanks poured machine gun fire into the Japanese until their casualties forced them back."

While Tanahashi's attacks were being repulsed, another column made its way to a height overlooking the western side of the Box, known as "C Company Hill" by the British. It was defended by a single platoon from C Company of the West Yorks. Early on the morning of February 15, the Japanese attacked, sweeping the defenders from the crest. Evans, knowing the Japanese on C Company Hill were only 300 yards from his headquarters, overlooking the hospital's new position—and remembering the events of February 7—ordered the hill retaken.

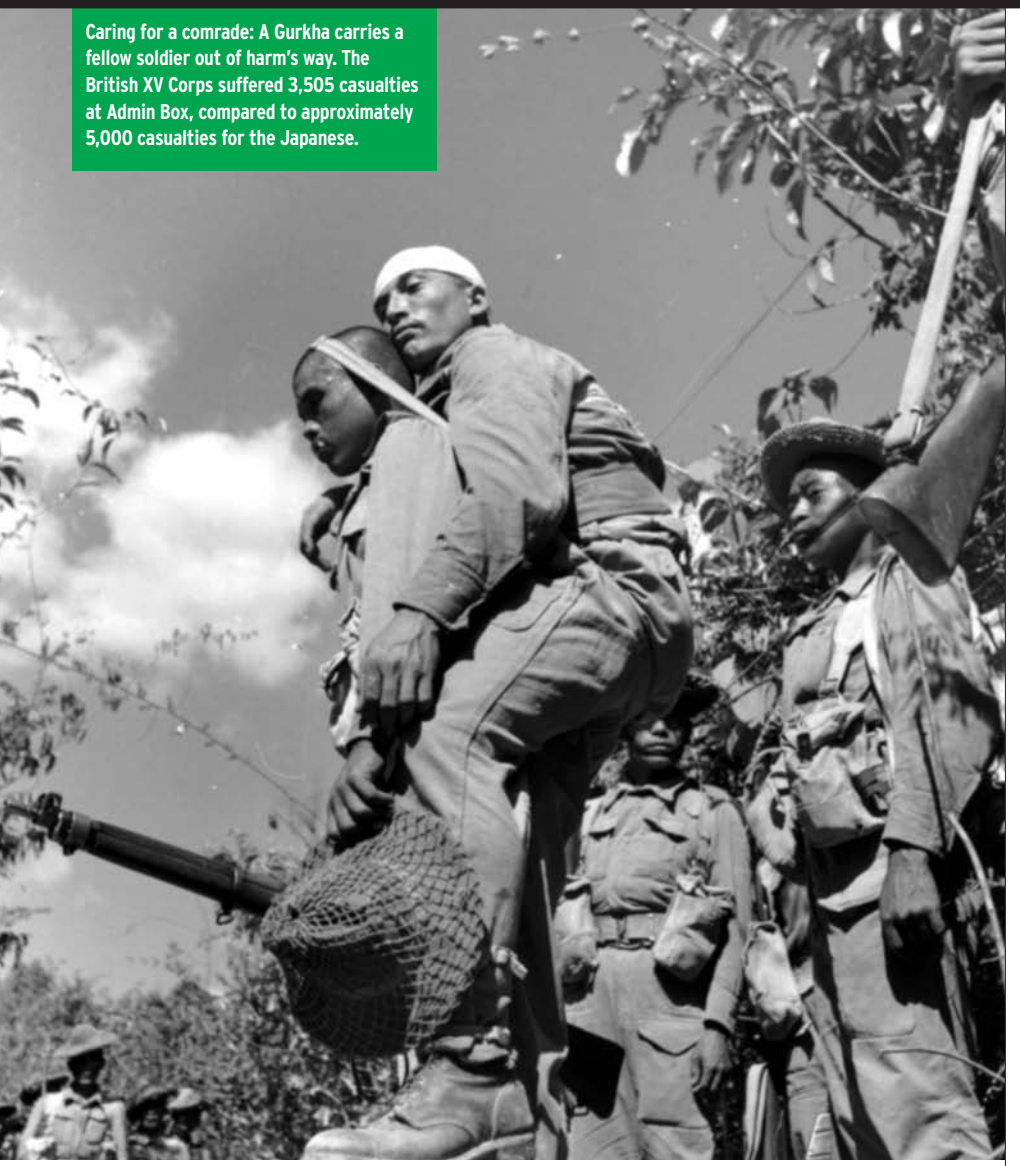
At daylight A Company of the West Yorks, led by a Major O'Hara, along with 10 Grants of 25th Dragoons' A Squadron, counter attacked. The tanks fired high explosive 75-mm shells at the summit, keeping the Japanese pinned down, while Major O'Hara's men moved up the slope.

A Company's first attack was met with a shower of Japanese grenades; O'Hara pulled back to let the tanks resume shelling the crest. Then A Company moved back up the ridge again, following the curtain of shells and machine gun fire. When the tanks ceased fire, the West Yorks charged the Japanese positions, clearing them from the crest, killing 17 in the process. C Company Hill was back in British hands.

During the night of February 15, as arranged by Evans days before, Brigadier Crowther moved his 89th Brigade headquarters, along with a battalion of the 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB) into the Box, and took over the eastern half of the perimeter from the 2nd West Yorkshire. Because of casualties and sickness, both A and B Companies of the West Yorks were down to half strength, with only 100 men each, when the KOSB took over. For the Box's defenders, the next few days, from February 16 to 21, were spent patrolling and clearing isolated Japanese pockets around the perimeter.

Meanwhile, outside the Box, Hayana's men were being pressed in an anvil formed by the 7th Division and both Lomax's 26th Division, and Maj. Gen. F.W. Festing's 36th Division descending from the north to reinforce XV Corps.

In addition, Briggs's 5th Division's 123rd Brigade continued fighting their way up Ngakyedauk Pass. Brigadier Winterton's advance, led by the 2nd Battalion/lst Punjab and 4th Battalion/7th Rajput Regiments, was stalled on February 20 by a Japanese bunker complex on a hill known as Point 1070. The next day, February 21, a 5.5-inch howitzer was brought up to the pass and fired twenty rounds into the bunkers. Japanese resistance on



Caring for a comrade: A Gurkha carries a fellow soldier out of harm's way. The British XV Corps suffered 3,505 casualties at Admin Box, compared to approximately 5,000 casualties for the Japanese.

Point 1070 collapsed; the advance resumed, only to be delayed by another roadblock.

While Winterton's men fought their way towards the Box from the west, Messervy dispatched the Dragoons' C Squadron and two companies from the KOSB from the Box with orders to head east for a link up with the relief column. During the night of February 21, Japanese troops all along the Admin Box perimeter launched suicide attacks. "It was clear from these desperate measures that the enemy commanders were facing a crisis," the British official history reported. All of the attacks failed, and the Japanese were driven back into the jungle.

C Squadron and the Borderers resumed their advance up the road on February 22. At the same time, 123rd Brigade attacked the Japanese positions from the west. After a short, sharp fight, the Borderers met the lead company of 4/7th Rajputs. Thus the siege of 25 days was broken.

That night, Col. Tanahashi, his efforts to penetrate the Box's defenses having failed; with ammunition gone and food scarce, decided he had no choice but to break off his efforts. Ignoring Hayana's orders to attack the Box, Tanahashi began pulling his men back to their original starting line. "I regret this, but am determined to do it," he radioed Hayana on February 24. "There is no alternative." Out of 2,190 men in his 112th Regiment when the operation began, 400 survived the siege.

After consulting with General Sakurai at 28th Army headquarters, on February 25 Hayana finally bowed to the inevitable and ended Operation HA-GO. He had lost 5,000 men dead around the Admin Box, Ngakyedauk Pass and along the Mayu Range. Barely 3,000 out of the 8,000 Japanese troops participating in HA-GO returned to their original positions.

In contrast, Christison suffered only 3,506 casualties, half in the 7th Division and corps troops under its command. Despite this, Christison resumed this offensive against Razabil

and Buthidaung by the first week in March, giving the Japanese no respite. By May 3, XV Corps had captured both Razabil and Buthidaung. "Revenge is sweet," Slim recalled years later. "The XV Corps had now achieved all the tasks I had set it."

The battle of the Admin Box, fought in a remote, relatively unimportant area of Burma, was a great tactical victory for Slim, and the 14th Army's first victory over the Japanese, marking a turning point in the war in Southeast Asia. "It was the first time that the Japanese met trained British/Indian formations in battle," reported the official British history, "and the first time that their enveloping tactics, aimed at cutting their opponents' line of communication, failed to produce the results they expected."

Slim's ideas on how to defeat the Japanese, and his training methods were proven correct. And the victory had a great effect on British morale. "An assortment of butchers, bakers, clerks, drivers, muleteers and sanitary orderlies had handed out a fair beating to some of the best infantry in the Japanese army and walked taller because of it," Bryan Perrett wrote. It demonstrated that the Japanese were not supermen, and that British and Indian troops could fight and defeat them in the jungle. "It had been imperative that this first big battle fought by 14th Army be a success," Geoffrey Evans said later, "and Slim, his officers and their men had won it."

Years later, summing up the campaign in his memoirs, *Defeat into Victory*, Slim wrote: "This Arakan battle, judged by the size of the forces engaged, was not of great magnitude, but it was, nevertheless, one of the historic successes of British arms…. It was a victory, a victory about which there could be no argument, and its effect not only on the troops engaged but on the whole Fourteenth Army, was immense." □

THE 100TH BATTALION AND 442ND RCT

AMERICA'S MOST DECORATED HEROES

DESPITE BEING SUBJECTED TO HARSH DISCRIMINATION, JAPANESE AMERICANS JOINED THE U.S. MILITARY TO PROVE THEIR LOYALTY.

BY RICHARD HIGGINS

Out of the darkest of days for the isolated, embattled Japanese American community—and indeed for the rights and privileges protected by the Constitution for all Americans—an amazing transformation began.

From the fallow ground of exclusion, racism, and disregard for habeas corpus and the Fifth Amendment, the sheer bravery, sacrifice, and dedication of more than 30,000 Japanese Americans would earn the country's admiration and respect.

This would not only be the beginning of the end of the forced relocation camps but, along with the inspiring performance of other minority units such as the Tuskegee Airmen, the United States was set on a course for an integrated military (1948) and eventually a country dedicated to racial equality and the rule of law. This journey began with the formation of Nisei combat units, one of which became the most decorated unit of its size in American history, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. (The Nisei were born in the United States of parents who emigrated from Japan.)

As with almost all events associated with the exclusion, the road to a Nisei combat unit was torturous and marked by one step forward and two steps back. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army, National Guard, and Hawaiian Territorial Guard took action to either isolate or remove Japanese Americans from the armed forces. This was after they had performed well in defense of the islands.

On alert for enemy activity in his snowy foxhole near St. Die, France, on November 13, 1944, is Sergeant Goichi Suehiro, a Japanese American (Nisei) machine-gun squad leader with Company F, 442nd Regimental Combat Team. He wears a rubberized raincoat and holds an M1 carbine. The 442nd saw extensive action in both Italy and France.

In sharp contrast, the Army was already running a Japanese American spy ring in the Philippines. Beginning as early as March 1941, Arthur Komori, Richard Sakakida, and Clarence Yamagata were on the ground and reporting enemy activities to Army intelligence. Sakakida was captured at the fall of Corregidor, put into a Japanese POW camp, and tortured. He convinced the Japanese he was a civilian and left the camp, but continued to gather information. He later led a breakout of more than 500 Filipinos from the camp.

In November 1941, the Army also opened a school for Japanese linguistics training, taught and populated primarily by Nisei. This was all top secret until many years after the war.

In early 1942, though, the American public viewed the Nisei with deep suspicion as being more loyal to Japan than to the United States. In some cases this ethnic group was actually classified as "enemy

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aliens," in spite of their U.S. citizenship.

Once again Lt. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, the military governor of Hawaii, came to the assistance of the Japanese Americans. Emmons seemed to understand that a territory under martial law and curfews might test the citizens' resolve and cooperation with the military without some recognition of their patriotism.

Along with stalling the ordered removal

ABOVE: Two men of the 100th Infantry Battalion, formerly the Hawaii National Guard and now part of the 442nd RCT, set up a 60mm mortar during training at Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 1943. RIGHT: Members of the 442nd RCT rush across a pontoon bridge built by the 232nd Engineer Company at Camp Shelby, July 1943. RIGHT TOP: Sergeant Harry Mijamoto conducts hand-grenade training for 100th Infantry Battalion soldiers at Camp Shelby. Many of the men left the confinement of their forced-relocation centers to join the armed forces and prove their loyalty as American citizens.

of Japanese Americans to the mainland in February 1942, Emmons permitted approximately 170 volunteers, who had been removed from the Territorial Guard, to join the U.S. Army as part of the 34th Combat Engineer Regiment. (The unit designation is a bit misleading because they would be solely employed as construction workers. But the ex-University of Hawaii R.O.T.C. students, designating themselves the "Varsity Victory Volunteers," put great energy into their tasks and were recognized for it. This occurred at the same time that the mainland Army was isolating Japanese Americans and refusing to draft them into the military.)

During 1942 the enlistment issue seesawed back and forth. However, strong supporters in the War Department began to weigh in on the issue. Besides Emmons both George C. Marshall and Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy, who had visited the Varsity Victory Volunteers in Hawaii, began to lobby for a Japanese American unit. The Navy never did agree and remained exclusionary of Japanese Americans. Also, after leaving as head of the WRA, Milton Eisenhower and the current WRA head both supported a Japanese

American unit. Somewhat predictably, General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command and a strong advocate for incarcerating Japanese Americans in concentration camps, or "relocation centers," was opposed. (See *WWII Quarterly,* Fall 2013.)

This was just the beginning. The now segregated Japanese American members of the Hawaiian Army National Guard had begun a journey in June 1942 that would result in their earning the title the "Purple Heart Battalion." More than 1,400 of them were shipped to the mainland and sent to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, for training as the Hawaii Provisional Infantry Battalion. This was done at night with no warning and no chance to say farewell to their families. They were disarmed for the journey.

The "training" regimen was also supposed to identify disloyal members in their ranks. It was a total failure for the intended purpose, finding no evidence of disloyalty. However, in an eerie twist of fate, the unit, redesignated the 100th Infantry Battalion, met their first Texans at the camp. The 2nd Infantry Division, based in Texas, arrived at the Wisconsin camp and immediately became incensed at "Japs" in American uniforms.

During one night in town, the animosity boiled over and a pitched brawl took place between members of the two units. The Nisei were, of course, outnumbered, but when the casualty list was compiled, 38 Texans were in the hospital compared to only one Nisei. The 100th would later meet Texans again and the two would bond as brothers-in-arms on a foreign battlefield. Finally, their training was completed and whatever tests aimed at them were passed; the 100th moved to a true training facility at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

At Camp Shelby, the primarily Hawaiian members learned with interest that another all-Nisei unit was to be established, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The Varsity Victory Volunteers were deactivated so they could enlist en masse in the new unit. Roosevelt's words on the establishment of the unit seem to belie his feelings of only one year before: "Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry."

The brutal necessity of war was teaching America that no matter how suspiciously hypocritical FDR's words were, they were actually true. The price of freedom and equality for these young Japanese Americans began to be collected in blood and sacrifice in 1943.

The newly formed regiment adopted the gambling phrase "Go for Broke" as its motto. This phrase would soon resonate in the annals of American military history. The term implies risking everything, no matter the outcome. In another gesture showing where they stood, the colors of the 100th were emblazoned with "Remember Pearl Harbor."

The new recruits began to arrive at Camp Shelby and settle in with the 100th. Of the two groups, two-thirds were Hawaiian and the rest were from the mainland, mostly the West Coast. The personnel from the mainland had an overall lower enlistment rate, theoretically due to their treatment in the relocation camps. Many of the mainlanders were recruited directly from the camps and, of course, their families remained behind in the camps.

While the Army viewed this as a homogenous segregated unit, that was not the case among the men. The Hawaiians were more relaxed, carried a plethora of guitars and ukeleles, and did not speak English as well as the mainlanders; their "pidgin English" baffled the mainlanders, and there was fighting and animosity between the two groups. The Hawaiians also had darker skin than the mainland Japanese Americans. The mainlanders called the Hawaiians "Buddhaheads" and the Hawaiians called the mainlanders "kotonks." Some of the hard feelings might have been over the assignment of NCO and officer positions. As a note, there were Anglo officers in both units.

Someone got tired of the divisiveness and arranged a visit for some of the Hawaiians. They were told they were going on a weekend leave to visit with other Japanese Americans and were taken by train from Camp Shelby to Rohwer, Arkansas, the location of one of the relocation camps. Daniel Inouye, then a young Hawaiian recruit (and later a U.S. senator), described "a joyful singing trip." He described the men's confusion when, ahead of them, they saw an Army-type installation with barracks, mess hall, etc., but also with barbed wire and machine-gun towers.

They then saw that the inhabitants looked like them and that there were bayonet-carrying white guards. They had not heard of the camps. They were shocked beyond belief and struggled to maintain a cheerful face for the inmates, who welcomed them and generously fed them with their limited food.

In an oral history for the documentary *The War,* Inouye said, "Would I have volunteered if I was in that camp?... I can't answer that question ... but when we got back to camp immediately they became our brothers. These guys were special.... They were better than us." The two groups had become a team, albeit one still com-

posed of an older and younger brother.

Camp Shelby, Mississippi, was an interesting experience for the trainees. Arriving in a blacked-out train at night ostensibly to prevent frightening the locals, Inouye remembered they were shocked to be met by more than 100 local women offering coffee and donuts.

There were even dances with the local girls sponsored by the USO. In his oral history for the National World War II Museum, Inouye fondly remembers the first time he danced with a white girl. With the most wistful expression he states, "It was nice." A Private Kashiwagi remembers not knowing which of the segregated bathrooms to use. He chose the "Black Only" and was escorted to the "Whites Only," very confused.

While public attention was focused on the 100th and 442nd as they went through their training, Japanese Americans were already in combat in the theater where they were not supposed to be: the Pacific.

Very quietly and with great secrecy the Army eventually recruited more than 6,000 Nisei and Kibei (Japanese Americans born in America who moved to Japan) for intelligence work in the Pacific Theater. The Kibei proved to be the best at field intelligence work as they had lived in Japan and learned to speak Japanese. Many of the cadre were recruited from the 100th and 442nd as volunteers for hazardous duty.

Their language and intelligence skills were honed at the Military Intelligence Language School in Minnesota. These skills became highly prized after several early war incidents demonstrated their value.

One of these occurred on Guadalcanal in the early days of the campaign. Forty-five Nisei and Kibei, the first graduating class from what became the Military Intelligence Language School, were split between the Aleutians and Guadalcanal. Their primary duty was deciphering Japanese military communications and documents. The group on Guadalcanal successfully deciphered captured documents that detailed all Japanese naval and air forces and their associated call signals

ABOVE: Many Nisei were invaluable as interpreters and interrogators in the Pacific. Here in an Army painting a Japanese American questions a captured Japanese soldier in the Aleutians in 1943. LEFT: T/Sgt. Herbert Miyasaki and T/Sgt. Akiji Yoshima, two members of the 442nd RCT who volunteered to serve as interpreters, pose with Maj. Gen. Frank Merrill, commander of Merrill's Marauders, in Burma, May 1, 1944.

and code names. The information proved invaluable to the embattled Marine and U.S. Navy units engaged in a life-and-death struggle for the island.

With this success, the clamor from the field for more of the trained specialists reached a crescendo that did not subside for the rest of the war. Other major intelligence coups included pinpointing Japanese counterattacks, targeting and killing Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, and deciphering Plan Z for the Japanese counterattack in the Philippines. This foreknowledge of Japanese plans was directly responsible for Admiral Raymond A. Spruance's crushing victory at the Battle of the Philippine Sea.

Of lesser significance but perhaps more demoralizing for the Japanese, the MISers as they were termed, decoded the hours of operation for a Japanese brothel on Rabaul and the hours reserved for officers. Air strikes ensued and James McNaughton, in his excellent book, *Nisei Linguists*, quoted an intelligence officer, Major Anderton, as stating, "Japanese leadership at Rabaul was never the same."

Contrary to popular belief, these men were also employed in direct combat situations. U.S. landings where the MISers were deployed included Guadalcanal, the Aleutians, Iwo Jima, the Marianas, the Philippines, Saipan, Okinawa, and virtually every other battle zone in the Pacific.

Takejiro Higa, an MIS soldier, recounted in an emotional oral history for the Go for Broke Educational Center in Torrance, California, what it felt like to invade his homeland, Okinawa, where family members still resided. He later saved the lives of countless Okinawa civilians who were preparing to commit suicide when he spoke to them in Okinawa dialect and, finally trusting him, surrendered instead. He also interrogated prisoners, some of whom had attended school with him. The MIS Nisei on the island were credited with saving thousands of civilian lives.

In the field they would listen to Japanese communications, examine captured docu-

ments, and interrogate captured Japanese. All of these activities led to major intelligence coups. They also spied behind enemy lines and parachuted into enemy territory, yielding valuable intelligence. They fought with and were recognized as "samurai" by famous units such as Merrill's Marauders. The stories of their heroism are legion.

Their field commanders were also impressed by their courage and prowess. Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, later said, "Before World War II, I entertained some doubt as to the loyalty of American citizens of Japanese ancestry in the event of war with Japan. From my observations during World War II, I no longer have that doubt."

General Charles A. Willoughby, Douglas MacArthur's chief of staff, said, "6,000 Nisei in the war in the Pacific saved over a million American lives and shortened the war by two years." Even MacArthur, the theater commander himself, commented on their value to him: "Never in military history did an army know as much about the enemy prior to actual engagement." But it wasn't until 1972 that President Richard M. Nixon signed an Executive Order allowing their service to be recognized.

Far from the Pacific, the 100th Battalion (or the "One-Puka-Puka," as the men termed it) was moving into another theater of war: Italy.

