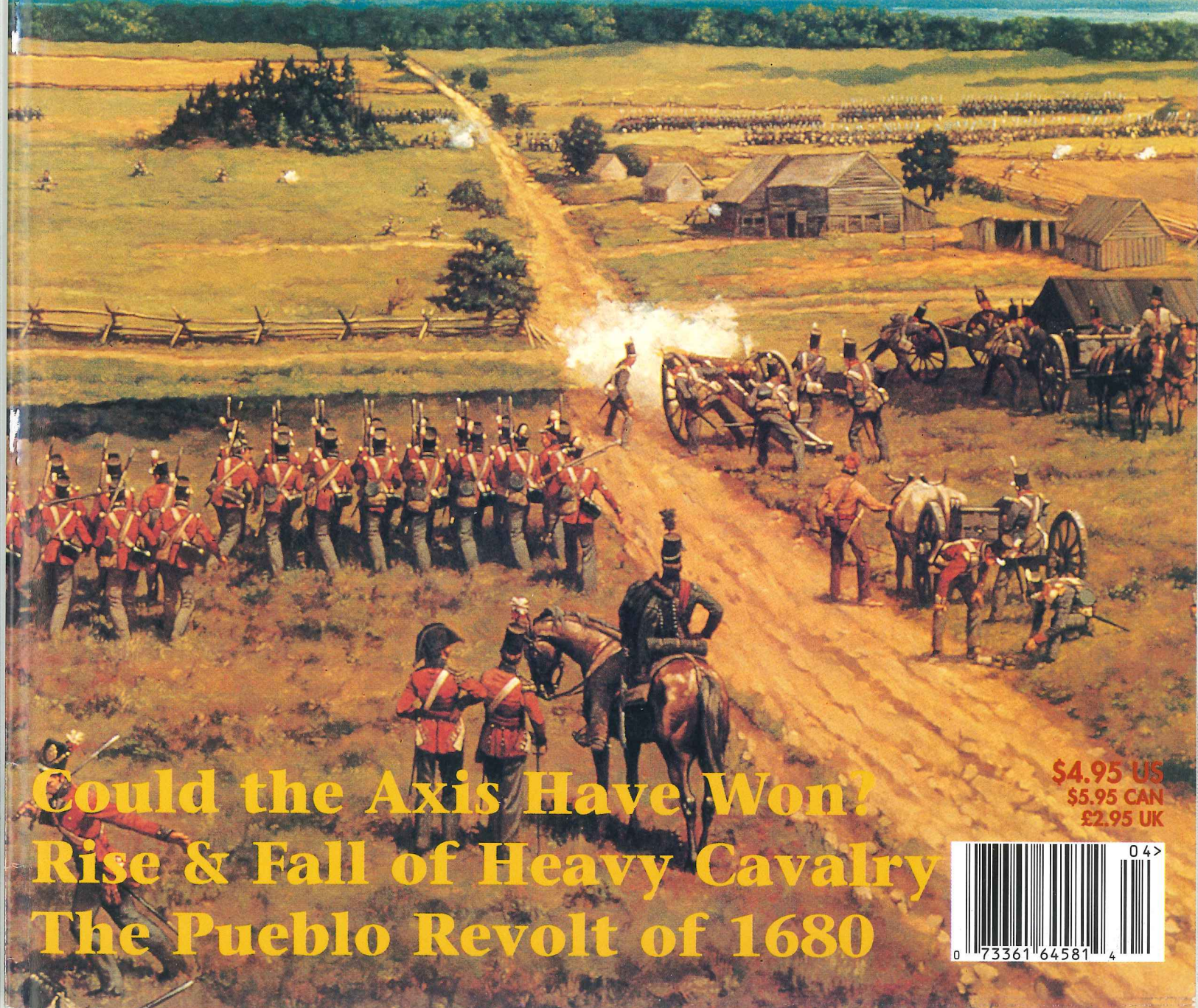


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THE SEVEN DAYS

Seven Pines was a poorly planned and executed attempt to throw back McClellan's army from the gates of Richmond.

The inexperienced Confederate army botched its offensive due to its unwieldy command structure.