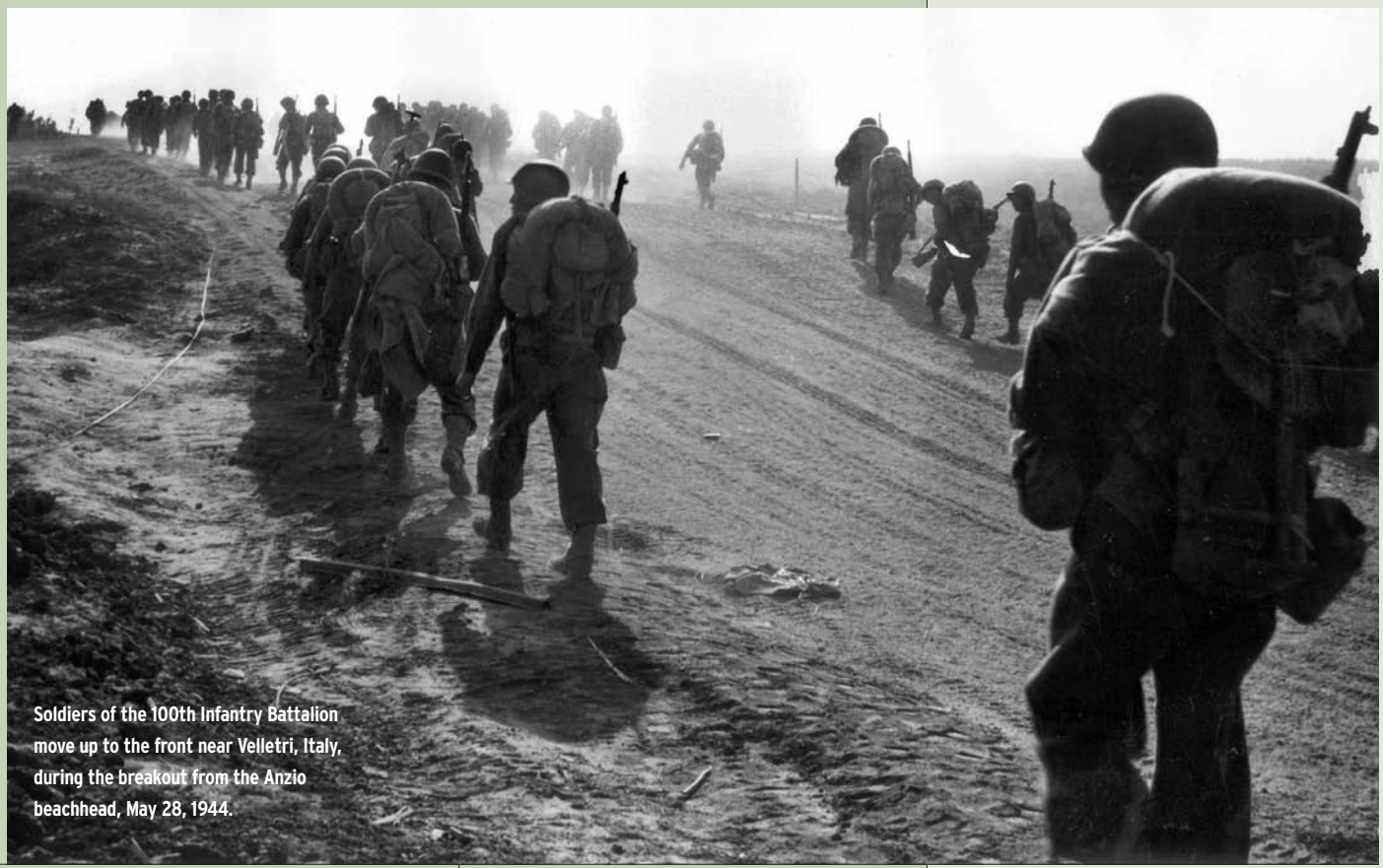
On September 8, 1943, fearing a full-scale invasion, the Italians signed an armistice with the Allies. The Germans moved quickly to disarm and neutralize the Italian Army and turn the country into Nazi-occupied territory.

The Italian campaign was more akin to World War I than World War II. It was marked by Allied frontal assaults against well-planned German defenses in mountainous terrain sliced by rivers, making maneuver very difficult. The primary Allied objective of the campaign was to tie down German forces so they could not be used in either Russia or against the coming invasion of Normandy.

The war in Italy would prove catastrophic for both sides and for the civilian populace. The casualty rates for both sides were higher than seen in other Western theater campaigns and virtually identical for each of the foes. Total Allied casualties amounted to approximately 320,000 while German casualties were more than 340,000 excluding the final surrender. Civilian casualties totaled over 150,000.

The 100th Battalion, with approximately 1,300 effectives, was detached from the 442nd and entered this meat grinder as part of the 34th ("Red Bull") Infantry Division on September 22, 1943, approximately two weeks after the initial Allied landings. They would not be reunited with their brethren, the 442nd, and become an official part of that unit until June 1944. By then they had covered themselves in glory as the Purple Heart Battalion.

The unit quickly adapted from training doctrine to the furious fighting required to make progress up the Italian "boot." In one battle against fierce resistance, they had to cross the winding and flooded Volturno River three times. Each time they were bracketed by German artillery,



Soldiers of the 100th Infantry Battalion move up to the front near Velletri, Italy, during the breakout from the Anzio beachhead, May 28, 1944.

machine-gun, and small-arms fire. Their casualties were staggering but they never shirked or refused to try. On the third crossing of this blood-soaked river, they made their first "banzai" charge—a tactic they would use again in an even more threatening situation.

The incident is related in the Go for Broke Education Center review of the campaign: "The next day, was the first 'banzai charge.' A sergeant mistakenly heard that one of the most respected officers in the battalion was wounded or captured. The sergeant ordered his platoon to fix bayonets and charge. The men yelled 'Banzai!' and swarmed the area, a move that later in the war would be used again to rescue a lost battalion....

"The 'banzai charge' occurred because of the men's concern for each other. The 'Buddaheads' had known each other since they were children. No other military unit had bonds this close. They never left a man behind. Never. By the time they were relieved on November 11, 1943, the men of the 100th had earned 19 Silver Stars. But the casualties were high. Eighteen officers and 239 enlisted men were wounded. Three officers and 75 enlisted men died."

If the rivers and mountains in the south of Italy were bad, the definition of hell was about to be unveiled to the One-Puka-Puka. Capping the Liri Valley approximately 20 miles inland from Italy's west coast is the majestic Benedictine Abbey at Monte Cassino. This mountaintop position and its valley moat, the Rapido River, were the main obstacles on the Gustav Line and would stall the Allied armies for four months. The position would unleash an avalanche of casualties during a brutal winter. There was no bright side. Both the fighting and the climate were hell. The 100th arrived on the line in January 1944.

Their objective, and that of the whole 34th Division, was to cross the Rapido northeast of the abbey and try to outflank the position. The initial assault was across flooded fields containing mines, clearly visible to the German defenders. The 100th's battalion commander was relieved from command when he would not order the men into a suicide charge. Reconnoitering the ground, the replacement commander was severely wounded and the most beloved officer in the battalion was killed.

ABOVE: Despite suffering discrimination at home, Nisei troops were often welcomed as liberators in Europe. Here civilians wave to soldiers of the 100th Infantry Battalion as they arrive in Livorno, July 19, 1944. BELOW: A 105mm howitzer of the Japanese American 522nd Field Artillery Battalion blasts German positions near Livorno (Leghorn), Italy, July 12, 1944.

The Nisei battalion eventually crossed, after several days of rest, at another more fordable location and pushed on into the mountains. The fighting lasted over two weeks and the brutality was beyond measure as machine guns and mortars ripped into the uphill advancing Nisei at close quarters. At one point the 34th Division actually came within

400 yards of the abbey before it was finally repulsed and withdrawn from the line.

Some Allied units experienced 80 percent casualties; after the battle, the 100th consisted of approximately 500 effectives. (The abbey would not fall until May 17, 1944, to valiant Polish troops after being flattened by Allied bombs in one of the war's most tragic incidents. See *WWII Quarterly,* Fall 2011.)

The 100th, commanded by West Pointer Lt. Col. Gordon Singles, continued to fight its way north, right to the gates of Rome. Having again acquitted themselves well, they were ordered to halt a few miles outside Rome as the 1st Armored Division drove by to clear the way for General Mark Clark's entry into the undefended Eternal City. Controversy still exists on whether the insult was intentional or not. However, for the men on the scene it was a bitter moment that stayed with them forever.

Clark swung his Fifth Army west to capture Rome on June 4, but the triumph was overshadowed by D-Day—the Normandy invasion—two days later. In the process, most of the German Tenth Army escaped and took up new positions farther north along the Gothic Line. The results were later written in the blood of the Allied forces. Clark's superior, Field Marshal Harold Alexander, later commented, "I can only assume that the immediate lure of Rome for its publicity value persuaded Mark Clark to switch the direction of his advance."

Meanwhile, the 442nd had sailed from Virginia and landed at Anzio on May 28, a few days after the breakout from the beachhead (Operation Buffalo), then moved north of Rome to Civitavecchia, where it linked up on June 11 with the 100th Battalion, then still attached to the 34th Division; four days later the 100th was made an official part of the 442nd.

LEFT: Lt. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, military governor of Hawaii, was pro-Nisei; RIGHT: Maj. Gen. Charles Ryder welcomed the 442nd to his 34th Infantry Division.

The 442nd RCT, under the operational control of the 34th Division, consisted of three infantry battalions, the 2nd, 3rd, and 100th (the latter was allowed to retain its designation because of its combat record). Also part of the 442nd was the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, the 232nd Engineer Company, an antitank company, and assorted support units.

Advancing out of Civitavecchia in late June with the rest of the Fifth Army, the Nisei were soon put to the test as an integrated unit. It was decided to hold the 100th in reserve and attack with the 442nd's untested 2nd and 3rd Battalions; they would be going up against a well-seasoned SS battalion in the town of Belvedere.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, "seeing the elephant" for the first time, were soon in serious trouble. Maj. Gen. Charles W. Ryder, the 34th Division commander, was almost captured and, returning to the 100th's command post, he thundered at their leader, "Singles, clean up this mess!"

Singles and the 100th launched into action and, using well-practiced encirclement techniques, cut off the SS and basically bagged the whole SS battalion. They also taught quite a lesson to their new Nisei comrades.

The Presidential Unit Citation awarded to the 100th for the action at Belvedere stated, "All three companies went into action boldly facing murderous fire from all types of weapons and tanks and at times fighting without artillery support…. The stubborn desire of the men to close with a numerically superior enemy, and the rapidity with which they fought, enabled the 100th Infantry Battalion to destroy completely the right flank positions of a German Army…. The fortitude and intrepidity displayed by the officers and men of the 100th Infantry Battalion reflect the finest traditions of the Army of the United States."

The rest of the campaign to the Arno River was as bloody and tough as the rest of Italy had been. However, the 442nd now grew together, and the new men received critical battle experience. An unintended consequence of their ferociousness in battle was recognition by their soldier comrades, commanders, and—perhaps most importantly for the Japanese American cause—the press.

A communiqué from Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall to Mediterranean Theater commander Jacob Devers reads, "Operations reports show the 442nd Infantry and the 100th Battalion Japanese in action on the 5th Army front against heavy resistance. If military reasons do not preclude, it would be beneficial to give publicity to aggressive action of these Japanese troops. It has tremendous value, not only from the propaganda side, but helps materially in our handling of the American-of-Japanese-descent problem in this country, particularly on the west coast."

Other military figures added their praise: General Ryder, who had chewed out Singles, called them "My best outfit." Mark Clark also praised them in no uncertain terms.

The *Army-Navy Register,* among a media storm of praise for the success of the unit, reported, "In ten months of almost continuous fighting ... the 100th Infantry [has been awarded] ... 1,000 Purple Hearts, 44 Silver Stars, 31 Bronze Stars, nine Distinguished Service Crosses, and three Legion of Merit medals. There has never been a case of desertion or absence without leave in the 100th, although there were two reported cases of 'reverse AWOL.' Before their battle wounds were completely healed in a field hospital behind the lines, two soldiers left the hospital and hitch-hiked back to their companies on the battlefield."

The 442nd and 100th were making a

mark in a theater of war that sometimes was ruled by anonymity and this was noticed back at home by their families, the American public, and the federal government.

However, the greatest tests lay ahead. With Rome taken, the 442nd was now transferred to France, arriving at the port of Marseilles on September 30, 1944. The RCT began to make their way north to the Vosges Mountains of Alsace-Lorraine. In this wild, freezing, rain- and snow-soaked forest they would seal their fame forever with the rescue of the "Lost Battalion."

The 36th ("T-Patchers") Infantry Division was a Texas National Guard unit that had fought on the flank of the 100th at the Rapido River in Italy and been decimated crossing the river. Maj. Gen. John E. Dahlquist, commanding the 36th, asked specifically for the "Go for Broke" outfit when requesting reinforcements. Attached to the 36th Division, the 100th fought two tough battles at Bruyères and Biffontaine. At Biffontaine, the surrounded 100th engaged in an isolated house-to-house battle for three days until a relief column broke through.

Now a group of the 141st Regiment of the 36th, around 275 men, were surrounded behind enemy lines. For several days the other battalions of the 141st struggled to free their comrades but to no avail. Casualties skyrocketed. Maj. Gen. Dahlquist ordered the 442nd into the fray on October 27 with just a day or two of rest after the hard fighting at Biffontaine.

For three days the 442nd battled forward against increasing German resistance and newly arrived German armor. The going was horrific. The unit lost half its fighting strength, and bravery to the limit of endurance became commonplace. The Germans poured in reinforcements and Dahlquist drove the 442nd. He began to micromanage the unit, which prevented the type of strategic move that might have broken the ring.

The Nisei could not believe how Dahlquist's orders for more frontal assaults just kept coming, but they did their best. The slaughter was unbelievable as the Nisei fought tanks, mortars, machine guns, and small-arms fire that seemed like rain. The fight continued with little progress made.

Finally, as told by the men, something "snapped." 2nd Lt. Edward Davis, the only officer left in Company K, stood up at the height of the battle and asked nearby Sergeant Etsuo Kohashi to follow him. Kohashi did so, then yelled to the men taking cover all around him. They all rose up, screaming, and made a banzai charge at the surprised Germans.

They captured the key hill position and, during the next two days, consolidated their breakthrough and drove forward, now through deep snow. The reunion with the beleaguered Texans became legend. The "T-Patchers" just stared in disbelief at the Nisei as they moved into their perimeter. Some did not even stop but pursued the fleeing Germans. The exhausted men of both units fell to the ground. Some laughed, some cried, together, Americans.

The 442 suffered more than 800 casualties in the two weeks waging the three battles but they rescued the 211 remaining Texans. After the war, Governor John Connally of Texas would declare the 442 to be "honorary" Texans. In his oral history, Senator Inouye remembers how, after the battle, whenever the two units were together, the Texans to a man rose up to salute the Nisei. The grateful survivors of the 141st gave a

"You fought for the free nations of the world. You fought not only the enemy, you fought prejudice—and you won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win—to make this great Republic stand for what the Constitution says it stands for: 'the welfare of all the people, all the time.'"

–President Harry S. Truman

After heavy fighting in Italy, the 442nd RCT was redeployed to southern France in October 1944. Here 442nd troops, now attached to the 36th Infantry Division, climb a steep hill, October 24, 1944.

Men of the 2nd Battalion, 442 RCT march down a muddy road near Chambois on their way to Bruyeres, France, October 14, 1944.

plaque to the Nisei which read, "With deep sincerity and utmost appreciation for the gallant fight to effect our rescue after we'd been isolated for seven days."

However, all was not done. Unbelievably, Dahlquist ordered the shattered regiment back into combat until November 9, when they were finally ordered back from the line. The deployment of the 442nd during this time has been severely criticized. A lifelong estrangement between Dahlquist and the unit was already well in place when Dahlquist ordered a regimental review on November 12 to honor the unit.

When he arrived, he was angered that so few soldiers lined up for review. For example, one company—I—was represented by just eight men, and another—K—only 18. When questioned about the lack of attendees, the 442's temporary commander responded, "This is all there is!"

Senator Inouye remembered the scene after the exchange about the number of men present took place. "General Dahlquist looked at us for a long time. Twice he started to speak and choked on the overpowering feelings that took hold of him. And in the end, all he could manage was an emotional, 'Thank you, men. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.' And the saddest retreat parade in the history of the 442nd was over."

Later in life, Dahlquist, then a four-star general, met up with Colonel Singles previously of the 100th at a review. Dahlquist offered his hand to let "bygones be bygones." Singles's salute never wavered but he did not take Dahlquist's hand.

During its month in the Vosges, the damage done to the 442nd was almost beyond belief. Arriving at Marseilles with approximately 3,500 officers and men, this total was reduced to approximately half after the campaign. There were nearly 2,000 wounded, 161 killed, and 43 missing when they left the mountain country. The Nisei had triumphed, but at an enormous cost.

The next four months were spent along the French-Italian border on the French Riviera for some well-deserved R&R, but also some dangerous patrolling. All in all, it was a period of recovery and replacement for the unit.

Meanwhile, back on the Italian front, General Mark Clark and the Allied forces had been halted in their advance up the Italian Peninsula by the German Gothic Line, also known as the Green Line, north of Pisa, for over six months. The line was grounded in the mountains and ran along rugged peaks both inland and along the coast. There were thousands of machine-gun and mortar emplacements and trenches built largely by slave labor.

Fighting in the fall had yielded some ground but the complete destruction and breakthrough of the line had not been accomplished. Clark, now in charge of all Allied armies in Italy, was going to launch a spring breakout. The campaign was suspended as possible surrender talks were held, but was launched on April 9, 1945, after talks broke down.

Under very secret orders and at Clark's request, the 442nd minus the 522nd Field Artillery was returned to Italy on March 24, 1945. The 442's reputation was now among the elite units of the entire army, but they were attached to the all-black 92nd Division, which initially did not sit

well with the 442nd. The 92nd was a hard-luck outfit, primarily for racial reasons, and their combat record under white officer leadership was poor. In combat, things would improve, but the two units were never very comfortable with each other.

Operation Craftsman, the massive spring offensive, was scheduled to begin on April 9 but, to surprise and divert the enemy, the 442nd would attack from their hidden positions on April 5. The 442nd attacked with their now customary ferocity and immediately secured a foothold in the mountains of the German defensive line. The Germans were frantic to drive the penetration back but, mountain by mountain, the Nisei drove the Germans northward. For the next three weeks the fighting was tough and bitter as the Allies advanced against desperate opposition.

The unit's first Medal of Honor was earned on April 5 during the jump-off's first day. Private Sadao Munemori of Los Angeles, known as Spud by his buddies in the 100th, was awarded the medal after the action where he made the ultimate sacrifice less than a month before the war ended.

His Medal of Honor citation reads: "He fought with great gallantry and intrepidity near Seravezza, Italy. When his unit was pinned down by grazing fire from the enemy's strong mountain defense, and command of the squad devolved on him with the wounding of its regular leader, he made frontal, one-man attacks through direct fire and knocked out two machine guns with grenades.

"Withdrawing under murderous fire and showers of grenades from other enemy emplacements, he had nearly reached a shell crater occupied by two of his men when an unexploded grenade bounced on his helmet and rolled toward his helpless comrades. He arose into the withering fire, dived for the missile and smothered its blast with his body.

"By his swift, supremely heroic action, Pfc. Munemori saved two of his men at the cost of his own life and did much to clear the path for his company's victorious advance."

ABOVE: After spending a cold, wet, and miserable night in the woods near St. Die, France, members of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 442nd RCT prepare to move out of their command post with their lieutenant, Joseph W. Hill (right), November 13, 1944. OPPOSITE: Illustrator H. Charles McBarron's painting, *Go For Broke,* shows the 442nd attacking German tanks during the rescue of men from the 141st Regiment, 36th Infantry Division, in the Vosges Mountains, France, October 27-30, 1944.

His mother received the news of his death while still in the Manzanar Relocation Camp, California. Initially he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross but, because of Congressional intervention, on March 13, 1946, his mother accepted the country's highest honor for her martyred son.

The *Stars and Stripes,* the Army's newspaper, trumpeted the attack being spearheaded by the 442nd. "They [the 442nd] remained within carefully guarded bivouac areas until last Wednesday. Then under cover of darkness, they moved into the line, and hid within mountain villages until the attack was launched. German prisoners said they had been caught completely by surprise." The 442nd had become a secret weapon!

The men knew the end of the war was near. In fact, the officers had been informed of the negotiations but sworn to secrecy so that during the campaign the pressure on the Germans would not abate. This did not deter them from acts of courage and defiance in the war's final weeks. Ahead of them lay Montignoso, Monte Nrugiana, Carrara, and Ortonovo, and Monte Nebbione at Aulla—all heavily defended positions.

One of the young soldiers, Yoshio Nakamura (who would become an art instructor and eventually chairman of the Department of Fine Arts at Rio Hondo College in California), recalls, "We were assigned to take out German observation posts, and we had to scale an extremely steep mountain in the middle of the night. Luckily, we were led by Italian partisans who knew every inch of the peak. We were able to take the enemy by surprise."

In another action, on April 21, 1945, the 442nd was near San Ternzo, east of Aulla, battling to take a key ridge position from the retreating Germans. Recently promoted to 2nd lieutenant, 20-year-old Daniel Inouye led his men against three well-sited machine-gun positions. Unfortunately, Inouye was frantic because he had lost his field jacket containing the two silver dollars that had saved his life in the Vosges when a bullet struck them. However, he shrugged it off and led his men forward.

This part of the line was held by Italian Army die-hards who would not surrender and sold their lives dearly. Inouye led the assault on the first machine-gun position and was

wounded in the stomach but succeeded in killing the crew with a grenade. He advanced on the second position, throwing two grenades and disabling that site.

Finally, with his unit advancing, he crawled up the flank of the third position and prepared to throw a grenade. However, a German rifle grenade hit and shattered his right arm. The grenade was still in his now-useless hand. His men headed for him to stanch his wounds but he ordered them back. Transferring the grenade to his good hand, he threw it at the position and then stood, firing the submachine gun one-handed when he was wounded again. He would receive the Distinguished Service Cross for these actions.

His arm was amputated without anesthetic because he had been given the maximum morphine dose in the field. With the loss of his arm went his hopes of becoming a surgeon. Thankfully, the United States gained a great senator. His DSC was upgraded to the Medal of Honor in 2000.

The war in Italy ended on May 2, 1945, as the Germans there surrendered. Their fighting days against the fascists and Nazi forces were over but not their fight for human dignity and rights. Interestingly, this fight was enforced for Inouye when 17 transfusions from black soldiers saved his life and had him contemplate the common dignity of all men.

Meanwhile, the 522nd Field Artillery, on detached service, was a witness to some of the most dramatic scenes of the war as it advanced against the final German defenses into Germany. Here in a great irony not lost on the men, they participated in the liberation of some of Dachau's perimeter camps and saw for themselves the horror they had been battling for years.

U.S. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall commented on the performance of the Nisei: "They were superb! That word correctly describes it: superb! They took terrific casualties. They showed rare courage and tremendous fighting spirit. Not too much can be said of the performance of those battalions in Europe and everybody wanted them...."

Returning home in July 1946, the 442nd was the first unit met personally by President Harry S. Truman even though many others had returned before them. He addressed the assembled Nisei and told them, "You fought for the free nations of the world.... You fought not only the enemy, you fought prejudice—and you won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win—to make this great Republic stand for what the Constitution says it stands for: 'the welfare of all the people, all the time.'"

ABOVE: After six months in France, the 442nd was returned to Italy in March 1945. Here a soldier from 100th Infantry Battalion sprays an Italian hillside with his BAR to silence German sniper activity near the Gothic Line. BELOW: Men from 442nd RCT dash for cover as German artillery lands near their headquarters in Italy, April 4, 1945.

They became the most decorated unit of its size in U.S history. In 2000 President Bill Clinton upgraded a number of their decorations including Inouye's to the Medal of Honor. The final count for the 100th/442nd was 21 Medals of Honor (20 of which were upgrades from other awards), 33 DSCs, 559 Silver Stars, 4,000 Bronze Stars, 9,486 Purple Hearts, and eight Presidential Unit Citations. These were awarded to a group that consisted of a total of 14,000 men serving in the 3,800-man unit during the war, a replacement rate of approximately 3.7.

On November 2, 2011, all veterans of the 100th, 442nd, and the Military Intelligence Services were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. The medal was first presented by George Washington and represents the highest civilian honor that Congress can bestow. The medal was adorned with unit names and symbols, armed Nisei, and "Go for Broke."

While the Nisei had been battling on two war fronts, the home front saw its own fighting until 1946. Through 1943 and increasing U.S. success in the Pacific it became evident to some senior members of the War Department and other government agencies that the exclusion of Japanese Americans was no longer required for any reason and was likely a violation of their civil rights. Estimates were prepared and criteria established for releasing the vast majority of captives.

However, General Dewitt fought to keep the exclusion in place. The West Coast press and public were also vociferous in support of the exclusion. Clearly nothing would happen until after the November 1944 presidential election. However, besides studies, the first small step was taken in September 1943 with the replacement of DeWitt by the Hawaiian military governor, General Emmons. Emmons quickly began studies to shrink the exclusion zone and generally worked with Washington, D.C., to begin to examine the unraveling of the program.

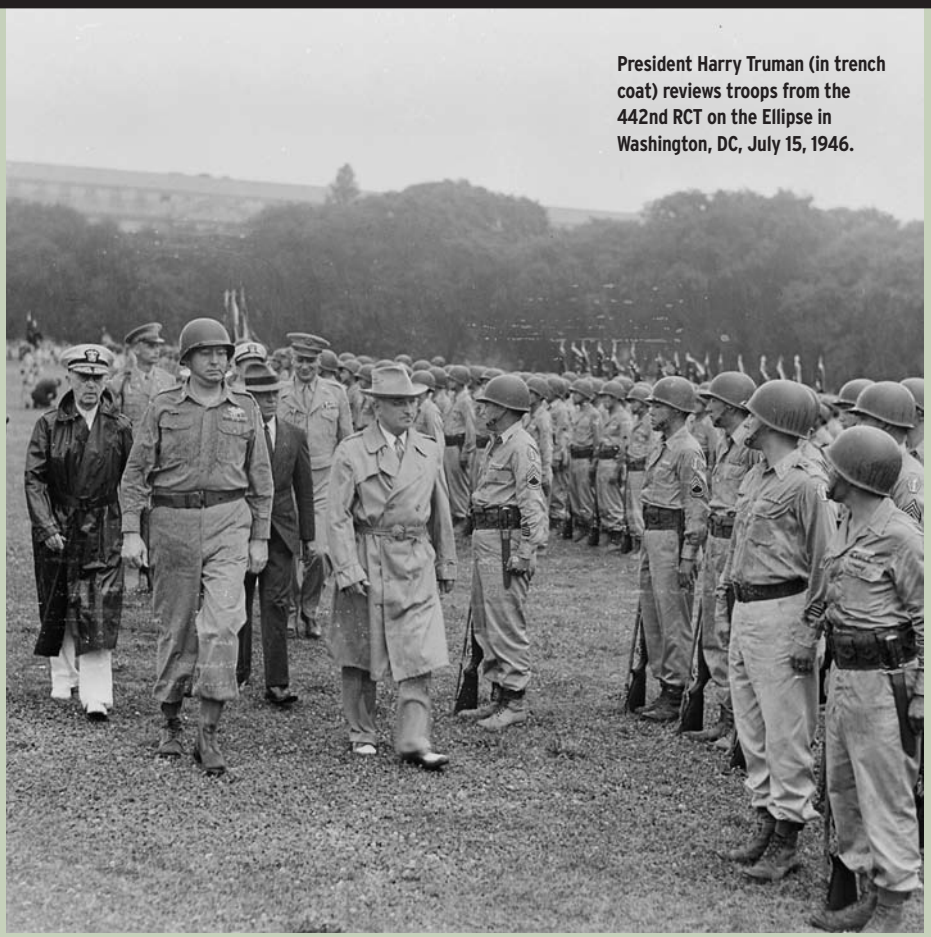
The justification for the program was broken when Under-Secretary of State John J. McCloy ruled that Nisei soldiers on leave could visit the excluded area with little or no supervision. With massive U.S. victories in the Pacific, the War Relocation Authority, Justice Department, and the War Department were ready to end the program. With Roosevelt's reelection in November, it was decided at the first cabinet meeting after the election to do just that. The Supreme Court issued a ruling that both supported and went against the camps. This has left a convoluted legal legacy.

In a short time plans were drawn up and a legal structure put in place. A list of more than 115,000 Japanese Americans cleared to leave the camps and return to the excluded areas was prepared. Approximately 5,500 were identified as being an issue based on the following criteria and sent to Tule Lake. (It would be the last camp closed, in late 1946.) The criteria mimicked that of the year before:

- Refusal to register on the Selective Service questionnaire
- Refusal to serve in the United States armed forces
- Refusal, without qualification, to swear allegiance to the United States
- Voluntary submittal of a written statement of loyalty to Japan
- Agents or operatives of Japan
- Voluntary request of revocation of American citizenship

The formal announcement that the camps would all be closed in one year was made on December 17, 1944, as Proclamation No. 21 was issued. However, things quickly bogged down, mainly for political reasons. The human toll on returning to devastated communities slowed the internees leaving. In many cases they simply had no belongings, no money, and nowhere to go. Over 75 percent had lost their homes. The booming war economy did help, but the elderly suffered. By January 1945, only one in six of the internees had left their camps. The government eventually forced all to leave, granting them a train ticket and $25 to restart their lives.

There was violence and racism directed at the returnees. Open discrimination against employment or even entry into businesses and the buying of homes occurred. Gradually the government officials and sympathetic whites eased some of these situations, but it was disheartening in the extreme. More than 4,300 Japanese Americans who had requested deportation were returned to a war-ravaged Japan with almost no assistance. Their isolation in a newly devastated land was also extreme. Others claimed that their renunciation of citizenship had been a protest against their situation and applied to stay. Their court battles took decades. Tule Lake closed to a sigh of relief in March 1946.



President Harry Truman (in trench coat) reviews troops from the 442nd RCT on the Ellipse in Washington, DC, July 15, 1946.

As with many experiences of discrimination and persecution, both white and Japanese American society tried to forget these experiences. However, the sheer injustice of the event kept it alive. In 1948 the Congress allowed claims for hardship due to the exclusion. Approximately 127,000 claims were filed totaling $148,000,000, and about $37,000,000 was granted. In 1952 the ban on Japanese immigration was lifted and the Issei granted citizenship.

The matter faded in memory while the families fought to recover their livelihood and assimilate. There it would stay until younger members of the community, banding with survivors and former military, began to push for some redress. In 1978 the Japanese American Citizens League began a process to grant funds to all involved and secure an apology from the government. This was finally achieved with the passage of the Civil Liberties Act in 1988 (the bill was numbered HR 442 in honor of the 442nd).

Two of the bill's sponsors had both been in camps—then Representative and future Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta and Representative Robert T. Matsui of California. (Matsui's family had four days in which to sell their home and move to the internment camp at Poston, Arizona; the sale netted $50.) The linkage between Japanese American valor on the battlefield and the closing of the camps was never more clear.

President Ronald Reagan presented the apology for the government. In it he stated, "Yes, the nation was then at war, struggling for its survival, And it's not for us today to pass judgment upon those who may have made mistakes while engaged in that great struggle. Yet we must recognize that the internment of Japanese Americans was just that, a mistake. More than a mistake, it was a grave violation of civil liberties and a blot on America's commitment to constitutional rights." The government appropriated $1.2 billion for redress which also included the Aleuts.

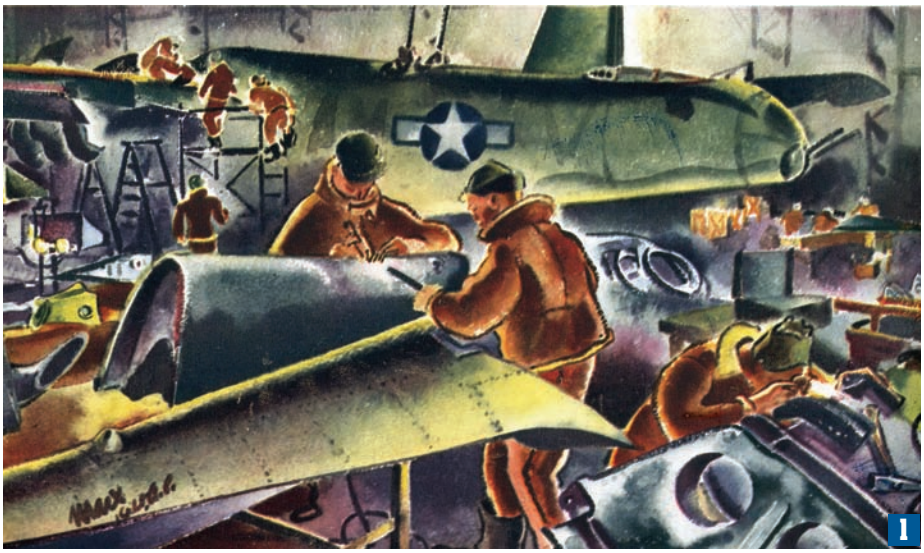
President George H.W. Bush would add to the apology and increase the funding with an additional $400 million awarded. The Canadian government did the same in 1988.

How do we look back on these events? What meaning abides for the present and the future of the United States? We learned that our principles can be compromised. Wrong can be done in the name of right. Good and strong citizens can bow to the weak and mean spirited. How do we prevent this from happening again?

The answers are actually quite simple. We must stand for each other and the deepest principles to which we pledge our allegiance, rule of law, "liberty and justice for all," "all men are created equal," "the pursuit of happiness." We have been told what can happen, but will we listen? The Civil Liberties Act was not just for the aggrieved parties but for all Americans, especially for the future generations. Japanese Americans not only saw their human rights affirmed but had changed a nation and how it viewed itself.

The linkage between the camps and the fighting Nisei is perhaps one of the greatest examples in our history of sheer courage and devotion. The Nisei knew what they were fighting and dying for: the very survival of their people as U.S. citizens. This was worth everything to them as they proved on countless battlefields or even in the camps by saying "no-no." The words inscribed on their monument in Los Angeles written by Ben Tamashiro, veteran of the 100th Battalion, say this most eloquently: "Rising to the defense of their country, by the thousands they came—these young Japanese American soldiers from Hawaii, the states, America's concentration camps—to fight in Europe and the Pacific during World War II.

"Looked upon with suspicion, set apart and deprived of their constitutional rights, they nevertheless remained steadfast and served with indomitable spirit and uncommon valor, for theirs was a fight to prove loyalty. This legacy will serve as a sobering reminder that never again shall any group be denied liberty and the rights of citizenship." □



NINTH AIR FORCE CAPTURED IN BRUSHSTROKES

Artist Milton Marx chronicled the Ninth U.S. Air Force preparing for the Normandy invasion and beyond.

BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

THE NINTH AIR FORCE officially arrived in England when General Lewis H. Brereton set up his headquarters in Sunninghill Park, Berkshire, on October 16, 1943. The Ninth had already had its baptism of fire in the North African desert, where it supported Field Marshall Bernard L. Montgomery's Eighth British Army. Now it would build up to the most important action of the European Theater—the upcoming invasion of France.

As he had done in North Africa (see *WWII Quarterly,* Fall 2010), Lieutenant Milton Marx, a commercial artist in civilian life and an officer attached to the Ninth's Public Relations Office, followed the action with his paintbrush and watercolors. He captured scenes of mechanics repairing aircraft, cannibalizing parts from destroyed planes, and test-firing machine guns. He also depicted pilots enjoying downtime, controllers preparing fighters to take off, and the dramatic departure of C-47s with their cargoes of paratroopers filling the sky as they aimed for the Normandy coast on the night of June 6, 1944.

1. On a cold February day, mechanics work in heavy leather bomber suits.

2. The commanding officer's Thunderbolt, the *Gawdamighty! Jeeter* awaits its pilot. In the background, a bomb crane delivers "gifts" that will be dropped on the German Army.

3. A Mustang waits for the sky to clear at an aerodrome in northern England, January 1944.

1. "Firing in." Mechanics check the hanging guns of a jacked-up fighter.

2. GIs waterproof their ambulance for the Channel crossing on D + 18 as a Royal Air Force liaison officer watches the work.

3. Ninth Air Force Military Policemen, nurses, airmen, and anyone in uniform saluted Old Glory every night when the bugler blew "Retreat."

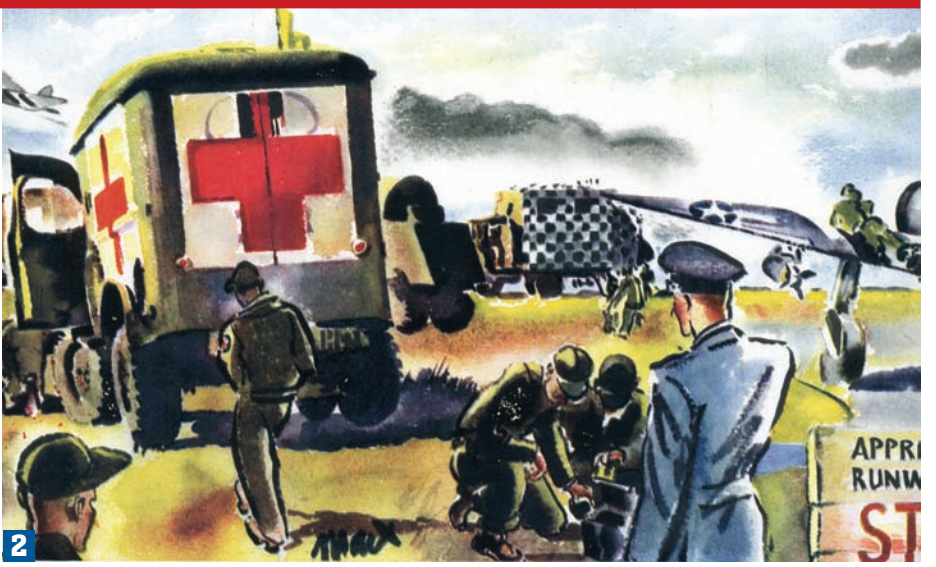
4. Crash trucks, pundit lights, the flight surgeons, and ambulances were always at hand during take-offs.

5. D-Day eve, 2300 hours. C-47s with paratroopers aboard fill the sky as they depart northern England.

Although the Eighth U.S. Air Force seems to be the most well-known today, the Ninth saw more than its share of combat, bombing German positions in France and Belgium, hampered only by the cloudy weather so common in northern Europe. P-51 Mustangs, P-47 Thunderbolts, P-38 Lightnings, B-26 Marauders, and A-20 Havocs replaced the war-weary P-40 Warhawks, P-40D Kittyhawks, B-25 Mitchells, and B-24 Liberators that fought so hard in North Africa. The force also included a Troop Carrier Command that ferried airborne troops to their drop zones and landing zones, carried freight, and delivered wounded to hospitals.

The Ninth raced to destroy V-1 rocket "buzz bomb" launcher sites around Calais before the Germans could fire them at London. Medium bombers also attacked coastal defenses, inland strongpoints, railroad marshaling yards, and airfields. Bridges were an important target to isolate the Normandy area from Germans trying to resupply troops and equipment around the landing beaches. Planes that did not bomb or strafe were busy photographing the shoreline and enemy troop concentrations.

On the eve of D-Day, the Ninth's sky train of C-47s formed a mighty armada,



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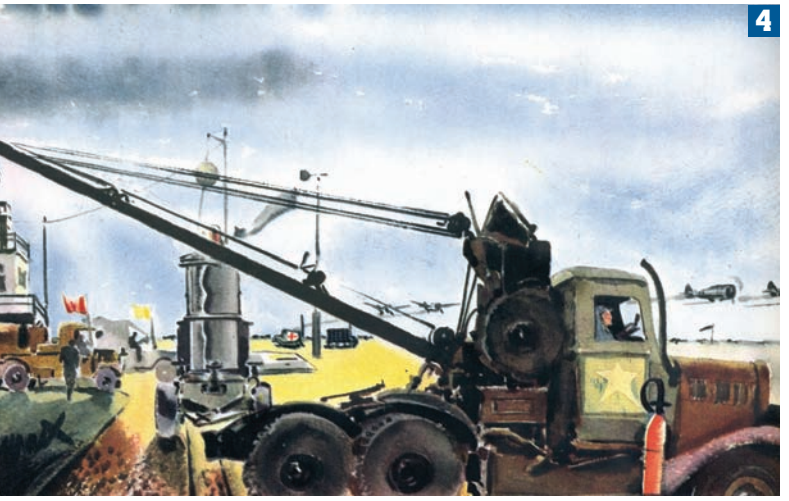
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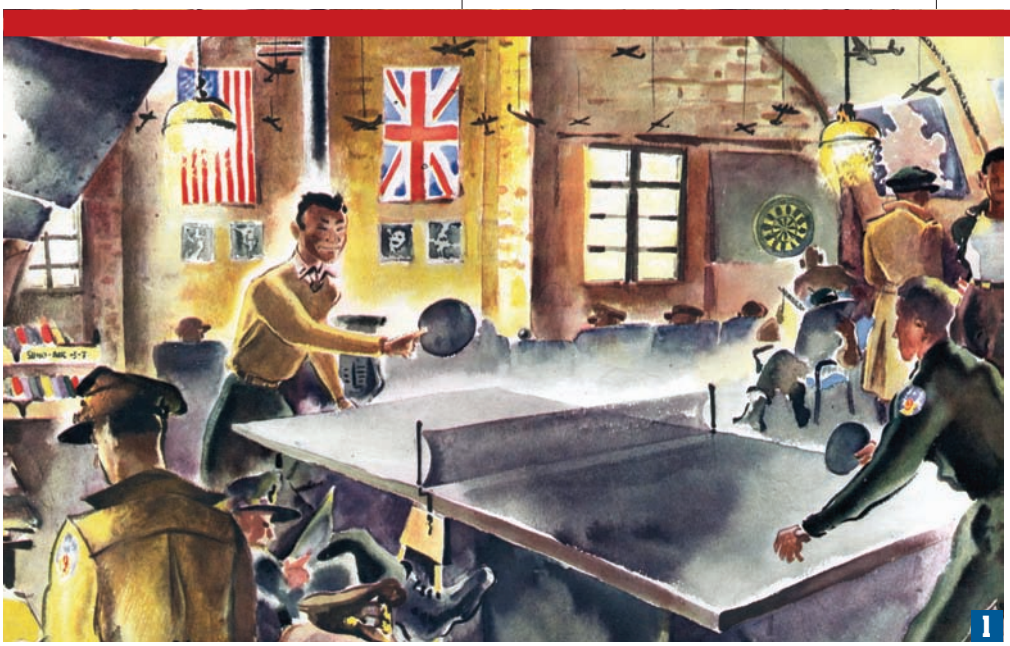

1. **Pilots lounge at a Mustang base in northern England.**

2. **A flight controller keeps fighters moving at a former RAF base in southern England.**

3. **Fifteen days after D-Day, a Thunderbolt affectionately named the *Screemin' Weenie* gets a "goin' over," at a base in southern England before taking off for targets of opportunity in Normandy.**

4. **The Lightning reconnaissance plane *Peeping Tom* gets a camera change as other Lightnings head for the fight. Recon pilots were able to photograph Holland in only three quarters of an hour.**

5. **Mechanics in a "boneyard" salvage B-26 parts with acetylene torches amid the raw wetness of northern England.**

delivering paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions to their drop zones. Follow-up flights brought towed gliders filled with men and equipment to the troops below. The fighter planes, released from their defensive roles, became fighter-bombers, supporting the Americans on the ground and wreaking havoc with the enemy.

After covering the landing beaches, the fighter-bombers attacked ahead of the Allied lines, strafing trains, bivouacs, enemy columns, and fortified defenses. Pilots assigned to ground units contacted air wings by radio and directed them to frontline positions. With this superb air cover, the American First and Third Armies cut off the Cherbourg peninsula and broke out at Saint Lô.

When General George S. Patton, Jr., blasted across France, he used the Ninth Air Force's fighter-bombers to guard his flanks, something never seen before on the battlefield. With the Ninth's help, the Western Allies entered Paris in August and crossed the Seine River.

Thanks to photographers and artists like Milton Marx, the visual history of the immense sweep of a world war has been preserved for future generations. □


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C-IT OF THIS!


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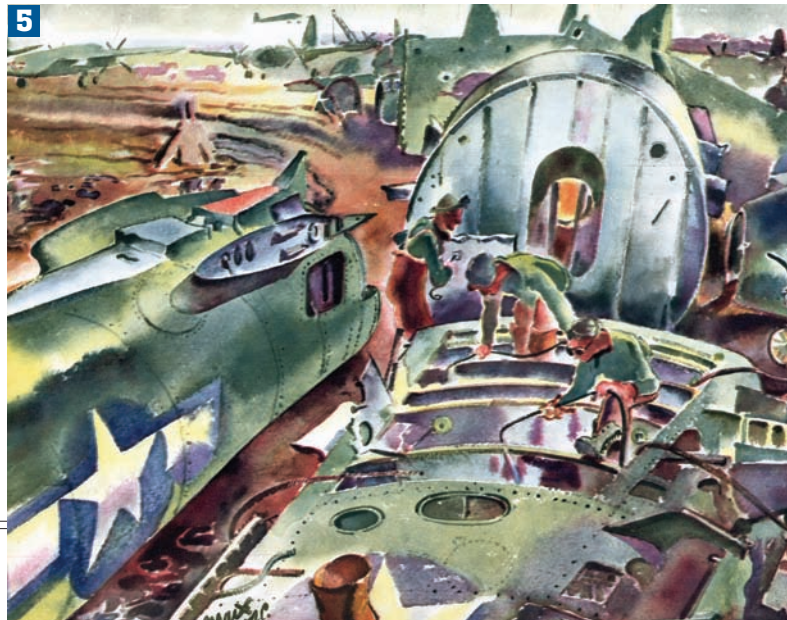
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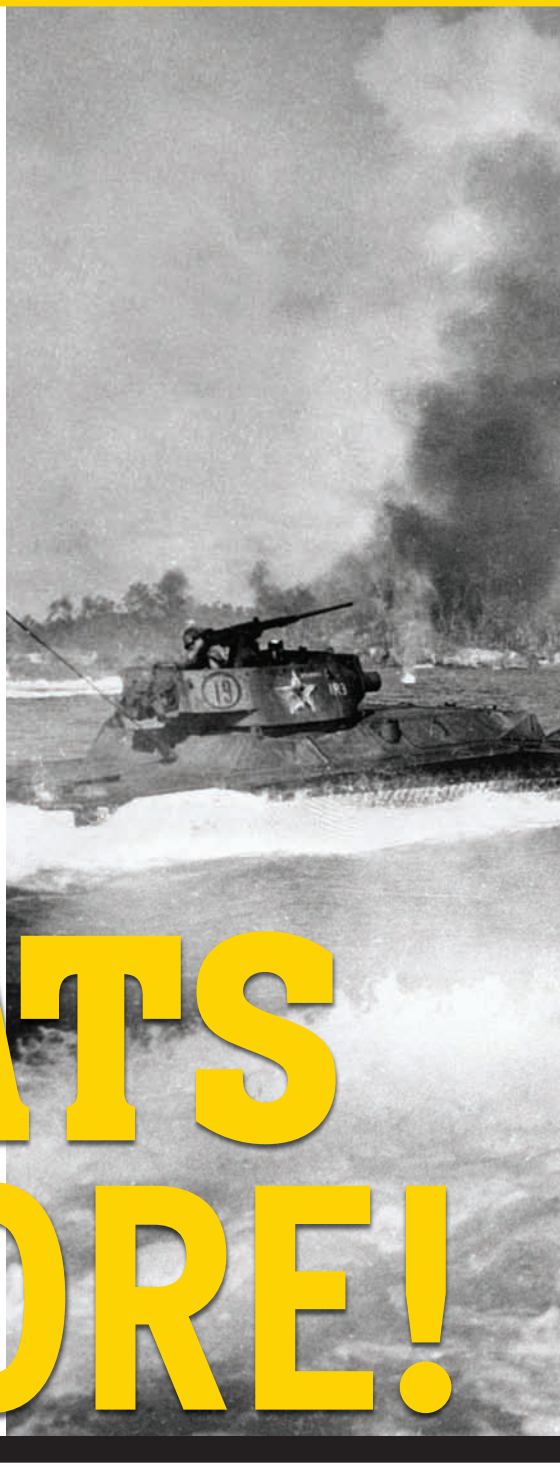
The Granger Collection, New York



The desperate fight for Angaur Island, a tiny piece of Pacific real estate, went almost unnoticed—except for the soldiers on both sides who were caught up in its brutality.

WILDCATS ASHORE!

BY NATHAN N. PREFER

On maps of the Pacific, it's barely visible—a mere, seemingly insignificant speck in a vast ocean. Its name—unlike Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Iwo Jima, Okinawa—is virtually unknown today. Yet, in the autumn of 1944, Angaur Island became another hard-fought piece of real estate in a war that propelled so many previously unknown pieces of real estate into places of strategic importance until they quickly faded from the public's consciousness.

Angaur is located about 10 miles southwest of Peleliu. It is a small (three miles by six miles) volcanic island with a very small indigenous population who lived by farming, fishing, and phosphate mining. First occupied by the Spanish in the 17th century, it had been sold to Germany after the Spanish-American War and then held under a League of Nations mandate by Japan until 1935, when Japan left the League. From that time on, Japan had exercised virtual sovereignty over the islands.

One of the least known yet most controversial campaigns of the Pacific War was the Palau Islands campaign (Operation Stalemate) in the fall of 1944. Most accounts of that campaign focus on the bloody battle for the island of Peleliu during the campaign, where the veteran 1st Marine Division was decimated while eliminating enemy forces on that island.

The battle fought for nearby Angaur Island, which took place at the same time as the battle for Peleliu, is far less controversial and even less well known, but no less savage. Unlike the Marines, the troops that took Angaur are even less well known than the battles they fought. They were the "Wildcats," the U.S. Army's 81st Infantry Division.

Strategically, by midsummer 1944, General Douglas MacArthur's forces in the Southwest Pacific Theater had conquered all that was necessary for Allied use in New Guinea. During that same summer it had been determined that the next major objective would be the Philippines. The Allies would cut off Japanese lines of supply and communication while at the same time establishing staging areas for the eventual assault on the Japanese homeland.

In the Central Pacific, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz's Pacific Ocean Areas Theater had just seized the Mariana Islands. Nimitz's forces, too, were to head farther west to place themselves within striking range of the Japanese home islands.

As reports began to come in about the increasing weakness of advance Japanese posi-

tions blocking his way to the Philippines, MacArthur altered his plans. On the advice of Vice Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey, he decided to abandon several preliminaries and advance directly on the Philippines, thereby speeding up Allied progress across the Pacific.

Nimitz was planning to seize Yap and Ulithi Islands to secure naval bases and airfields to neutralize Japanese positions in the Caroline Islands, particularly the strong Japanese naval base at Truk Island. Once that operation was completed, Nimitz's forces were to seize the entire Palau Island group to advance farther west while at the same time protecting the flank of MacArthur's advance toward the Philippines.

But here, too, new information changed the early plans. News of heavy Japanese reinforcements being rushed to the Palau Islands, and his own shortage of troops, equipment, and shipping resources changed Nimitz's mind as well. Instead of seizing the entire Palau Island group, he altered his plans to seize the three largest islands in the southern section of that

group: Angaur, Ngesebus, and Peleliu. This would provide the necessary airfields and anchorages required for future operations while conserving scarce resources. But even these supposedly "final" plans were soon to be altered once again as new intelligence arrived and was digested by the two commanders.

When all the planning was done, the seizure of Yap and the Talaud Islands were dropped from the schedule—they would be neutralized by naval and air attacks—while the attacks on Morotai and the

Two Wildcats, under fire for the first time, take cover inside their landing craft on the way to Angaur.

Palau Islands would proceed as scheduled; forces were shifted and adjusted to allow for these changes.

For the Palau Islands operation, the overall commander was Vice Admiral Bull Halsey as the Commander, Western Pacific Task Force, and Commander, Third U. S. Fleet. His mission was to seize Ulithi and the southern Palaus. In turn he organized his forces into two groups: the Covering Forces and Special Groups (Task Force 30) under his direct command, and the Joint Expeditionary Force and III Amphibious Force (Task Force 31), both under the command of Rear Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson.

The Western and Eastern Attack Forces, under Wilkinson, were assigned the task of securing the Southern Palaus and Yap-Ulithi, respectively. The Western Attack Force, under the command of Rear Admiral George H. Fort, was assigned the seizure of Peleliu and Angaur. In turn, Admiral Fort delegated the overall conduct of the Angaur invasion to Rear Admiral William H.P. Blandy.

For the Palaus, the ground force commander was Maj. Gen. Roy S. Geiger, USMC, who had a wealth of experience in ground and air combat. His command, known as the Western Landing Force and Troops, or as the III Amphibious Corps, USMC, included the 1st Marine Division (Maj. Gen. William H. Rupertus, USMC) and the Army's 81st Infantry Division, under Maj. Gen. Paul J. Mueller. The 1st Marine Division would assault Peleliu while the 81st Infantry Division would seize Angaur and then be in reserve to assist the Marines on Peleliu. In distant reserve were the 5th Marine Division and the 77th Infantry Division.

The 81st Division had first been organized for World War I where it saw action in the Meuse-Argonne and Alsace-Lorraine offensives. After the armistice, the 81st spent months on occupation duties until returning to the United States and demobilization in June 1919. One distinction the division achieved was creating and issuing the first shoulder patch or shoulder sleeve insignia to its troops, beginning a tradition within the U.S. Army that continues today. From that insignia—a black cat in a green circle—the division got its nickname, the "Wildcats."

The division lay dormant between the wars, but after Pearl Harbor it came alive again. On June 15, 1942, the 81st Division was reactivated at Camp Rucker, Alabama, and soon redesignated as the 81st Infantry Division. It participated in the Tennessee Maneuvers in 1943, after which it underwent desert training in California. At the end of 1943 it underwent amphibious training at Camp San Luis Obispo, California. With training completed, the division sailed to Hawaii from San Francisco in July 1944.

After a month's training in Hawaii, the division moved to Guadalcanal where the men conducted final rehearsals at the end of August 1944 in preparation for their first combat assignment. The next month they were aboard troop transports and sailing west toward the Palaus.

The 81st Infantry Division was one of the few wartime divisions that kept the same commander throughout its combat career. That commander was Maj. Gen. Paul J. Mueller. He was born on November 16, 1892, in Union, Missouri, and was commissioned into the infantry from West Point in 1915. During World War I he rose to command a battalion of the 64th Infantry Regiment, 7th Division, in the American Expeditionary Forces. He spent the years 1920-1922 on occupation duty in Coblenz, Germany, before returning to the United States and graduating from the Command and General Staff School in 1923 and the Army War College in 1928. He served with the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff between 1931-1934 before instructing at the Command and General Staff School from 1935-1940. Then he moved to the position of Chief of the Training Division, Office of the Chief of Infantry, before becoming the Chief of Staff of Second U. S. Army in 1941. He was promoted to brigadier general in October 1941 and got his second star in September 1942. At this time he assumed command of the new 81st Infantry Division and led it into the Western Pacific.

Initially, Japan's main interest in the Palau Islands was their bauxite and phosphate deposits and, by 1941, some 16,000 Japanese had been sent to the islands for colonization. Japanese strip mining of Angaur's phosphate deposits—a key ingredient in the manufacture of explosives—had created two small lakes in the north and north-central regions of the island that would soon figure in the American attack.

The Japanese had also constructed a 6,600-foot-long airstrip on the eastern side and narrow-gauge railroad lines that ran through thick underbrush to connect the various mining sites. Although there were more than 6,000 natives in the island group, fewer than 300 resided on Angaur.

The Japanese had a formidable force defending the Palaus, but most of these troops were based on the group's largest island, Babelthuap. Lt. Gen. Sadae Inoue commanded

Members of the 81st Infantry Division wade ashore calmly, suggesting that this photo was taken sometime after the initial landings, when hostilities along the beachheads had quieted considerably.

the Palau Sector Group, a force made up largely of his own 14th Division. Inoue planned to defend his islands at the beaches but, as a man who learned from previous experience, he noted that the "defense-at-the-water's-edge" tactic had consistently failed at Japanese-held islands to the east. So he modified his plans to include a defense in depth should his beach defenses be breached.

Positions including mines and antiboat obstacles were placed at likely landing beaches on all the Palau Islands, and each island commander was also advised to prepare inland defenses as well. In particular, Peleliu and Angaur were able to take advantage of steep and deep ridge lines in their respective interiors.

Originally, the Angaur garrison consisted of the 59th Infantry Regiment, supported by engineers and artillery. But, for some unrecorded reason, Inoue in July 1944 decided to withdraw the bulk of that regiment to Babelthuap, leaving only the regiment's 1st Battalion, reinforced with support troops, to defend Angaur.

Under the command of Major Ushio Goto, this force, which included artillery, engineers, antiaircraft and antitank guns, mortars, and service troops, became known as the Angaur Sector Unit; it numbered about 1,400 men. The 59th Infantry Regiment, like its parent unit, the 14th Infantry Division, had been organized in 1905 and was reorganized in 1941. It was an experienced combat unit that had served in Japan, North China, and China before being transferred to the Palaus.

While the 81st Infantry Division trained in Hawaii, General Mueller began to plan his attack on Angaur. His first responsibility was to provide troops to conduct a feint landing at Peleliu, after which he was to land on Angaur. He would be allocated two of his three regiments for the operation, the third regiment being held in reserve for Peleliu should that operation turn out to be more difficult than expected. Then, in mid-September, Mueller, already in transit to the Palaus, was advised that he was to provide one regimental combat team to seize either Yap or Ulithi. That regiment, the III Amphibious Corps reserve, was then designated to seize these islands if it became necessary or desirable.

The 81st was to invade Angaur beginning on "F" Day, to distinguish it from other assaults. The 322nd Regimental Combat Team was scheduled to land on Red Beach and the 321st RCT was to land at Blue Beach at 8:30 AM. The two assault beaches were separated by 2,000 yards of rough coast and the eastern turn of the island. Mueller knew that this was not ideal, but the difficult terrain of Angaur and known placement of Japanese defenses made his choice inevitable.

Division reserve for the landings was the 3rd Battalion, 321st RCT, which was available to land on either beach should it become necessary. The III Amphibious Corps reserve, the division's own 323rd RCT, was to feint at another beach to confuse the Japanese.

Division artillery faced a difficult problem, since the narrow island would force the gunners to fire on targets below the minimum effective support ranges. To lengthen the range, Mueller and his artillery commander, Brig. Gen. Rex W. Beasley, would land the supporting artillery on opposite beaches to those regiments they would be supporting. The 105mm guns supporting the 322nd Infantry would land on Blue Beach and those supporting the 321st Infantry on Red Beach. The heavier 155mm guns of the 318th Field Artillery Battalion would come ashore on F+1.

ABOVE: A jeep tows an antitank gun ashore from a Coast Guard landing craft as two Sherman tanks cross the beach. OPPOSITE: After landing at two beachheads, the Americans forced the defenders into two pockets—one around Lake Salome (aka "Wildcat Bowl") in the northwest corner—where they were systematically wiped out.

Early on the morning of September 17, 1944, the U.S. Navy's fire-support ships moved into position off Angaur. Using a slow, methodical area fire, they bombarded the island until supporting aircraft, arriving late, appeared over the island. Dawn brought unlimited visibility, light wind, and a light surf. The infantrymen had no trouble debarking from their transports and into the assault landing craft.

Moving behind rocket and mortar boats shelling the landing beaches, the first wave of Colonel Robert F. Dark's 321st Infantry landed on Blue Beach on Angaur's eastern shore at 8:31 AM, one minute behind schedule. Only a few rounds of mortar and small-arms fire had opposed the landing. The amphibian tanks quickly moved off to protect the flanks of the incoming assault tractors known as Alligators. Green-clad figures raced from the landing craft and immediately disappeared into the thick jungle underbrush inland from the beach. The Alligators moved back into the water and loaded up with another wave of assault troops.

Offshore, a portion of the 323rd RCT made its feint at Green Beach. As the assault boats came within small-arms range of the beach, they turned and returned their troops to the transports.

Meanwhile, at Red Beach, Colonel Benjamin W. Venable's 322nd RCT came ashore six minutes late against light resistance. Lt. Col. Leonard L. Cutshall's 3rd Battalion was slowed by light enemy artillery fire and the need to hack its way through a maze of thick jungle growth behind the beach. The 1st Battalion, under Major William R. White, had no such difficulty and moved quickly inland.

Over at Blue Beach, the two assault battalions of the 321st RCT also slowed due to a maze of debris, barbed-wire entanglements, and enemy land mines. Active Japanese resistance, however, remained slight.

Back at the beach, follow-up waves continued to come ashore. Blue Beach had to be closed for a while until engineers cleared underwater obstacles blocking access. Red Beach continued to receive enemy machine-gun fire for several hours after the first landings. But none of this stopped the buildup.

Lieutenant Colonel Eugene F. Melaville brought his 306th Medical Battalion ashore and was set up for business within hours of the initial assault. The 1138th Engineer Group also arrived and immediately the threatening congestion at the beaches began to disappear and controlled organization took its place. Regimental command posts went ashore and were operating before 3 PM.

The two assault regiments had two immediate objectives: to reach the first objective line or 0-1 line and to make contact with each other and organize a united front line before the Japanese could take advantage of the gap between the regiments. But increasing enemy resistance and the nearly impenetrable jungle in many areas slowed the advance.

The 710th Tank Battalion rolled ashore and came forward to assist in the advance but, so difficult was the terrain, bulldozers had to lead the tanks forward. These difficulties kept the advance limited to a few hundred yards inland.

One of those bulldozers was manned by T/5 Vernon H. Waters of Company A, 306th Engineer (Combat) Battalion, the division's engineers. Despite enemy fire directed at him personally, he used his machine's blade to scrape an exit from the beach and then led the advancing infantry, opening trails as he went and removing any obstacles encountered along the way. Individual bravery by the untested American troops was common on Angaur.

Staff Sergeant Leslie L. McKnight of Company I, 322nd Infantry went alone against an enemy cave position, crawling forward until he was close enough to toss grenades into the opening. Pfc. Roy M. Swank of Company L did the same and knocked out an enemy machine gun holding up the advance of his company; he was later killed on Angaur.

First Lieutenant Hugh A. McCandless and S/Sgt. Jesse V. McCoy were forward observers for Battery A, 317th Field Artillery Battalion, advancing with the infantry. Instead of directing the fire of their guns, however, they exposed themselves to enemy

bullets and shells to direct the fire of the tanks against enemy fortifications.

Staff Sergeant Henry M. Myers of Company B, 306th Engineers crawled the length of his platoon's frontline position, knocking out enemy positions as he went. When faced with pillboxes his grenades could not destroy, he stood up to direct the fire of a tank against the pillboxes, and even after being seriously wounded continued to do so until enemy fire ceased. He survived to wear his Distinguished Service Cross.

Although concerned that the dangerous gap between his assault regiments would continue to remain open, General Mueller decided to take the risk and ordered his 322nd RCT, which seemed to have made better progress than the beleaguered 321st, to move forward to the O-2 Line. The 321st Infantry, slowed by terrain and strong enemy defenses in the vicinity of Rocky Point, would catch up as best it could. Meanwhile, the 322nd would advance and close the gap between the regiments.

At Rocky Point, specially trained assault squads took on the prepared enemy defenses. Using the coordination they had learned in training, the demolition squads first placed small-arms fire on the pillbox. Under the cover of this fire the automatic weapons moved up and blazed away at the enemy's firing ports. Then a flamethrower operator crawled forward to within point-blank range and let loose a burst of flame.

While the enemy reeled from that blast, engineers raced forward and placed demolition charges at vulnerable points on the pillbox. The assault squad then withdrew to a safe distance and awaited the blast. Once the smoke cleared, the squad leader determined if the pillbox was destroyed or needed another "treatment."

The supporting artillery was by now coming ashore. Lt. Col. John E. Barlow brought his 906th Field Artillery Battalion ashore that afternoon and was open for business by 4:10 PM, but Lt. Col. Carl Darnell's 316th Field Artillery Battalion had a problem after landings. Unable to observe their impact zones, they could not register their guns.

Map © 2014 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

Meanwhile, the 322nd RCT had reached the 0-2 Line and was trying to close the gap between it and the 321st Infantry. Visual contact was finally established late in the afternoon, but a group of Japanese soldiers held positions between the two regiments and could not be dislodged. Physical contact would have to await daylight.

Indeed, as the first day on Angaur ended, General Mueller had much about which to be satisfied. His division had established a firm beachhead. Its communications, under Major William S. Houston's 592nd Joint Assault Signal Company, were operating efficiently. Supporting artillery and armor were ashore and operating. Naval and air support had functioned as intended. With darkness now approaching, and knowing the Japanese preference for night counterattacks, the Wildcats dug strong defensive perimeters and awaited the new dawn.

As was usual with units new to combat, the tendency to fire at shadows or sounds took hold of the 81st Infantry Division on its first night in battle. In some areas it was so pronounced that the artillery commander, Brig. Gen. Beasley, and other commanders had to walk the front lines in danger of being shot by friend or foe alike, calming the men and assuring them that they were secure in the defensive perimeters. As it developed, the Japanese failed to take advantage of the newness of the Americans and only a few patrols and

intermittent artillery fire disturbed the Wildcats' first night ashore. But toward dawn Major Ushio Goto made his presence felt.

Goto had apparently needed the hours of darkness to assemble his counterattack force. Soon after 5 AM, he launched his attack against Company B, 321st Infantry, with the intent of rolling up the American beachhead at Blue Beach.

Courage abounded among the American troops in their first action. Captain Wallace B. Moorman, to better control his command, Company B, 321st RCT, stood erect in the midst of enemy fire to encourage his men. He earned the Silver Star.

Nearby, Pfc. George B. Draughn, an attached machine gunner of Company D, was blinded in one eye by a shell fragment. Refusing evacuation, he remained with his gun crew until the enemy attack was turned back.

Private First Class Stephen W. White remained at his radio transmitting orders and information even as his platoon leader and platoon sergeant were killed in the same hole. Private William P. Curtis, Medical Department, crawled from hole to hole in the midst of the attack to provide first aid to at least eight wounded men. Another machine gunner from Company D, Pfc. Homer L. Johnson, volunteered to crawl forward to an abandoned machine gun. Under enemy small-arms fire he dismantled the gun and, cradling it in his arms, fired it as he crawled back to friendly lines.

Second Lieutenant Peter Chappetto of Company D saw a Company B rifle platoon leader killed and immediately assumed command of that platoon after receiving serious wounds that later resulted in his death.

Despite the need to withdraw 50 yards, Captain Moorman's Company B held its line and forced the Japanese to flee back into the island's interior. Occupying the enemy's former positions were a depleted rifle company and a wounded battalion commander (Lt. Col. Lester J. Evans). The Americans had a firm grip on Angaur.

The 322nd Infantry had received a much less severe attack that same morning and soon turned the Japanese back. At 9 AM, after a three-hour artillery preparation, the division again attacked with the 322nd directed to seize the 0-4 Line and the 321st Infantry the 0-2 Line. The 322nd pushed Lt. Col. Thomas D. McPhail's 2nd Battalion past the tired 1st Battalion of Major White.

Once again the rough terrain proved as difficult as the Japanese. The 3rd Battalion found the enemy gone from its front and occupied the phosphate plant area, but the main opposition fell against the 321st Infantry. Colonel Dark's regiment was hit by two counterattacks against Companies C and F but, with the support of air strikes, beat them both back.

Immediately, the 2nd Battalion took the offensive, but a second strong Japanese attack hit the 1st Battalion and forced a withdrawal. Once again air support and offshore shelling by an LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry) defeated the Japanese offensive.

Division headquarters landed on Red Beach at 7:55 AM and by 9:25 General Mueller

National Archives

National Archives

ABOVE: The 322nd's advance to the Wildcat Bowl is stalled briefly by sniper fire along the railroad tracks. OPOSITE: Soldiers of the 322nd Infantry Regiment, accompanied by Sherman tanks of the 710th Tank Battalion, follow narrow-gauge railroad tracks that lead to Angaur's phosphate plant and Lake Salome.

was ashore and directing the operation in person; at noon he assumed command of operations ashore from the Navy task force commander.

That same afternoon the 322nd Infantry achieved a physical link with the 321st, closing the dangerous gap between the regiments and trapping dozens of Japanese snipers and pillbox garrisons between them. The division's Reconnaissance Troop was directed to eliminate these holdouts.

It was Lt. Col. Evans's 1st Battalion, 321st Infantry that discovered why the landings at the Red and Blue Beaches had been lightly opposed. As they moved to clear Rocky Point, they discovered a perfectly developed and positioned defense system of pillboxes, dugouts, rifle pits, and interconnecting trenches. These were positioned to fire to the front or flanks, and each pillbox was defended by trenches or rifle pits to prevent infantry from making a close approach.

Trenches also provided a protected and covered access for reinforcements and supplies. Built of two walls of heavy coconut logs separated by several feet of space filled with sand and coral rock, they were all but impregnable to any infantry carried weapons. Never more than three feet above the surface and well camouflaged, they varied in size and shape depending upon the defenses they held. What they held was artillery, machine guns, and small arms manned by determined Japanese troops. They defended the best landing beaches on the island, the ones General Mueller had declined to land upon.

Colonel Evans quickly realized that a frontal attack on these prepared positions was senseless. Taking advantage of the Japanese failure to protect themselves from the rear, he left a small containing force to occupy the Japanese troops' attention while the bulk of the 1st Battalion outflanked and isolated the enemy. Stopped briefly by a destroyed pillbox that had been reoccupied by the Japanese, the battalion advanced slowly over steep cliffs and through thick jungle.

Nearby, the 2nd Battalion reached the 0-2 Line and Lt. Col. Dallas A. Pillod's 3rd Battalion and its attached tanks of Company B, 710th Tank Battalion cleared the phosphate plant area and moved to within 300 yards of Angaur's west coast. But there were problems: when Company L of the 322nd RCT was firing on Japanese defenses, they were suddenly attacked by friendly aircraft.

Private First Class Richard F. Behm had just placed his machine gun in position when the American aircraft began to bomb and strafe his position. Undeterred, he continued firing his gun at an enemy pillbox until he knocked it out, only to be mortally wounded himself; he was awarded a posthumous Silver Star.

Upon learning of the "friendly fire" incident, which cost the division seven men killed and 46 wounded, General Mueller immediately ordered a cessation of all air attacks on the island. But the air attack, and the indiscriminate shooting from behind by service and supply troops reacting to the occasional sniper fire, kept the Wildcats distrustful of all friendly supporting fire for some time to come.

By late afternoon, however, elements of the 322nd Infantry were in sight of the town of Saipan, the island's capital and largest city.

Back on the beaches, Lt. Col. Harold Taber's 52nd Engineer Battalion and Lt. Col. Alan E. Gee's 154th Engineer Battalion continued to improve the Red and Blue Beaches, respectively. Fighting off the occasional sniper and ducking intermittent mortar fire on the beaches, the two battalions of the 1138th Engineer Group cleared, organized, and operated the beach areas and supply dumps for the assault troops.

There was no counterattack during the night of September 18-19. Enemy infiltrators hit some units and small patrols were encountered, but the men of the 81st Infantry Division were now combat veterans and there was no recurrence of the previous night's outbreak of indiscriminate firing. With dawn on September 19, the advance resumed.

This day the 321st Infantry had an easier time. With half a dozen infantrymen riding on tanks of Companies A and C, 710th Tank Battalion, they moved swiftly toward Middle Village, the second and only other settlement on the island, against light opposition. Three enemy pillboxes near Rocky Point were destroyed but enemy fire from Green Beach pinned down Company K for a while. Attempts to eliminate these

defenses were halted by observed Japanese artillery and mortar fire.

Meanwhile, the 322nd RCT cleared Saipan village against mortar, rifle, and machine-gun fire and reached the 0-6 Line. In Colonel McPhail's 2nd Battalion of the 322nd, Companies E and F assaulted Shrine Hill, capturing four 75mm guns and clearing numerous enemy caves and mine fields. As the attack progressed, T/Sgt. James F. Weston of Company E found himself in personal combat with an enemy brandishing a samurai sword. After tossing a grenade into a cave, Weston suddenly saw a sword-wielding Japanese officer come rushing out directly at him. Wounded by a blade slash, and also by grenades thrown by supporting Japanese soldiers, Weston held his ground and killed his attacker.

General Mueller made a personal reconnaissance of his front lines on the 19th. Having seen for himself the situation at the front of his assault regiments, he ordered their commanders to proceed in the attack without regard to objective phase lines; clearing the rest of the island before nightfall was the new goal.

The 321st Infantry put all three battalions on line and resumed the attack. Accompanied by tanks, the troops advanced against light resistance and reached a point about 800 yards from the southern tip of the island by 5:35 PM. Here they were stopped by a counterattack by some 200 Japanese soldiers. The attack came over open ground without supporting fire, and the Japanese were decimated.

At Green Beach, the 3rd Battalion finished clearing enemy defenses despite determined resistance by the Japanese.

Colonel Venable's 322nd Infantry attacked Lighthouse Hill and ran into strong, well-concealed fortifications. American flanking movements met with limited success, and one was halted by murderous fire coming from the area of Lake Salome, one of the two lakes created by the strip mining. With darkness fast approaching and the ground unsuitable for defense, the 322nd withdrew to better defensive terrain and waited for the next day.

ABOVE: Observing the Army's progress on Angaur from a half-track are Maj. Gen. Julian C. Smith (left, with glasses), commanding the Third Fleet's amphibious troops; Maj. Gen. Paul J. Mueller (center), the 81st Division's commander; and Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Roy Geiger, commander of III Amphibious Corps. BELOW: 81st Infantry Division troops advance through a landscape torn up by the naval bombardment.

National Archives

Late that afternoon, aircraft observed a group of rubber boats near the island's southern tip. Exactly what the Japanese were attempting was unknown, but American artillery destroyed whatever was going on.

The day's advance had split Major Goto's forces into three isolated groups. One remained in the Green Beach defenses, another held the southern tip of the island, and a third was in the area Palomas-Romauldo-Black Beach.

For their actions thus far, the Wildcats received a Naval "Well Done" by the III Amphibious Force commander. One of those who earned the well done was Pfc. Clarence

W. White of Company K, 321st Infantry, who exposed himself to enemy fire, using his light machine gun to pinpoint enemy positions for others to destroy. When some remained, he mounted the deck of a disabled tank and directed the tank's fire from that position until he fell wounded. From an exposed position on the ground, White continued to indicate enemy targets using his machine gun until he was hit a second time and mortally wounded. He received the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously.

This day also saw the first Japanese prisoner of war captured. Seriously wounded, the soldier had been captured in a pillbox near Red Beach. Under interrogation by T/4 Saburo Nakamura and S/Sgt. James Kai, he reported that he had been in the pillbox for six days and that all troops except his battalion—1st Battalion, 59th Infantry, 14th Division—at a strength of a little over 1,000, had left for Babelthuap in June.

General Mueller had visitors this day, conducting ground force commander Maj. Gen. Geiger and naval force commander Rear Adm. Blandy over the battlefield.

September 20 opened with an attack by the 2nd Battalion, 322nd Infantry on Palomas Hill. Bitter fighting ensued but the Americans pushed their attack, knocking out pillboxes as they struggled up the nearly vertical slopes of the hill. By 9 AM the battalion owned the hill, which they quickly discovered had been the enemy's command post. Large quantities of weapons, including 75mm guns, were captured.

Meanwhile, Company G of the battalion, supported by tanks, was fighting its way toward Lake Salome, but Japanese defenses in the area were strong and the advance slowed. To the south, the 321st Infantry cleared enemy remnants in the southern end of the island. By midday the area was considered secured, and the outcome of the battle certain.

Another tour of inspection by General Mueller, accompanied by the corps commander, of the southern tip of the island confirmed the enemy's destruction. At 10:55 AM a radio message was sent to Corps Headquarters that read, "All organized resistance ceased on Angaur at 1034. Island Secure."

The island may have been declared "secure," but the resistance had not "ceased"; the battle went on. Major Goto had been caught unprepared for the American attack, expecting instead that they would come against his prepared defenses in the southern section of the island. Then the feint landing further convinced him that additional American landings were planned on the island, and he held much of his battalion in their positions, like those on Green Beach, awaiting an attack that never came.

Once he realized that the 81st Infantry Division had completed its landing operations, Goto began to pull his units together and move toward the northwest hills of the island, abandoning his southern defenses. Anything that could not be carried was discarded, including the artillery pieces captured at Paloma Hill. His troops took only what they could carry into the rugged northwest corner of Angaur and prepared themselves for the "defense in depth" phase of the island's defense.

The northwest corner of the island was like the difficult coral cave area on the island of Biak, New Guinea, that had delayed the 41st Infantry Division for weeks just a few months earlier. Filled with coral pinnacles, shallow shelves, and ridge lines running in every direction, Angaur's northwest section was filled with natural crevices and covered by large tropical trees and thick jungle undergrowth. It was a defender's dream and an attacker's nightmare.

So rough was the terrain that the tanks of the 710th Tank Battalion could not be used in the assault. In the heavy jungle and bleak coral landscape, the incredible heat and humidity of the island intensified its toll on the attacking Americans. Colonel Venable also noted that evacuating casualties would be a difficult operation and so pulled his regiment back to reorganize for a new attack the following day. By this time, the division intelligence section estimated that about 850 enemy had been killed, leaving about 350 cornered in the northwest.

Based on this estimate,General Mueller believed that a reinforced regiment could clear the rest of Angaur and so assigned Venable's 322nd Infantry that job. The attack on September 20 immediately faced problems, however. Enemy automatic weapons and small-arms fire from heights to the front and from the right flank hit Major White's 1st Battalion. The supporting tanks could not get past the difficult ground to assist the infantry. Then a swamp near Lake Aztec forced the infantry to move along a line of advance that the Japanese had already planned as a fire zone. Although the advance was difficult and dangerous, the Wildcats pushed forward and made progress.

National Archives

A Japanese infantryman, killed during fighting at the Wildcat Bowl, wears captured American gear including canteen, belts, and binoculars.

The next major obstacle was Lake Salome, or what was later called "Wildcat Bowl." The first move toward the Bowl by Company G and self-propelled guns of the regiment's Cannon Company was soon halted by land mines and an enemy antitank gun that knocked out one of the guns and wounded the entire crew. Colonel Venable immediately sent up a platoon of medium tanks but they could not get through a defile that led to the Bowl.

With his advance stalled, Venable ordered Company B to attack from the east. Forced to cut their way through thick undergrowth, Company B's attack soon bogged down. Faced with no alternative, Venable ordered both groups to withdraw while artillery registered on the Bowl. By the end of September 20, the 322nd Infantry firmly disagreed with General Mueller's estimate that the Japanese on Angaur were defeated.

Later intelligence estimates indicated that Major Goto had more than 750 men defending the Wildcat Bowl. He had recently received orders from General Inoue that no final banzai attacks were to be launched and that the defense in depth tactic was to be carried out to the end.

On September 21 the regiment went back on the attack. Led by Companies E and F, the 322nd tried to break into the western side of the enemy defenses. Supported by a naval air strike and the division's 155mm gun battalion, which had to relocate because once again the range was below the minimum for the guns, the infantry attacked, confident that the enemy defenses had been damaged, if not destroyed. They quickly received a rude surprise.

Tanks attempting to support the advance were blocked by a knocked-out Cannon Company vehicle, which had to be towed away after attempts to destroy it with demolitions failed. Meanwhile, the infantry came up against strongly placed enemy defenses, including mortars, light artillery, machine guns, and small-arms fire, all coming from hidden positions with mutual support.

Eventually eight tanks and a platoon of infantry from Company G managed to get into the Bowl; only scattered small-arms fire opposed them. But the tanks were forced by the terrain to follow the track of one of the narrow-gauge railways built by the Japanese. These were on raised beds and two tanks slid off the banks. Both became useless and had to be abandoned.

Three other tanks, guided by Private Oliver C. Ferguson of the 710th Tank Battalion, moved into the Bowl and provided supporting fire while the Company G platoon worked along the eastern rim of the Bowl. An enemy antitank gun was located and knocked out before it could open fire, but little in the way of targets could be identified.

National Archives

An American soldier, his weapon at the ready, cautiously inspects a well-camouflaged Japanese pillbox.

Despite the Americans' artillery barrage, the heavy vegetation remained, hiding the Japanese. As a result, enemy fire and difficult terrain continued to slow the advance. Because the tanks could not leave the railroad cut, tank-infantry cooperation was impossible. Patrols from other companies did, however, reach the northwest tip of Angaur, surrounding the Japanese within Wildcat Bowl. While the 321st Infantry cleared the rest of the island of snipers and holdouts, the 322nd Infantry remained focused on reducing Major Goto's main force in and around Wildcat Bowl.

Meanwhile, the division's 3rd Regiment, Colonel Arthur P. Watson's 323rd Infantry, still offshore, left Angaur's waters to seize Ulithi Island. Later that afternoon, Admiral Fort and Generals Smith and Geiger arrived at division headquarters to meet with General Mueller. Things were not going well over at Peleliu and Mueller was requested to furnish one regiment to assist the Marines. The 81st's assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. Marcus P. Bell, was ordered to take the 321st Infantry to Peleliu as soon as possible.

With the 321st preparing to leave Angaur, the attack was renewed on September 21. It soon turned into a battle of attrition, with the Americans forced to attack the hidden Japanese and knock out one position at a time. With machine guns, rifles, antitank guns, and mortars firing from hidden positions using smokeless, flashless powder, and usually mutually supporting, Major Goto's defenses could withstand everything but a direct attack.

Often, even after a cave had been knocked out, it would come back to life after the Americans had bypassed it. Using fire and movement, employing flamethrowers and demolition charges, the 322nd Infantry slowly but steadily knocked out the remaining Japanese within Wildcat Bowl, but it remained a costly operation. Three tanks supporting the infantry at the railway cut were fired on by antitank guns. Colonel Venable, standing near them and observing his regiment's attack, was hit by shell fragments and his arm was nearly severed. Next to him, his radio operator, Sergeant William E. Sherman, was killed by the same gun. Venable was quickly evacuated to

the 17th Field Hospital. Lt. Col. Ernest H. Wilson, the regimental executive officer, assumed command of the 322nd Infantry.

Once again the infantry had to withdraw at darkness. One tank had been so badly damaged that it had to be abandoned, and another tank in front of it could not get past the disabled tank, so it, too, had to be destroyed. For a hard day's work, an estimated 75 Japanese had been killed and two taken prisoner. One of these, a Private Ikeda, a cook for the battalion, later broadcast surrender appeals to his comrades within Wildcat Bowl.

Only two of Major Goto's men responded to Ikeda's appeals, and both were soon prisoners of war. They reported that their comrades were short of food and water. Morale remained excellent and the bulk of the Japanese force had no intention of surrendering. Under interrogation, the POWs estimated the remaining force at 400 men.

After attacking for seven straight days, Sunday, September 24, was a day off for the exhausted infantrymen of the 322nd Infantry. The engineers of the 306th Battalion built roads up to the front lines to expedite resupply and evacuation of the wounded.

While their artillery bombarded the Lake Salome-Wildcat Bowl area all day long, the men of the 322nd listened to broadcast appeals for the Japanese to surrender while they themselves rested, repaired equipment, and moved to new assault positions.

The Wildcats returned to the attack the next day, and again the next. The battles were characterized by actions such as that of Pfc. Lester H. Klatt of Company F. While moving downhill toward the enemy, he observed a machine-gun position on the right flank that could enfilade his entire company. Klatt immediately rushed the position, threw a grenade, and then fired his rifle until the crew was killed and the gun captured.

In another instance, 2nd Lt. Robert G. Holsinger found his platoon pinned down by two mutually supporting machine guns. Terrain made an attack nearly impossible, but Holsinger led a squad against one of the guns until he fell mortally wounded. But his attack succeeded and the platoon knocked out both enemy guns.

By September 30 the Japanese had been squeezed into a restricted area near some cliffs in the northwest corner of the island, but still the fighting raged fiercely. When a patrol of Company L was attempting to clear a chasm of the enemy, they were ambushed by automatic weapons and rifle fire; three men were killed and two others wounded. Pfc. James G. Ramsey, himself wounded, volunteered to remain behind and cover the withdrawal of the wounded men using his automatic rifle. When he ran out of ammunition, he picked up a submachine gun from one of the dead and used it until he was mortally wounded. His courage earned him a posthumous Silver Star.

National Archives

Soldiers and vehicles advance through a destroyed section of Saipan village, the island's capital and largest town. Sporadic resistance continued until November 1944.

Private Marion Clark, also of Company L, was with another small group when it was attacked with grenades. Though severely wounded, he took up a flanking position with his Browning Automatic Rifle and stood upright to fire effectively on the attacking Japanese, holding his position until he died of his wounds. Clark's Distinguished Service Cross was also awarded posthumously.

And so it continued. A flag-raising ceremony was conducted near Red Beach and congratulations from all sources poured into General Mueller's headquarters. But barely two miles away vicious combat continued. Not even field grade officers were immune, as when Major Louis K. Harthrong, commanding the 1st Battalion since September 23, was killed by a sniper while directing the forward elements of his battalion. Major Michael Gussie, who replaced him, was likewise seriously wounded by an enemy grenade on October 20.

Major Goto was also killed on October 20 while attempting to infiltrate his remaining troops through American lines to Lighthouse Hill, where he planned to build a raft and escape. That night the remaining Japanese tried desperately to avoid death or capture. The next morning 10 Japanese soldiers surrendered, but for weeks afterward individual Japanese were either killed or captured throughout the island.

Technical Sergeant Frank J. Becker of Company L led a night patrol to recover the bodies of American dead. Becker found that the enemy position could be knocked out by explosives, and the following day he led a patrol back to place demolition charges. Discovered by the Japanese, several men in Becker's party were wounded. Becker directed the withdrawal of his men

Continued on page 87

Bundesarchiv Bild 146-2005-0191; Photo: Unknown

While millions of German Jews were being persecuted by the Nazis, many of their relatives, willingly or not, were fighting for the Third Reich. **BY BRYAN MARK RIGG**

Hitler's Jewish Soldiers

ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1944, as Allied armies squeezed Germany from east and west, and the Third Reich needed all the experienced, able-bodied soldiers it could find, a strange but far from unusual letter was being written.

On that day an officer in the headquarters of SS head Heinrich Himmler had requested that Generalmajor Wilhelm Burgdorf, deputy chief of the Wehrmacht personnel office, dismiss from the Army on Himmler's personal orders a colonel by the name of Ernst Bloch. Bloch, it seems, had been targeted for discharge from the service not because he was deficient as a soldier but simply because he was a Mischling—a half-Jew; his father was Jewish.

He also might have been discharged because Himmler may have discovered that Bloch had helped rescue some Jews, one of them the famous Rabbi Joseph Schneersohn, in 1939 from the SS, although this was done under the orders of his boss, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the German Secret Services (Abwehr).

Eleven days later, Burgdorf informed Himmler's office that Bloch had been dismissed but added that in 1943 the colonel, who had earned an Iron Cross for bravery, had asked to be "sent to the front despite his several World War I wounds." Burgdorf's halfhearted protest did not succeed in easing Bloch's plight. It also did not seem to matter that Bloch was described as a "positive National Socialist."

Bloch left his post on October 27, 1944. On February 15, 1945, Hitler signed the official order discharging him because of his Jewish heritage and Burgdorf officially informed Bloch of his discharge: "The Führer has decided as of 31 January 1945 to discharge you from active duty. It is an honor to thank you on behalf of the Führer for your service rendered during war and peace for our people and fatherland. I wish you all the best for the future. Heil Hitler."

Bloch was flabbergasted because he knew Hitler had once personally declared him *deutschblütig* (of German blood). However, Bloch probably did not know the particulars behind his discharge. He was simply ordered to leave, and he obeyed without questioning.

Walter Brockhoff, a close friend of Bloch's, wrote to Bloch's wife, Sabine, after the war to ask why his friend had been discharged. Brockhoff wrote, "One doesn't dismiss a brave and battle-tested officer away from the front during the hour of greatest danger. There have been and will be few officers of his caliber."

Yet the brave Bloch did not simply fold his tent and return home. As the Soviets closed in around Berlin, Bloch joined a

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ABOVE: Luftwaffe Field Marshal Erhard Milch, far left, with Hermann Goring, Adolf Hitler, and SA Stabschef Viktor Lutze. Milch, who otherwise would have been considered a "half-Jew" or Mischlinge, was "aryanized" by Hitler, who claimed the power to change an individual's ethnicity.

LEFT: Had the Nazis not persecuted and sent millions of Jews to the death camps, like these men and boys exiting boxcars at an unnamed camp, they might have helped ease the Germany military's manpower shortage.

Volkssturm (people's militia) unit and prepared to defend the capital. He was killed during the Battle of Berlin shortly before war's end.

However odd the story of Ernst Bloch may seem, it is far from being an isolated case. Thousands of Mischlinge—field marshals, generals, colonels, majors, captains, lieutenants, and enlisted men—were summarily dismissed from the German military; many ended up in forced-labor camps. And many of their Jewish relatives also reached a tragic end in Nazi Germany's slave-labor, concentration, and extermination camps.

Finding and documenting men of Jewish descent who fought in the Wehrmacht was a research project I undertook throughout most of the 1990s. The stories of the nearly 500 veterans I interviewed helped me document a largely unknown and undocumented chapter of World War II history. Many of the stories, like Ernst Bloch's, illustrate the tragedy and complexity of German society under Hitler. And for many today, it presents several troubling issues about identity and history. This is even the case for the very subjects themselves.

By way of illustration, back in 1994 I interviewed a couple in Berlin. He, Heinz Z., was a half-Jew who had false documents during the Third Reich claiming he was an Aryan. As he discussed his time in the military, his second wife Sabine sat next to him silently listening to him describe his experiences under Hitler. Heinz told me that he felt his false documents helped him protect his first Jewish wife and their infant son. His status came under the Nazi legal designation of "privilege mixed marriage." In other words, he helped protect his wife from persecution by staying married to her.

While Heinz was on the Russian Front in 1943, he got a notice in the mail that his wife and infant son had been deported to Poland. His commander, on learning this, immediately granted him emergency leave to put "things in order." As Heinz explained, he thought at that moment, "What moron deports a nursing mother off to a camp?"

When Heinz arrived in Berlin and started to visit the various Nazi government

National Archives

Hans Frank, Governor-General of Nazi-occupied Poland, greets the commander of a Ukrainian militia unit as Gestapo officers look on. Frank pledged to annihilate the Jewish population of Poland—and nearly succeeded.

offices, including the Gestapo, he learned that she had indeed been deported to the East. He tried desperately to get permission to go to the camp to bring his family back home, but the Nazis denied his request.

As the war came to an end, his unit was transferred to the Western Front where he eventually ended up in an American POW camp. After several months of internment, the Allies released him and he returned home. He quickly learned from the Nuremburg Trials and other events that documented the crimes of the Nazis that his wife and baby boy had been deported to Auschwitz. They, being the most vulnerable, were immediately gassed on arrival and then burned in the crematorium. By the time Heinz had learned of their deportation, they had already gone up the chimneys of the factories of death at this extermination camp.

As he explained this story, he fell into deep sobs. This grown man of 80 years of age crumbled and cried like a small child. I turned off my camera, walked over to Heinz and gave him a hug. I told him that if he wanted, I would return the next day to finish the interview and he could have the evening to rest. I even suggested we go for a walk to allow him to calm down.

As I backed away from him and returned to my seat, I could see that his wife, Sabine, was furious. At first, I thought she was angry at me because I had brought her husband to this emotional state, or that maybe she was upset because I hugged him and had violated German social etiquette. (Germans in general are not given to public displays of affection.)

But I soon learned that she was not upset at me at all. As she suddenly verbally laid into her husband, I quickly learned that she was shocked and angry with him because this was the first time out of 50 years of marriage that she had learned she was the second wife.

As I sat there listening to her berate him, I told them, "I think I will just leave you two alone for a while. I am sure you have plenty to talk about without me here." I would finish the interview the next morning.

To my surprise, the wife was quite thankful that I had come because many questions she had accumulated in 50 years of marriage were answered in one evening. She and I

learned many things about Heinz that helped explain some of his problems in adjusting to surviving the pain and trauma of the Nazis. She now knew why he had been so adamant about the name of their first son—it had been the name of his first son who had died in Auschwitz. She also now knew of the strange woman's name he often yelled during his nightmares.

Bloch's and Heinz's stories illustrate the difficulty of understanding the Third Reich's different shades of gray. Their stories also highlight the struggle the Nazis underwent in implementing racial policy onto a society developed by hundreds of years of assimilation between Christians and Jews, Gentiles, and Semites.

With these facts in mind, most accept as common knowledge today that persons of Jewish descent were the most endangered people under Hitler, and when considering the Nazi definition of who was a "full Jew," they would be right. Yet, what many do not know is that probably several thousand Jews—and more than 150,000 "partial" Jews—served in the Wehrmacht, Germany's military.

These partial Jews, so-called Mischlinge, had a much more complicated history under the Nazis than one would think especially when one knows these men were actually required to serve. This fact surprises even those who consider themselves knowledgeable about World War II and the Holocaust.

Even more surprising is how these men dealt with their situations. One partially Jewish soldier, Heinz Bleicher, observed that few people today can understand the heavy emotional burden of partial Jews during the Third Reich. Every year they felt sucked deeper into an abyss with no escape.

Nevertheless, until at least 1941, the Nazis drafted many into the Wehrmacht during this time of trauma and confusion. This startles most people since Hitler called Mischlinge "blood sins" and "monstrosities halfway between man and ape." Among those were career soldiers who, because Hitler "Aryanized" them with the *deutschblütig* declaration, reached some of the highest ranks, though many of their relatives had to wear the yellow star and died in the Holocaust.

While lecturing from 2002 to 2013 about my books *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers, Rescued From the Reich,* and *Lives of Hitler's Jewish Soldiers,* I was often asked about the lives of those identified as "Hitler's Jewish soldiers." How could they serve? Did they consider themselves Nazis or Jews? What did Hitler know about them? What did they know about the Holocaust? Did they feel guilty about serving? Many listeners found it difficult to learn that men of Jewish descent served in Hitler's armed forces, sometimes with great distinction.

Until recently, historians have not explored Mischling history. For some these "victims of the Holocaust" represent "embarrassing leftovers from the trauma of Hitler's Germany." These men often feel alone in their experience and harbor a fear that their testimony will be given "without an echo in the vast wasteland of war," the Third Reich, and the Holocaust.

Moreover, in general, German soldiers have really "nothing to celebrate and much, including dishonor, to forget." So it is remarkable that Jewish and Mischling soldiers have shared their experiences, which complicates an already thorny subject matter.

This "thorny subject matter" exists because Mischlinge simply do not fit into neat categories of victim or perpetrator, Jew or non-Jew. Although a few documented in this study were Jews, most were Mischlinge—a category of people that historically has no intellectual justification. Thus, it has proved challenging to explain a racial category that never existed before the Third Reich's 1935 Nuremberg Laws.

However, what unites Mischlinge is not only the discrimination they experienced, but also their anger, frustration, fear, and sense of inferiority. Ultimately, the Nazis severely persecuted them and murdered many of their Jewish relatives, bringing them into the horrible world of the Holocaust.

Both: Author's Collection


Das Lichtbild und die eigenhändige Unterschrift des Bewerbers sowie die nebenstehenden Personalangaben werden hiermit beglaubigt.
Der Bewerber hat sich durch Vorlage des (Name, Nr. und Datum) amtlichen Ausweises genügend ausgewiesen.
Reichs-Sport-Medal Document, 1941. Age 21 as soldier.
Signature missing below:
"I declare to be of German or racially equivalent blood

ABOVE: A page from Dieter Bergmann's Wehrmacht pay book. A half-Jew, he loved his country but agonized about fighting for a regime that persecuted his fellow religionists. BELOW: Colonel Ernst Bloch was a German Mischling (half-Jew) who gave much for the Fatherland. His facial scars were the result of being bayonetted during World War I. He died defending Berlin in 1945.

The question of identity haunted many Mischlinge in general, not only those serving in the Wehrmacht. Most grew up as patriotic, Christian Germans who suddenly learned after 1933 that their nation now

viewed them as inferior subhumans. The Nazis believed that being Jewish or partially Jewish made them unacceptable as full citizens. Soon after the Nazis took over power, many of these "Christian" Mischlinge soon discovered that their Christian churches, both Protestant and Catholic, had gone along with the Nazis and not only turned their backs on them but gave theological justification to persecute the Jews in the name of God and Jesus. So their identities as Germans and Christians were quickly stripped from them and they started struggling with the question: "Who am I?"

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) wrote that "government defines reality." The Nazis violently upset the lives of millions by implementing this racial doctrine. The 19th-century political philosopher John Stuart Mill foretold what would happen to Jews and Mischlinge under the Nazis when he wrote, "Society can and does execute its own mandates: and if it issues wrong mandates instead of right ... it practices a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression.... It leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into details of life, and enslaving the soul itself."

The men described in this article were persecuted by a system that issued "wrong mandates" about human value. They struggled to conform their personalities to the Nazi view of worthy Germans, yet failed to realize that their society had abandoned them. For example, Dieter Bergman wrote during the war that he represented what people wanted in a "good German." He was tall, blond, trim, kind, good natured, and also a "warrior type."

Yet he realized his destiny as a half-Jew hung from a pathetically slender string in an environment without refuge and legal rights. This perilous condition affected their perception of themselves and their behavior. They had to honor laws that eliminated their rights. The situation had the elements of a play in a Theater of the Absurd.

This article uses several Nazi terms to explain this history, without implying agreement with the Nazi racial theories that inspired their introduction. Nazi terms such as "half-Jew," "quarter-Jew," "Mischling," "Aryan," and "non-Aryan" come from an evil system designed to eliminate people of "inferior" ethnicity from society. The Nazis used such vocabulary to abuse and dehumanize those they deemed *Untermenschen* (sub-humans).

The ways the Nazis applied their racial laws did not reflect the understanding of Jewishness prevalent in German society in the 1920s. The designation "Mischling" after 1933 sounded just as foreign to Mischlinge's ears as it does to ours.

Library of Congress

An anti-semitic poster with a caricature of a Jew; the headline reads, "He is to blame for the war!" Through such crude propaganda the Nazis hoped to inflame hatred toward Jews.

Bergman further explained, "Half-Jewishness is a strange concept. It's like being half-circumcised—it doesn't exist.... However, with Hitler, we had to try to understand what being a Mischling meant. Unfortunately, we were slow learners." Events beyond their understanding and coping mechanisms simply beleaguered most Mischlinge. For example, Heinz Gerlach wrote Minister of Education Bernhard Rust in 1941, "I cannot help it that I'm a Mischling. Also, no one should blame my parents for my situation. They married during a time without racial laws."

Gerlach further clarified that his mother looked and acted like an "Aryan" and that his father's family never thought twice about accepting her. He wrote that she had proven her disapproval of Judaism by marrying a Christian, baptizing her son a Christian, and raising him to "love his Fatherland and the Führer." Gerlach struggled with the Nazis defining him partially Jewish—a part of his background he had never accepted.

The lives of Jews and Mischlinge show how the racial laws affected them on a personal level, the extent of their persecution, and the divided loyalties many toiled with during the Nazi years and afterward. Their lives seemed ludicrous when they served in the military while the Nazis persecuted their family members.

As a full-Jew, Captain Erich Rose told his friend, General Albert Schnez, "I'm a Schwein. The Nazis murdered my family (which I have to assume), and at the same time, I fight for them."

Yet, most did serve, and when one learns more about German society, this service does not seem so strange. Most German Jews and Mischlinge grew up in an environment where their elders conditioned them to have a strong obedience to authority. They learned to obey their parents, teachers, clergymen and, most importantly, their government. German society conditioned people to believe that the authority of superiors was based on "greater insight and more humane wisdom."

All: Author's Collection

LEFT: "Quarter-Jew" Vice-Admiral Bernhard Rogge was awarded the Knight's Cross with oak leaves. Although he had a Jewish grandfather, Rogge received the Deutschblütigkeitserklärung (German Blood Certificate) from Hitler, declaring him to be an Aryan. CENTER: Field Marshal and half-Jew Erhard Milch, second-in-command of the Luftwaffe, received the Knight's Cross (Ritterkreuz) for his performance during the 1940 Norway invasion. RIGHT: "Half-Jew" and later Luftwaffe General Helmut Wilberg; Hitler declared him Aryan in 1935.

In the military, this submission was explicit. After the war, Gustav Knickrehm said, "'The advantage of our armed forces lay in this monstrous training.… You carried out all orders automatically.… You acted automatically as a soldier.…'"

Mischlinge learned *Kadavergehorsam,* or slavish obedience, even if it infringed on their personal freedom and the human rights of their family. In other words, the Nazis imposed "political and ideological conformity" on all subjects under their rule. Whatever Hitler ordered, they had to obey, and they did so almost willingly because of their culture. Those who did not obey Nazi laws wound up in concentration camps or in front of a firing squad.

Also fundamental to comprehending the bizarre situation where men wore the swastika on their uniforms while their relatives had to wear the Star of David is an understanding of their Jewishness. Most parents of Mischlinge did not raise them as religious Jews, and most Mischlinge did not consider themselves Jewish until Hitler persecuted them. But Nazi racial laws considered them all Jewish to one degree or another.

On November 14, 1935, the Nazis issued a supplement to the Nuremberg Laws of September 15, 1935, that created the "racial" categories of German, Jew, "half-Jew (Jewish Mischlinge 1st Degree)," and "quarter-Jew (Jewish Mischlinge 2nd Degree)," each with its own regulations. These laws distinguished Germans from persons of Jewish heritage both biologically and socially. Full Jews had three or four Jewish grandparents, half-Jews had two Jewish grandparents, and quarter-Jews had one Jewish grandparent. If a person not of Jewish descent practiced the Jewish religion, the Nazis also counted him or her as a Jew.

The Nazis resorted to religious records to define these "racial" categories, using birth, baptismal, and marriage and death certificates stored in churches, temples, Jewish community centers, and courthouses.

The 1935 Nuremberg Laws provided the basis for further anti-Jewish legislation to preserve the purity of the "Aryan" race. The Nazis based their racial laws on the *völkisch* (ethnical in a racial sense) notion of the inherent superiority of the "Aryans." These laws provided civil rights to those belonging to the Volk and having German "blood." This created a "new morality which, in terms of the old system of values, seemed both unscrupulous and brutal."

The Nazis automatically denied Jews and Mischlinge citizenship privileges. However, under Article 7 of a supplementary decree of the Nuremberg Laws, Hitler could free individuals from the labels Jew or Mischlinge by aryanizing them with a stroke of his pen. In fact, Hitler allowed several high-ranking officers of Jewish descent to remain in the military by "aryanizing" them. Two of these were second in command of the Luftwaffe: Field Marshal and half-Jew Erhard Milch and General and half-Jew Helmut Wilberg, the brilliant strategist who helped develop the operational concept of Blitzkrieg.

But most Mischlinge did not receive this clemency, and the German authorities despised them as an unwelcome minority. Most Nazis considered Mischlinge as predominantly Jewish and wanted them treated as such. Both the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, and his general Reinhard Heydrich wanted Mischlinge exterminated like the full Jews. But pressure on the SS and party by "Aryan" relatives, prominent families, the military, and the government postponed the issue of how to deal with Mischlinge until after the war.

In addition to the racial laws, an essential element of this history explores Halacha (Jewish Law), which considers more of the men in this study Jewish (full-Jews) than the Nazi racial laws did. Since the Nazis considered anyone who practiced the Jewish religion a full-Jew, most Mischlinge were, by definition, Christians.

However, according to Halacha, the majority of half-Jews documented would be considered Jewish because they had Jewish mothers, since only mothers determine Jewish identity according to Halacha.

Not only do Nazi racial laws and Halacha make it difficult to understand Mischlinge, but the way many developed private connections to Judaism complicates how one judges them today. Many developed Jewish identities, but the majority of those identities were born out of persecution rather than cultural or religious upbringing. Today, some Mischlinge feel Jewish, though their Jewish identity is private and complicated.

The following story illustrates the difficulties one encounters when identifying a Jew for the purposes of this research. After World War II, Wehrmacht veteran Karl-Heinz Maier decided to do something for his Jewish family. He traveled

to Israel and fought in its War of Independence. Even after becoming a major, the local authorities did not consider him Jewish because his father, rather than his mother, was Jewish.

For 12 years, Maier explained, the Nazis persecuted him because he had a Jewish father, but the Israelis called him a goy (a derogatory Yiddish term for Gentile) because of his Gentile mother. Although he could fight for the Israeli Army, the government did not consider him Jewish.

The same type of identity crisis that Maier experienced also happened to tens of thousands of Mischlinge during—and some even after—the Third Reich. So differences in religious belief, cultural background, ethnic makeup, historical experiences and self-perception often make it difficult to answer the question, "Who is a Jew?"

Before this study, documented in *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers*, it was widely unknown that probably a few thousand full, and tens of thousands of half- and quarter-Jews, as classified by the Nazis, served in the German Armed Forces during World War II. After examining assimilation records, birth rates, and mixed-marriage rates with mathematicians and statisticians, this study estimates that 60,000 half-Jews and 90,000 quarter-Jews served in the Wehrmacht.

Some, as mentioned, served as high-ranking officers, including generals, admirals, and even one field marshal. Full Jews who served did so with false documents; their commanders believed them to be "Aryans." The estimated numbers of Jews and Mischlinge in the Wehrmacht have caused controversy because the assimilation records or definitions of Jewishness have not been carefully analyzed and deserve a closer look.

If one contends that Mischlinge were not Jewish because they had been born into Christian families, had converted, had not practiced Judaism, had not felt Jewish, or had only received this label from the Nazis, then one must also reevaluate the figure of six million Jews who died in the Holocaust. Tens of thousands of those exterminated did not consider themselves Jewish, but the Nazis labeled and treated them so. For instance, the Nazis sent the philosopher Edith Stein to the Auschwitz gas chambers even though she had converted to Christianity.

Hitler had cynically described the conversion process: "If worst came to worst, a splash of baptismal water could always save the business and the Jew at the same time." The Nazis, he said, would make sure that "the ability to camouflage ancestry by changing religions will completely disappear."

The reader will therefore not find it surprising that the Nazis deported countless converted parents, grandparents, and relatives of the Mischlinge documented in this study to Hitler's death camps. As Holocaust expert Martin Gilbert wrote, "Tens of thousands of German Jews were not Jews at all in their own eyes."

Half-Jew Dieter Bergman said, "I lost over a dozen relatives in the Holocaust and most of them wouldn't have called themselves Jews—they'd converted to Christianity for Christ's sake." Half-Jew Hans Günzel, who lost 57 relatives in the Holocaust, expressed his confusion about the Nazi definition of Jewishness when he claimed, "The sad thing about all of their deaths is that most had converted to Christianity and didn't consider themselves Jews."

Even though an estimated 50,000 Jewish converts to Christianity lived in Germany in 1933, the Nazis treated them as racial Jews. They also did so in other countries. For example, Chaim Kaplan, a distinguished principal of a Warsaw Hebrew school, took pleasure in 1939 in seeing that the Nazis treated Jewish converts to Christianity no differently than religious Jews.

He wrote "I shall, however, have revenge on our 'converts.' I will laugh aloud at the sight of their tragedy. These poor creatures ... should have known that the 'racial' laws do not differentiate between Jews who become Christians and those who retain their faith. Conversion brought them but small deliverance.... This is the first time in my life that a feeling of vengeance has given me pleasure."

Obviously, many Polish Jewish converts to Christianity had hoped their new religion would protect them, something that Kaplan described as painfully mistaken.

Furthermore, the Nazis labeled half-Jews in Poland and Russia as full Jews because they did not have "Aryan blood" and Gentile relatives to protect them. Although most of these partial-Jews had assimilated into Christian society and converted to Christianity, the Nazis marked these non-German Mischlinge in the eastern territories for extermination. They died in the Nazi camps as Jews.

The Reich Security Main Office for the Eastern Territories stated in the summer of 1941, "In view of the Final Solution ... anyone who has one parent who is a Jew will also count as a Jew."

Hans Frank, the governor-general of occupied Poland, included Mischlinge in his plan of extermination in a report on December 16, 1941: "We have in the General Government [i.e., occupied Poland] an estimated 2.5 million, maybe together with Mischlinge and all that hangs on, 3.5 million Jews. We can't poison them, but we will be able to take some kind of action which will lead to an annihilation success.... The General Government will be just as *judenfrei* [free of Jews] as the Reich."

Consequently, hundreds of thousands of converts to Christianity and non-German Mischlinge ultimately died in the Holocaust, and many of them, tragically, had relatives serving in the Wehrmacht.

With these facts in mind, if one argues that the men documented in this study are not really Jewish, then that same person must also reevaluate his definition of Jewishness when discussing "Jewish" Holocaust victims.

While it may be difficult to accept the fundamental concept of "Hitler's Jewish soldiers," there is one key sense in which this phrase is accurate. Hitler's racial laws designated Mischlinge as "Jewish" or "part Jewish." They were only "Hitler's Jewish soldiers" and no one else's, since the majority of the German Jewish population and many Mischlinge

Bundesarchiv Bild 183-R97066; Photo: Unknown

Erhard Milch, on trial at Nuremburg in 1947, was sentenced to life in prison, but was released in 1954.

seemed not to share Hitler's definition.

People often ask, "How could those affected by these laws serve?" Most Mischlinge served because they were drafted by the Wehrmacht which, until 1940, required half-Jews to serve. However, they could not become NCOs or officers without Hitler's personal approval.

In April 1940, Hitler decided to order the discharge of half-Jews from the armed forces because their presence created problems. Many came home after the Poland campaign in 1939 to find that the authorities had severely persecuted their relatives. Hitler did not want to protect Jewish parents and grandparents because of the service of their children and grandchildren, so he ordered their dismissal.

Many, however, remained on active duty, with exemptions from Hitler or because they had hidden their Jewish ancestry. Also, several stayed with their units for months after this discharge order, because of the war with Norway in April and the invasion of France in May of 1940, which slowed the bureaucratic process of discharging them.

The authorities did not widely enforce this discharge order until late summer 1940, and even then, many officers ignored it. In addition, the search for half-Jews in the service often consisted solely of requiring soldiers to sign ancestry declarations stating they were not Jews. Many Mischlinge signed this statement in good faith, since they were not Jews according to their understanding. Others just lied and remained with their units.

Known half-Jews who had won combat medals or battlefield promotions could apply for an exemption from the racial laws, enabling them to remain in the Wehrmacht because of their valor; thousands submitted applications. Even before 1940, several half-Jewish officers had received exemptions from Hitler and obtained high ranks.

The military also drafted quarter-Jews. Unlike the half-Jews, they had to serve throughout the entire war. Yet they, like their half-Jewish counterparts, could not become NCOs or officers without Hitler's approval.

The majority of half-Jews discharged after April 1940 returned home and resumed their studies if they had distinguished military records or found work until 1944. Then Hitler had them, as well as other nonveteran half-Jews, deported to forced-labor camps of the Organization Todt (OT). They were joined there by the "Aryan" husbands of Jewish wives, many of whom were their fathers. Fortunately, they were not in the camps long, and their treatment there was less severe than in the concentration camps. Thus, most survived these places of persecution.

The Nazis treated these partial Jews as objects without any self-determination. Hitler probably would have further persecuted and in many cases exterminated them had he won the war.

After the war, neither "Jewish identity" nor "Jewish loyalty" played any role in their lives. Some embraced their Jewishness and now call themselves Jews. Others acknowledge their Jewish roots, but would not call themselves Jewish in any sense of the word. Many have wrestled with questions about themselves and their role in society in light of their Jewish background throughout their lives. These men acknowledge their Jewishness but feel bewildered as to what this means in practical terms.

These men's stories illustrate the wide range of experiences one could have under the Third Reich and how complicated it was for the Nazis to implement racial policy. The trauma that thousands of mothers, sisters, wives, and girlfriends suffered by being connected to them broadens the scope of the tragedy of this chapter of the Holocaust. The lives of many Mischlinge and some Jews in the Wehrmacht were traumatic, filled with difficult choices and painful experiences.

Some came from families with strong military traditions that encouraged them to accept service under the Third Reich as natural and honorable. Their fathers and uncles had served in World War I, and a few, like Field Marshal Milch and General Wilberg, had even distinguished themselves in the "Great War," giving them a strong foundation of military service before Nazism. The majority of their families and most of these men had equal rights in Germany, only to have them quickly taken away once Hitler came into power.

The stories of Mischlinge show in vivid detail that these men fought for a government that took away their basic human rights and sent their relatives to extermination centers. (It also should not be forgotten that the U.S. military segregated and discriminated against its black troops and forcibly removed Japanese Americans from the West Coast and relocated them to American "concentration camps.")

Nevertheless, most Mischlinge continued to serve, since any open resistance would have cost them their lives.

The fact that their "Aryan" superiors—including Hitler's Army adjutant Gerhard Engel and Domestic Officer in the Wehrmacht office Commander Richard Frey—courageously helped many of them added to their belief that their service would help protect them. Their superiors often disregarded the Nazi racial laws, valuing a trained soldier and true comrade more than Nazi regulations. This helps explain why many of these men remained loyal.

The passionate patriotism felt by many Mischlinge is ironic. When drafted, most thought it their duty to obey, though the Nazis persecuted them and their families. As half-Jew Dieter Bergmann said, "I loved my Fatherland, and most half-Jews I knew all believed they were fulfilling their duty to Germany. We loved Germany and wanted to see her become great again. Unfortunately, we were lied to and were abused by the very country we held so dear." Nazi policy toward Mischlinge gradually worsened and pushed them toward the world of the Holocaust.

Hitler refused to use these patriotic citizens to help win the war. This demonstrates how Hitler valued racial purity over military victory. From 1942 to 1944, Hitler assigned hundreds of trains to move millions of Jews across Europe to the death factories in Poland when the Army could have used those trains to move troops and war matérial.

Despite the constant labor shortage, Hitler exterminated millions of Jews who could have worked in factories. Hitler had discharged tens of thousands of half-Jews from military service by late 1942 when

National Archives

Even by being brave and decorated for valor, partially Jewish soldiers could not always keep their wives, mothers, and sisters from being sent to concentration and death camps.

Germany encountered severe setbacks at Stalingrad. He could have recalled these men, who most probably would have fought bravely.

Hitler's racial policies turned most Mischlinge against him and his government. The majority of them looked forward to the day of Hitler's demise. Half-Jew Helmut Krüger admitted that had Hitler not discriminated against him, he probably would have become a Nazi. When asked why, he simply explained how difficult it is today for people to understand how attractive the movement was to young men. In front of "the evil goals of the Nazis stood the wonderful activities for young men of camping, war games, and community," he said. "It all just felt so good."

Just as shocking as Hitler's perverse racial policies with respect to partial-Jews in the Wehrmacht is that most Mischlinge soldiers did not know Hitler was murdering millions of Jews, including their relatives; the octagenarian Heinz Z., mentioned earlier, experienced losing his wife and infant son in Auschwitz while he fought on the Russian Front.

Like most other Germans, they knew about Nazi deportations, but what happened at the deadly destinations lay beyond their knowledge or imagination, as illustrated by Heinz's attempt to go to the very camp to which his wife and child had been deported. Some knew about executions in the East but not the systematic killing of millions in gas chambers.

The most convincing proof that these men did not know what was happening is the story of half-Jews in the OT forced-labor camps. Had half-Jews known about the Holocaust, one would expect them to have done everything they could to have avoided their own deportations. But as my research revealed, most reported when called, even though most had weeks if not a month before they were "required" to report to their train station to be shipped off to an unknown work camp.

Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer wrote, "The Jews were the products of a civilization which stood in stark contradiction to all the premises of Nazism. It was totally incomprehensible to them that people should exist who denied the sanctity of human life, or who excluded some people from humanity altogether. They were therefore outwitted

at every point, easily misled, and murdered precisely because they could not accept the reality of the world in which such murder was possible."

Hitler's constant attention to the details of Mischling policy support the assumption that he was at least as intimately involved in their extermination as in that of the Jews. As Hitler told district party leaders when discussing the Jewish issue, "Who can give the order? Only I."

Yet the Mischling story offers much more than exploring Nazi discrimination, persecution, and injustice. Many Mischlinge did a great deal to protect their relatives and others saved Jews to whom they had no previous connection. Ernst Bloch, mentioned at the beginning of this article, saved the famous Lubavitch Rebbe, Joseph Schneersohn, and 20 of his followers and family members. We also see courage, generosity, and self-sacrifice in the face of great danger.

Unfortunately, we also see evil in the lives of some Mischlinge. Field Marshal Milch, a Nazi, represents a Mischling who turned himself over to Hitler and his goals. In the end, he served time as a Nazi war criminal. Luckily, this disgusting person was a member of a tiny minority among the Mischlinge.

Contemporary genocide does not only happen in Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Rwanda, and Bosnia. Genocide begins with discriminatory and prejudicial thoughts long before anyone dies, as was obvious with Nazism under Hitler and, moreover, like we see today with radical Islam (Islamic Fascists) present in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Syria, Egypt, and Libya, to name but a few that deny people religious freedom and refuse women basic human rights.

How we learn to think about others and their worth makes all the difference. The Mischlinge remind us how important it is to fight vigilantly against our tendency to denigrate others for bolstering our own faltering self-esteem. It also reminds us that we all need to fight against those who do not have the intelligence or humility to realize exclusive ideology and religion breed lethal convictions leading to persecution and murder. □

Beloit

Continued from page 35

having the cadets fly while attending their CTD but the War Department mandated otherwise. Once mandated, the AAF used this flying time to familiarize the cadet with flying but prohibited the cadet from soloing. Even so, this provided an early opportunity for the AAF to evaluate whether a cadet would make the grade and another opportunity for the cadet to wash out. This was also the point that some cadets decided that flying was not for them and voluntarily left the program.

It's interesting to note that the AAF, from 1938 through 1945, became the largest single educational organization in existence. The AAF grew from 11 percent to just shy of 33 percent of the Army's uniformed personnel. Some historians and authors have written that the College Training Program was noneffective and that it was only a place to "park" the cadets until they could be placed at an Air Force Training Center. General Arnold and the men conducting the training at Santa Ana would have disagreed.

Additionally, the CTD was successful by aiding in preflight and primary flight training. "A 1944 study of the program showed that the indoctrination [flight] training contributed to the students' progress materially in the early stages of primary [flight] training...."

By the end of the program in March 1944, 100,000 men had entered the Aviation Cadet Training Program through the 150 colleges offering the program. During the year the CTD program was operating, 1,100 cadets had come and gone through Beloit College.

Beloit's willingness to serve the country by opening its doors to the men of the 95th Cadet Training Detachment is, to this day, a historical treasure for Beloit College and a credit to the country they served. Captain Manning's prediction about nostalgia is doubtful; the young men never forgot the campus they once called home or the faculty who prepared them for a successful aviation career. □

Angaur Island

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and evacuated a wounded man to safety.

Becker had earlier occupied an advance position behind enemy lines and had harassed them with fire for five days. But on October 21 his luck ran out; he was killed while leading a portion of his company to a new location. His Distinguished Service Cross was posthumously awarded.

Like many Pacific War battles, the Battle of Angaur ended more with a whimper than a bang. There were no banzai attacks, and individual Japanese fought until killed well into November 1944. But for all intents and purposes, the campaign ended October 23, 1944, although both General Geiger and General Mueller had declared it over days earlier. Some 1,330 Japanese had been killed and 59 captured.

Total battle casualties for all American units fighting on Angaur came to 264 men killed and 1,355 wounded. There were also 244 cases of battle fatigue and 696 hospital cases from sickness and disease. During the battle some 900 men fell due to heat exhaustion. About 183 natives were freed from Japanese imprisonment.

Meanwhile, the combat troops had moved westward to other islands and other battles.

Today, beautiful and peaceful Angaur has fewer than 200 permanent residents and the capital has been moved from Saipan village to Ngeremasch. Phosphate mining ended in the 1950s. The few visitors who come to Angaur do so primarily for the surfing and for technical diving on the USS *Perry* (DMS-17), 240 feet down, sunk by a mine off the southeast coast on September 13, 1944. Destroyed and abandoned vehicles, equipment, guns, and other military artifacts are slowly rusting away in the jungles, mute reminders of the savagery that took place there seven decades earlier.

The Battle of Angaur today remains a footnote in the history of World War II, but it is remembered by the men who fought there as one of the most savage and difficult of all encounters. □

Paris was in tumult. The French 2nd Armored Division had rolled into the City of Light on August 25, 1944, ending four years of harsh Nazi occupation. A great parade was set for the following day, a celebration of France's deliverance, and foremost among its participants was to be Charles de Gaulle, the leader of the Free French movement and the soul of the broken nation during its darkest days of humiliating defeat.

De Gaulle had followed General Jacques Leclerc and the 2nd Armored Division into the French capital, carefully choreographing the manner in which he would assert control of the government. Although he held a reasonably solid base of support among the Resistance, the armed forces, and the people, he realized that the end of Nazi dominion might prompt rivals to assert themselves, possibly even plunging the nation into civil war.

Charles de Gaulle rose to lead the Free French during World War II and restore his nation's honor in the postwar world.

BY MICHAEL E. HASKEW

IN DESPERATION AND TRIUMPH

Upon entering the city, de Gaulle first went to the war ministry, then to the main police station to solidify the cooperation of the gendarmerie. A brief, matter-of-fact meeting with Resistance leaders followed—all this as his Gaullist representatives throughout the liberated areas of the country secured the support of local and regional leaders.

Sometime after 8 PM, he stepped out onto the small balcony of the Hotel de Ville (City Hall) and greeted tens of thousands of Parisians who had been gathering and waiting for several hours to catch a glimpse of the perceived savior of France.

The next day, the parade commenced, with a million people lining the Champs Élysées. Walking in uniform to the Place de la Concorde, de Gaulle was flanked by prominent associates and others who had fought and bled for this occasion, carefully placed in the procession so that the identity of its leader was unmistakable.

In his postwar memoirs, de Gaulle remembered, "So, I walked on, quiet and deeply moved in the midst of the crowd's indescribable exultation, through a storm of voices that echoed my name. At that moment there was occurring one of those miracles of national consciousness, one of those gestures on the part of France that in the course of centuries sometimes come to light in our history. And I, in the middle of this passionate outburst, I felt that I was fulfilling a function that went far, far beyond myself personally, that of acting as the instrument of destiny."

General Charles de Gaulle, head of the Free French movement, leads marchers down the Champs-Élysées in Paris on August 26, 1944, the day after the city's liberation from the Germans by Allied forces. At left is Georges Bidault, head of the Conseil National de la Résistance.

When he reached the Place de la Concorde, de Gaulle got into a car for the short ride to the Cathedral of Notre Dame, where a service of thanksgiving was to be held. As he exited the vehicle, two young girls presented him with bouquets of spring flowers. Suddenly, the reports of rifle fire were heard in the street. Extricating himself from the crowd that had pressed him against the door of the cathedral, de Gaulle entered. Then, another rifle shot rang out—this time from high in the choir loft. Apparently with only disdain for the gunfire, he strode the 200 feet down the aisle to his seat.

A British Broadcasting Company (BBC) observer was one of numerous witnesses who were astonished at this display of coolness under fire. He reported that de Gaulle "walked straight ahead in what appeared to me to be a hail of fire, without hesitation, his shoulders flung back. It was the most

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ABOVE: De Gaulle, now a colonel in command of the 507th Tank Regiment, watches military maneuvers in eastern France in 1938. OPPOSITE: De Gaulle (left) photographed in 1919 as a captain with his three brothers while on leave in Paris after the Great War. Although he had spent 33 months as a prisoner of war, he felt he was France's "man of destiny."

extraordinary display of courage that I've ever seen."

Another bystander was heard to say that the incident confirmed the fact that de Gaulle held the nation of France in the palm of his hand.

Of course, the de Gaulle ascendant had not come to such high stature without great struggle. In fact, he was well acquainted with trial and tribulation. However, he had never waivered from the conviction that his destiny and that of France were intertwined. Even as a young boy, born on November 22, 1890, in the industrial city of Lille at the height of the Belle Epoch, a period of tremendous cultural revival in France, he was certain that his future held great promise, that he was fated to render some noble service to his country.

The son of Henri and Jeanne Marie de Gaulle, Charles was raised as a devout catholic. The third of five children, four boys and a girl, his father was a lifelong educator. Never one to conform, it was somewhat surprising that he chose a career in the military with its tradition of regimentation and rigid chain of command. Perhaps it was that spark of destiny within that drew him to the Army and the military academy at St. Cyr.

There were more than 800 applicants to the prestigious French military academy, and 221 were accepted. Charles had studied tirelessly and was among the select few. There was a significant prerequisite. Prior to entering St. Cyr, each officer candidate was required to spend one year in the enlisted ranks of the French Army. Dutifully, on October 10, 1909, he joined the 33rd Infantry Regiment headquartered at Arras, not far from his hometown.

The enlistment was the beginning of a lifetime of love and hate with the French military. When his year was up, Charles had reached the rank of corporal. His commanding officer had had enough of the headstrong soldier who always seemed to know more than the veterans and refused to advance Charles further in rank. "What use to make that young man a sergeant when the only military title that would interest him would be Grand Constable," said the weary captain.

Despite that, in the autumn of 1910 Charles entered St. Cyr. Initially, his academic effort was unremarkable, and on one of his papers a professor wrote sarcastically, "Average in everything except height." The tall, thin figure remained aloof, most often apart from the body of his fellow cadets. Along with the nickname of "Grand Constable" that followed him from the 33rd Regiment, he also became derisively known as "The Big Asparagus" and "Le Coq."

By the time he graduated in October 1912, a revived commitment to his studies had landed Charles 13th in a class of 211. Along the way, though, he had freely questioned authority, debated with instructors, and generally developed the reputation of a headstrong maverick. Nevertheless, the official assessment of his performance was positive and noted, "A very highly gifted cadet. Conscientious and earnest worker. Excellent state of mind. Calm and energetic nature. Will make an excellent officer…."

Curiously, de Gaulle chose to return to his old 33rd Infantry Regiment after graduation. At the time, its commanding officer was Colonel Philippe Pétain, destined to become a Marshal of France and national hero in World War I, only to tarnish his legacy with the stain of Vichy collaboration with the Nazis in 1940. The two would forge a long friendship, and on more than one occasion Pétain was willing to use his prestige to bail de Gaulle out of hot water.

Since the humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, every career officer in the French Army was convinced that another war with Germany loomed. That war came in the summer of 1914.

The holocaust of World War I convinced de Gaulle more than ever that he was a man of destiny. His baptism of fire occurred on August 15, 1914, during the fight for a bridge across the Meuse River at the French town of Dinant. He was wounded in the right leg while leading his infantry platoon against German machine guns, and the grueling recovery took seven months.

In the winter of 1916, de Gaulle and the 33rd Regiment were transferred to the killing fields at Verdun, and there the young officer, now a captain with the Croix de Guerre on his chest for bravery, nearly lost his life again. When the French line was breached on March 2, de Gaulle and a handful of soldiers made a heroic stand, but he was seri-

ously wounded and taken prisoner. Most Frenchmen who survived the ordeal, including his commanding officer, presumed de Gaulle had been killed.

"I had hardly gone 10 meters when I came on a group of Boches crouching in a shell-hole," he recalled later. "They saw me at the same moment, and one of them ran his bayonet into me. The thrust went through my map case and wounded me in the thigh. Another Boche shot my orderly dead. Seconds later a grenade exploded in front of my face, and I lost consciousness."

During 33 months as a prisoner of war, de Gaulle remained a thorn in the Germans' side, attempting to escape five times and actually remaining at large with a co-conspirator for several days. While in prison at Ingolstadt, he was joined by Roland Garros, the inventor of a mechanism that allowed machine guns to fire forward from the cowling and through the propeller of an airplane, revolutionizing aerial warfare, and Mikhail Tukhachevsky, a Russian officer who achieved the rank of marshal and later fell victim to the Stalinist purges of the Red Army officer corps in the 1930s.

Following the 1918 armistice and a brief reunion with his family, Charles attended a course for French officers who had been prisoners of war. Its purpose was to acquaint these men with technological developments and other aspects of modern warfare that had emerged while they had been prisoners. While attending the course, he awakened from a deep depression and overcame the belief that his military career was finished.

During 1919-1921, Charles was detailed with 2,000 other French officers as an adviser to the army of a newly reconstituted Poland, fighting the army of Bolshevik Russia. For bravery under fire, he was awarded the Polish Virtuti Militari. He declined an invitation from the Polish government to lecture at its Army staff college, returning to France and his fiancée, Yvonne Vendroux, whose family owned a biscuit-making factory in Calais. They were married on April 7, 1921, and remained together for the next half century. They had three children, Philippe, born in December 1921, Elizabeth in 1924, and Anne, born with Down Syndrome, in 1928.

Rue des Archives / The Granger Collection, NY

Charles taught at St. Cyr for a year while endeavoring to gain entry to the École Supérieure, the prestigious Army war college. For any French officer aspiring to the higher echelons of command and responsibility, graduation from the École Supérieure was a necessity. Others had amassed more extensive combat records while he languished as a prisoner. He had not been a member of the general staff and was not guaranteed a place in the upcoming class. However, based on his high score on the competitive examination, he gained entry in the spring of 1922.

Preceded by his reputation as a difficult pupil at St. Cyr, an arrogant know-it-all, and as the protégé of Pétain, de Gaulle entered the war college as something of a marked man. In fact, those who had never met him were likely to have already formed a negative opinion of the young officer. True to form, he did not disappoint and argued with instructors and senior officers to the extent that when graduation came he was given a final rating of "Good" rather than the "Very Good" that was probably deserved.

It was a slight that neither de Gaulle nor Pétain ever forgot. Following an assembly during which his rating was read aloud, de Gaulle seethed, "I will come back to this dirty hole only when I am commandant of it. Then you will see how things will change."

Adding insult to injury, de Gaulle was posted to the Fourth Bureau Army in occupied Germany, stationed in the city of Mainz, and placed in charge of refrigeration, storage, and the supply of food. It was career oblivion. Within nine months, though, Pétain rescued him from the dead-end job and brought him to Paris to work as a writer on a history of the French soldier in wartime.

Pétain further arranged for de Gaulle to deliver a series of lectures to the esteemed faculty at the École Supérieure, a captive audience, many of whom had a hand in de

Rue des Archives / The Granger Collection, NY

ABOVE: De Gaulle shows French President Albert Lebrun a new tank during Fifth Army maneuvers on October 23, 1939, in Goetzenbruck (Lorraine). BELOW: On June 22, 1940, with Hitler seated to his right, Generaloberst Wilhelm Keitel reads the terms of surrender to General Charles Huntzinger (second from right) in the same railroad car that was used when Germany surrendered in 1918. By this time de Gaulle was in London, considering his options.

National Archives

Gaulle's humiliation with the undeserved rating. The lectures were sweet revenge, a lowly captain, not yet confirmed for promotion to major, delivering superb oratory to officers quite senior in rank but compelled to swallow their rage.

For de Gaulle, a man of towering ego and great intellect, the moment was sublime, even in later years. It was, though, soured years later by the irreparable rift that developed between de Gaulle and Pétain over the rights to the material from the book to which Charles had contributed as a ghost writer under Pétain, and further damaged by Pétain's willingness to collaborate with the Nazis. After World War II, the disgraced old marshal had a death sentence commuted to life in prison by de Gaulle and was exiled to l'Ile d'Yeu where he died in 1951 at the age of 95.

Throughout his life, de Gaulle was a prolific and accomplished author. He wrote dozens of books and articles, including extensive memoirs and treatises on various topics. Among these topics were leadership, historical perspective, and a new weapon, the tank, which he had become aware of while still a prisoner of the Germans during the Great War. He read the works of British armor advocates B.H. Liddell Hart and J.F.C. Fuller, advocated a standing, mechanized army of 100,000 trained professional soldiers, and argued for the formation of armored divisions within the French military.

He argued, however, at his own peril. In the wake of World War I, the French military establishment was decidedly defensive minded. The tank, many high-ranking officers believed, was an offensive weapon. De Gaulle refused to be dissuaded and made enemies of numerous influential officers. One of these was General Maurice Gamelin, commander-in-chief of the Army.

"I do not believe in Colonel de Gaulle's theories," Gamelin fumed. "They are unsound and unrealistic. Tanks are necessary, it is true. But to think that with tanks you can crush the whole organization of the enemy is just not serious…. The tank is not endowed with self sufficiency. It has to go through, but it has to come back for more fuel and ammunition. As for the air force, it will be a flash in the pan."

In the autumn of 1936, de Gaulle's promotion to full colonel was blocked by the vindictive Gamelin and, as a 46-year-old lieutenant colonel, the upstart officer took command of the 507th Tank Regiment the following year. It was de Gaulle's first practical experience with tanks, and he earned yet another nickname—"Colonel Motor."

At the same time, the relationship between de Gaulle and his benefactor, Pétain, collapsed. After years of benign neglect, the great work that Pétain had undertaken on the history of the French soldier, *Le Soldat*, lay unfinished. De Gaulle decided to use seven of the 10 chapters he had ghost written in his own forthcoming book, *La France et Son Armée*. The two were unable to agree on ownership of the rights to the material, and barely another word ever passed between them.

When the storm of World War II broke across Europe with the Nazi invasion of Poland

on September 1, 1939, the firepower and rapid mobility of the German panzer formations stunned the world. Within months, Hitler turned his blitzkrieg westward. On May 10, 1940, the Nazi juggernaut attacked France and the Low Countries. Although it remained decidedly defensive minded, depending on the fixed fortifications of the Maginot Line to dissuade an invasion of the country from the east, the French Army did approve the formation of two armored divisions in December 1938. However, the army's first armored brigade was not authorized until September 2, 1939, the day after the opening of hostilities.

By the middle of May, Gamelin had summoned de Gaulle to his headquarters, told him that the number of authorized armored divisions had been increased to four, and that with the relatively low rank of colonel he would be given command of one of these—although it existed largely on paper only.

Woefully short of men, vehicles, and tanks, de Gaulle moved the 4th Armored Division forward as seemingly endless lines of refugees and despondent soldiers who had thrown their weapons away trudged in the opposite direction. On May 17, elements of the 4th Armored Division engaged the Germans near the village of Montcornet, a crossroads town that lay in the path of the Germans headed across the Meuse River and on to the English Channel.

About 120 Germans were taken prisoner, while 25 French soldiers were killed and 23 of their precious tanks destroyed. The intent had been to delay the German advance but, as the afternoon wore on, German Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers attacked, compelling a withdrawal.

National Archives

Churchill and de Gaulle, photographed in Paris in November 1944. When de Gaulle arrived in London in 1940 Churchill noted, "You are all alone."

Despite the realization that the Battle of France was lost, the 4th Armored Division continued to resist. On May 21, de Gaulle was promoted to the temporary rank of brigadier general, and his command was ordered to move 150 miles west to contest the German advance near Abbeville.

A week later, the division fought a three-day battle, attempting to dislodge the Germans from a bridgehead across the Somme River. Accounts vary; however, it cannot be disputed that de Gaulle exhibited bravery under fire and blunted the German advance for a time. Casualty figures are vague, with anywhere from 250 to 400 Germans taken prisoner and French tank losses estimated at 70 to 130. Relieved by the British 51st Highland Division, the battered French withdrew.

One of the few members of the French National Assembly who shared similar views on several topics with de Gaulle, Paul Reynaud had assumed the post of prime minister in March. Doing his political best to contain the rising defeatist sentiment among French politicians and senior military commanders, Reynaud appointed de Gaulle on June 6 to the position of Undersecretary of State for National Defense.

Reynaud made the appointment over the strenuous objections of both Pétain and General Maxime Weygand, an old adversary who had replaced Gamelin in overall command of the French Army. A career soldier, de Gaulle entered the political arena and remained engaged in it for the next 30 years.

A wave of shuttle diplomacy followed as de Gaulle made several trips to London, met British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and labored with Reynaud to keep France fighting as the Germans indeed reached the English Channel and the howls of those clamoring for parlay with the Nazis grew louder. There was talk of removing the government to the French colonies in North Africa to continue the fight, and the government did relocate to Bordeaux just ahead of the Nazi vanguard, which had marched into Paris on June 14, 1940.

A new French government was established with Pétain at its head, and a humiliating surrender was forced upon the defeated nation in the same rail car in which the Germans had capitulated at the end of World War I. To make the humiliation complete, Hitler ordered the rail car removed from a museum and transported to the forest of Compiegne, where the German surrender had taken place two decades earlier. The national nightmare of Vichy collaboration followed.

As for de Gaulle, the British diplomats took note of the dour Frenchman who had not seemed to exude the air of defeatism that most of his countrymen shared. In one meeting, Churchill had observed the tall brigadier, and when the discussions were over, he moved across the room and whispered to de Gaulle, "*L'homme du destin* (the man of destiny)."

De Gaulle was now at a personal crossroads. It was no secret that he vehemently opposed the surrender and collaboration with the Nazis. He no longer held a post in the French government, and as an Army officer he was subject to the vengeance of Weygand. Pétain probably had ordered a search for him and would likely place de Gaulle under arrest. Therefore, he saw to the safety of his family as best he could and decided to fly to London.

De Gaulle visited Reynaud at Bordeaux and was given all that remained in the French treasury, 100,000 francs, about $500. The following day, June 17, accompanied by British diplomats and his aide, Geoffrey de Courcel, Charles de Gaulle left France and looked to an uncertain future. He had little money, no political standing,

no army, and no country. Churchill observed later that there was one thing of great importance in the brigadier's possession. "De Gaulle," he said, "carried with him, in this small airplane, the honor of France."

Churchill welcomed de Gaulle in London, and the following day the French exile spoke to his dazed and confused countrymen via the BBC. In what has come to be known as the Appeal of June 18, he exhorted them to continue to resist. "I, General de Gaulle, now in London, call on all French officers and soldiers now present on British territory or who may be so in the future, with or without their arms ... to get in touch with me. Whatever happens, the flame of French resistance must not and will not be extinguished...."

Both: National Archives

Then, he waited. In fact, he attempted to contact French officers who were his senior, asking them to take command of the movement in London and asserting that he would follow them if they would step forward. No one did. At the end of June, Churchill called de Gaulle to his residence and said bluntly, "You are all alone. Well then, I recognize you alone."

While de Gaulle was organizing the Free French movement, the Vichy government tried and convicted him twice in absentia, first of disobedience and then treason, stripping him of his French citizenship, and sentencing him to four years in prison and later to death. It mattered not to de Gaulle; he was the soul of France. The true France was with him, and the imposter of Vichy was certain to come to grief.

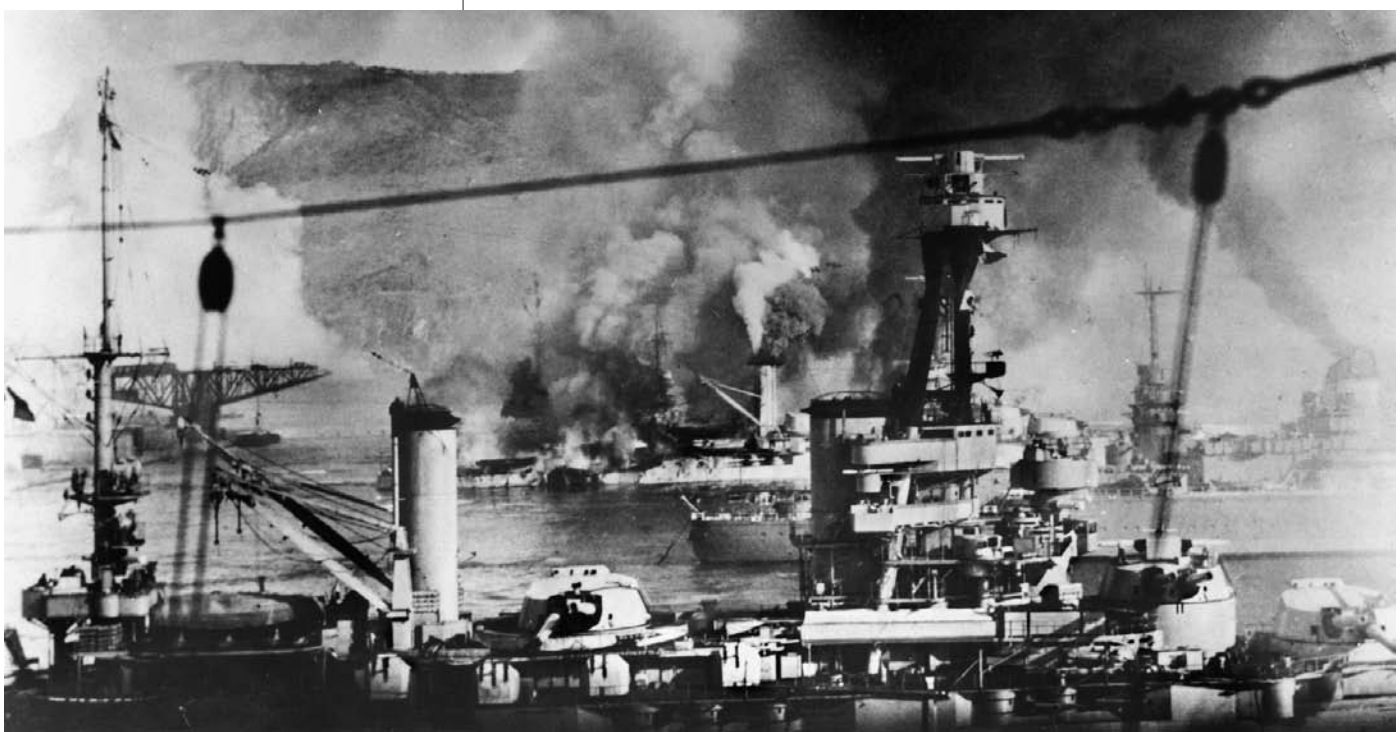
During the next four years, the vexing relationship between Churchill and de Gaulle waxed and waned. Further complicating matters, the Americans were not at war until December 7, 1941, and considered Vichy the legitimate government of France for some time. The administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt mistrusted de Gaulle and struggled with the fact that a representative of a defeated country could be so obstinate and uncooperative while his allies did their utmost to liberate his country from the Nazis.

De Gaulle was initially aghast when the British Royal Navy was ordered to fire on the French Fleet at Mers el-Kébir in July 1940 to prevent these warships falling into German hands. More than 1,300 French sailors were killed. However, he understood the British action and spoke to his grieving countrymen over the BBC. His power and influence continued to grow as French colonial governments in Africa and the Pacific rallied to him.

In September, an abortive British-Free French attempt to capture the Vichy port of Dakar, Senegal, so embarrassed de Gaulle that he contemplated suicide or simply fading away to a quiet life in Canada. Neither, it turned out, was an appropriate course of action for the man whose soul was bound to the destiny of France.

One of the most fractious incidents during the war years occurred during preparations for the invasion of North Africa, Operation Torch, on November 8, 1942. The gov-

BELOW: Vichy French warships burn in Mers el-Kebir harbor, French Algeria, on July 3, 1940, after being bombarded by British warships to keep them from becoming part of the German Navy. LEFT: De Gaulle broadcasts from BBC studios in London, June 18, 1940, calling on French citizens to resist the Nazis and their Vichy collaborators.



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Maj. Gen. Jacques Leclerc, commander of the 2nd Free French Armored Division, gives commands to Free French forces during the liberation of Paris, August 25, 1944.

ernments of Britain and the United States hoped for a quick surrender by Vichy authorities in North Africa. Churchill and Roosevelt concluded that the Free French were not to be included in the landings and that de Gaulle was not to be informed about the impending operation.

When he was finally told of the landings on the morning of November 8, de Gaulle raged, "I hope the Vichy people will fling them into the sea! You can't break into France and get away with it!" Churchill did his best to settle de Gaulle down with reassurances of continuing support for the Free, or Fighting French, movement as it was renamed in June of that year.

As de Gaulle continually sought to maintain the French seat at the table of world politics and to assure that the country would be looked upon as a great power after the war, both the British and American governments remained wary and considered much of his posturing as detrimental to the Allied war effort.

The Americans subsequently proposed a more agreeable leader for the resurgent France and offered up General Henri Giraud as a successor or at least a buffer to the irascible de Gaulle. A tense meeting at Casablanca in January 1943 produced a few awkward photos, including one of the Frenchmen shaking hands, but little else. As events unfolded, the astute de Gaulle politically outmaneuvered Giraud and marginalized his rival with little difficulty.

As preparations for the Normandy invasion of June 6, 1944, progressed, Roosevelt was adamant that de Gaulle was to be kept out of the detailed planning. Just two days before the invasion, de Gaulle was briefed on the tactical situation and the objectives of the initial operation. For his part, de Gaulle had no interest in discussing a joint plan for the government and administration of a liberated France. Without question, France would be governed by the French people—with de Gaulle at their head—once the Germans were defeated.

On June 14, de Gaulle boarded the French destroyer *Combattante* at Portsmouth harbor and crossed the English Channel to the Normandy beaches near Courseulles. He set foot on French soil for the first time in four years that day, and by mid-July the U.S. government grudgingly acknowledged the de Gaulle and his national committee had the authority to exercise civil administration in the liberated areas of France.

On August 15, Allied troops landed in southern France during Operation Dragoon and, as the summer wore on, the armored spearheads of the Allied XII and XXI Army Groups, under General Omar Bradley and General Bernard Montgomery, respectively, were steadily progressing toward the frontier of the German Reich.

Ten days after the Dragoon landings, Leclerc's 2nd Armored Division rolled into Paris, liberating the capital city that had already been the scene of fighting between Free French guerrillas and the German garrison. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, had originally intended to bypass Paris, but de Gaulle personally visited Eisenhower and forcefully argued that the French capital should be directly occupied. Not only were the communist elements among the Free French fighting in the city a threat to de Gaulle's authority, but Paris was also an important communication center and its liberation would be a tremendously symbolic event.

Eisenhower's hand was forced by de Gaulle and by the unrest in Paris, and General Leonard Gerow, commanding the Allied V Corps, was authorized to release Leclerc to enter the city. However, in short order Gerow expected Leclerc to return to V Corps command and continue its drive across France. De Gaulle informed Gerow that the 2nd Armored Division was to participate in the grand parade the day after the liberation and that French officers would now be taking orders from the French government. Of course, the presence of an armored division parading behind the perceived head of the French government only served to reinforce de Gaulle's hold on the reins of authority.

By the time Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union issued separate

Continued on page 98

BY JEFF PATTON, COLONEL, USAF (RET.)

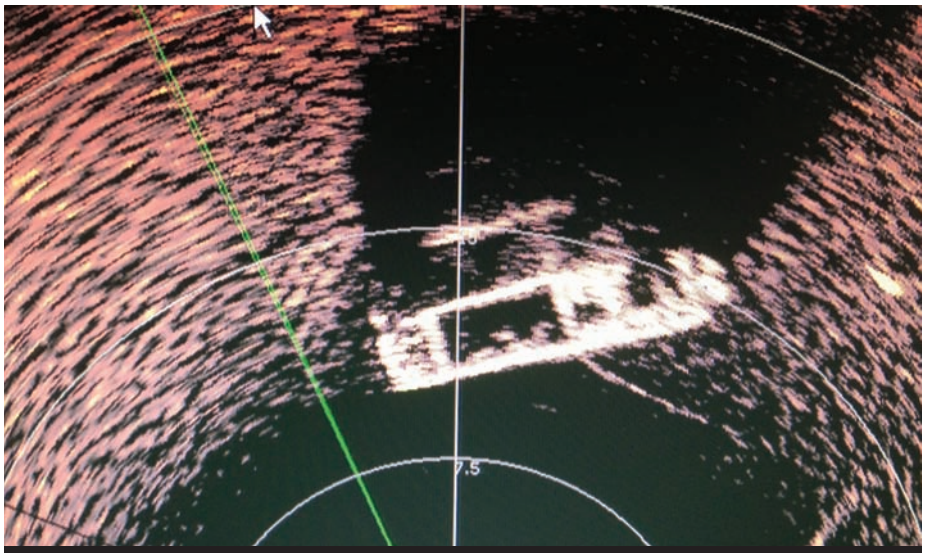
The Voluntari del Garda conducted an exhaustive search for the last casualties of the 10th Mountain Division.

The editorial in the Summer 2013 issue of WWII Quarterly *concerned the search for an amphibious DUKW that sank with 25 men aboard on April 30, 1945, in Lake Garda, northern Italy's largest lake. This follow-up article is by one of the people involved in the search for the vehicle.*

The war in Italy was rapidly drawing to a close. The 10th Mountain Division had succeeded in pushing the retreating remnants of Lt. Gen. von Lemelson's L Mountain and XVI Panzer Corps north toward the Brenner Pass. In an effort to cut off the retreating elements of these units, the 10th Mountain Division was assigned the task of moving up Lake Garda's eastern shore.

Despite encountering six blown tunnels, Task Force Darby (under Colonel William O. Darby, the founder of the U.S. Ranger Force and now the 10th's assistant division commander) led the charge up the lake and liberated the towns of Nago and Torbole on the lake's northeast corner three days after starting their sweep from the south end.

Volontari del Garda



ABOVE: Photo taken by the sonar camera on December 12, 2012, when the Volontari del Garda finally hit paydirt; the image of the DUKW is plainly visible. The grainy images around the DUKW were first thought to be human remains but photos from the ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) confirmed that they were construction cinder blocks used to anchor buoys for sailboat races over the decades. RIGHT: A restored DUKWs entering Lake Garda at Riva del Garda (northwest corner of the lake), April 25, 2013, Italy's "Liberation Day."

On the evening of April 30, 1945, three DUKWs carrying members of the 86th Mountain Infantry Regiment departed Torbole for a three-mile trip across the northern end of the lake to arrive at Riva del Garda on the northwest shore to secure the town following its abandonment by retreating German forces.

The DUKWs took a wide swing south from Torbole into the lake to avoid presumed German artillery sited on Monte Brione, which dominates the north end of the lake. During this swing south, one DUKW carrying members of the 605th Field Artillery battalion suffered engine failure. A storm came up on the lake and, with the engine stopped, the vehicle lost steerage and was swamped by waves kicked up by the storm.

According to the sole survivor, Thomas Hough, the men tossed their packs and weapons overboard but the DUKW was overloaded with 25 men plus a 75mm pack howitzer and ammunition and quickly took on water. The vehicle sank rapidly, tossing the men into the icy water. Hough said the rest of the men drowned fairly quickly and he was the only survivor; he was rescued by some soldiers who heard the cries of the men and commandeered a row boat to come to his rescue. The men in the DUKW were nearly the last casualties suffered by the 10th Mountain in Italy, and their bodies were never recovered.

In 2002, 57 years after the event, I was serving on active duty as an Air Force colonel and the Air Attaché to the Republic of Italy in Rome. I was approached at a diplomatic reception being held at the Brazilian Embassy, by an Italian civilian who introduced himself as Giovanni Sulla of Montese. Giovanni told me he was an amateur historian and collector of militaria and had a great interest in the role of the Brazilian and U.S. Armies in the liberation of Italy in World War II. (For the story of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force, see *WWII Quarterly,* Winter 2013.)

Author's Photo

Sulla told me the history of the 10th Mountain's final days in combat in Italy and specifically told me the story of the loss of the 24 men aboard a DUKW. While it was an interesting story, I wondered why he was telling me, an Air Force officer. He asked, "Isn't it the policy of the U.S. government to recover its missing in action?" I agreed with him and he proceeded to tell me he thought he knew the approximate location of where the DUKW sank based on an Italian translation of the division's history.

Volontari del Garda

Author's Photo

ABOVE: One of the two restored DUWKs en route to the site of the sinking for a wreath-laying ceremony to honor those Americans who lost their lives aboard the vehicle the night of April 30, 1945. LEFT: A picture taken by the ROV of the driver's position on the DUKW. The instrument gauges are still visible although a portion of the dashboard has fallen off. The rubber-coated steering wheel is still largely intact.

He ventured that it should be a relatively simple matter to find the DUKW and recover the soldiers' remains. Little did I realize this "relatively simple matter" would take 10 years and the work of dozens of people to bring to fruition.

I first contacted the U.S. and Italian Navies for help in the search. While supportive of my efforts, they were either not equipped to do the search or had other priorities. Fortuitously, Brett Phaneuff, a member of Submergence Group/PROMARE, contacted me and volunteered to find the DUKW. PROMARE is an organization that specializes in deep-water salvage and exploration and was ideally suited to conduct a search.

Over the next two years, we conducted several surveys of the bottom of the northern end of the lake with towed side-scan sonar and a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) with photographic capability. We imaged numerous items that appeared to be the DUKW on sonar but when investigated with the ROV, they turned out to be sunken vehicles or large rocks that had fallen into the lake. We saw no trace of the DUKW or the missing soldiers.

PROMARE got involved with another project and the search was suspended in 2004. In December 2012, I was shocked to hear that the DUKW had been found!

A group of Italian volunteers who work for the Volontari del Garda (literally, Volunteers of Garda) had been searching on weekends in the lake for almost a year using sonar and an ROV and found the DUKW sitting upright in 900 feet of water approximately one mile farther south than we had searched in 2003 and 2004.

The Volontari are like an EMS service that searches for people and cars and boats lost in the lake, so they have the proper equipment and training to conduct a search. The Volontari had taken more than 3,000 sonar scans, crisscrossing the lake bed until late at night on December 12, 2012, when lowering the sonar for the last time that night, they almost landed the sonar directly on top of the DUKW, missing it by a few feet! Immediately, the ROV was sent down to identify the vehicle.

Two DUKWs were reported lost in 10th Mountain history. One was sunk by tank fire close to the east coast of the lake, and the other was the DUKW carrying the 24 men from the 605th FA. This latter DUKW was undamaged and was obviously the correct one. Hough said the engine had quit and this DUKW's engine compartment cover was open, evidence that the men were trying to get the engine restarted prior to sinking. Photos showed little corrosion from the 68 years it had been submerged and sitting on a muddy bottom.

I was graciously invited to participate in the search for the remains of the soldiers by the Volontari during the first three weekends in March 2013 and I eagerly accepted. I accompanied them aboard their 12-meter vessel, *Volga 2026,* for five 9-10 hour days searching in the vicinity of the DUKW for our missing soldiers.

I cannot say enough about the passion and dedication of these men in pursuing the location of our fallen. They developed a daily search plan then used the sonar to search the area. I never heard one word of discouragement despite the hundreds of concrete blocks and other false targets we encountered. Their efforts to find these men who all they knew about where they died to liberate Italy were heartwarming to this American.

Unfortunately, we were unable to find the soldiers. The most likely scenario is that the remains of the soldiers have been entombed in the lake bottom by the current and are not recoverable. The Volontari have received permission from provincial authorities to make an attempt, probably in the spring of 2014, to raise the vehicle and conduct a more thorough survey surrounding the DUKW for artifacts and human remains.

We can draw this chapter of the long and glorious history of the 10th Mountain Division to a close. Our men are in eternal rest in a place known only to God, surrounded by their comrades and embraced by the country they died to liberate. May they rest in peace.

Postscript: On April 25, 2013, in commemoration of Liberation Day in Italy, two restored, privately owned DUKWs with reenactors dressed in World War II U.S. Army uniforms laid a wreath in Lake Garda above the site of sinking of the DUKW in honor of the 24 young American soldiers who rest below. As the wreath was laid, a bugler played "il Silenzio," a beautiful tribute similar to "Taps." □

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DeGaulle

Continued from page 95

communiqués recognizing the French government as such on October 23, 1944, de Gaulle had already been acting as head of state. His deputies assumed key roles in the government, arrested collaborators, and wrestled with the momentous problems of caring for hundreds of thousands of displaced people, repairing infrastructure devastated by war, jockeying with internal political opposition and with other weighty matters such as the future of the French colonial empire in North Africa, the Middle East, and Indochina.

When Churchill, Roosevelt, and Soviet Premier Josef Stalin met at Yalta in January 1945, France was excluded from the discussions. Again in mid-July, when British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, President Harry Truman, and Stalin met at Potsdam, France was not represented. De Gaulle was not surprised and issued statements that his country would not be bound by any agreements reached without its direct approval. In February 1946, after some debate, France was given an occupation zone in postwar Germany.

By then, however, de Gaulle had already resigned from the country's presidency, to which he had been formally elected just the previous November. His primary concern was the structure of the postwar government itself. It was to resemble that of the Third Republic with its legislative body rather than the president retaining the majority of the political clout. Such a government, he believed, had been an abject failure as demonstrated by its collapse in the spring of 1940.

"The exclusive regime of the political parties has returned," he told an assemblage on January 14, 1946. "I condemn it. However, unless I use force to impose a dictatorship, which I do not desire and which would doubtless come to a bad end, I have no means of preventing this experiment. So I must retire."

The path to power and to the redemption of France had been long and arduous. More than likely, de Gaulle knew that he could not simply fade from the world stage. Although it took longer than he expected, the people called him to serve once again. In December 1958, de Gaulle was elected president of the Fifth Republic, wielding power that closely resembled a model put forth a decade earlier by his failed RPF (Rally of the French People) Party.

De Gaulle's firm hand and even his mere presence in government quelled the prospects of civil war. He worked toward an acceptable formula for the independence of Algeria, which occurred four years later. He stiff-armed outside influence, refusing to allow American nuclear weapons on French soil and undertaking the country's own nuclear program, vetoing British entry into the European Common Market due to that country's close ties with the United States. As far as de Gaulle was concerned, Britain was an American Trojan horse at the gates of the Common Market. On March 7, 1966, de Gaulle took France out of the NATO military alliance, again fearing American hegemony.

In the spring of 1968, de Gaulle's political curtain call occurred with a forceful radio address that put down a wave of civil unrest related to economic and social issues with words rather than bullets.

On the evening of November 9, 1970, de Gaulle sat down to a game of solitaire, a fitting pursuit for someone who had been a reticent loner for much of his life, and in moments he was unconscious. In less than an hour he was dead of an aortic aneurysm, 13 days short of his 80th birthday. In keeping with his wishes, written down nearly two decades earlier, there was to be no great fanfare, no solemn eulogy, and no grand state funeral. His epitaph was to read "Charles de Gaulle, 1890- ... Nothing more."

In planning his own final farewell, de Gaulle was brilliant. Modern France was itself his monument. There was no other validation needed for the headstrong, fiercely independent individual who loved his country as he loved himself and became the greatest Frenchman of the 20th century. □

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