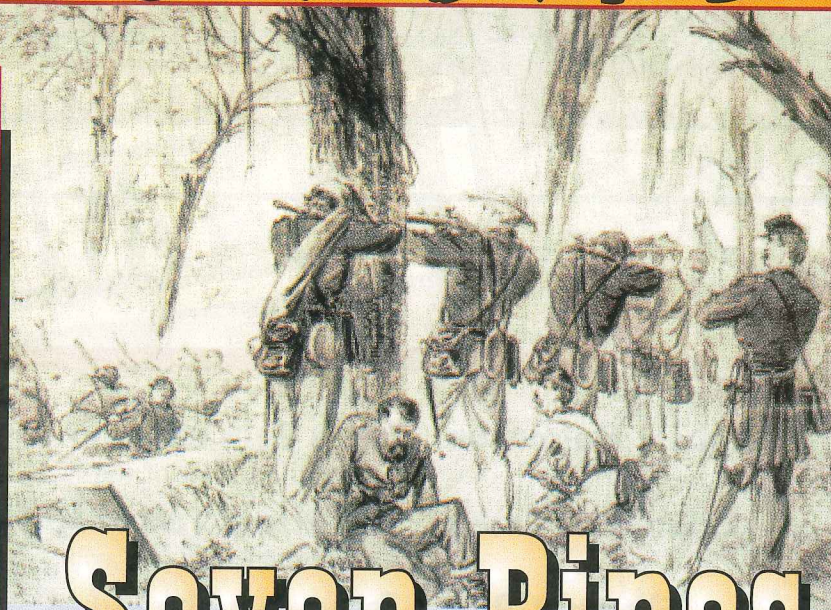
As a result, Joe Johnston was removed from command and an untried general named Robert E. Lee was placed in command.

After some reorganization (and the reinforcement by the Valley Army), Lee took the offensive in the Seven Days. Forced to "change his base" McClellan withdrew from the Peninsula in defeat, relieving the threat to Richmond. A serious Union return to this area would not occur until 1864.

Seven Pines is the second of three linkable games which we will publish covering the entire Seven Days Battle. The final massive linked game will showcase the **Civil War, Brigade Series** innovative command rules (which show players the limitations of the real commanders and the command system available) as never before.

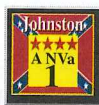
Despite its large map area, each Seven Days game is easily playable due to the limited number of counters involved.

Seven Pines covers two major battles in the same package. The early Battle of Seven Pines itself as well as Savage Station. Seven Pines, a full-blown battle of its own, can be played entirely on these maps. The Seven Pines battles here can be played using these maps alone or linked with **Gaines Mill** to show 2/3rds of the Seven Days. The options are numerous. When linked, McClellan's missed opportunity to take Richmond during the Battle of Gaines Mill can be explored.



Seven Pines

THE BATTLES OF THE SEVEN DAYS. JUNE, 1862. VOLUME II



Civil War, Brigade Series

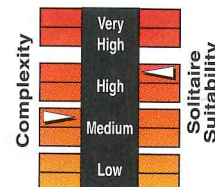
Game No. 12

game designer:
David A. Powell

series designer:
Dean N. Essig

Game Data

- ◆ Die-Cut Counters: 280
- ◆ Full-Color 22" x 34" Maps: Three
- ◆ Scenarios: 10
- ◆ Playing Time: 6-20 Hours
- ◆ Players: 1 or more
- ◆ Unit Scale: Brigades
- ◆ Turn Length: 30 Minutes
- ◆ Hex Scale: 200 yards
- ◆ 1-Map Scenarios: Yes



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APRIL 1998

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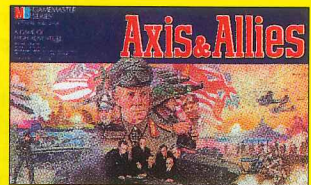
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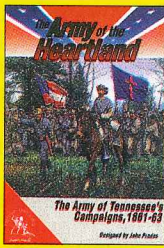
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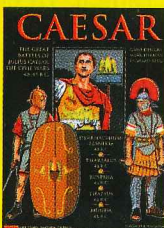
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New World Order Hot Spot...

Bougainville Update

Papua New Guinea is an equatorial nation of four million in the southwest Pacific with jungle-covered mountainous terrain and few roads. It's blessed with considerable natural resources and has an economy centered on mining, oil and logging. But despite those seeming advantages, the United Nations Development Program ranks it only 126 out of 174 nations. Certainly the high level of corruption and incompetent management that have plagued the Melanesian nation during its 22 years of independence are a large part of the cause of that national poverty; but another significant factor is what's come to be known as the "Bougainville Crisis."

Since 1988 Papua New Guinea's remote but important island of Bougainville (pop. 100,000) has been in rebellion against rule from Port Moresby, the nation's capital. To begin, the Bougainvillians aren't naturally a part of Papua New Guinea (PNG), and never would have become part of that nation if they'd had their way. Their island belongs geographically to the Solomons group, and came under German rule during the late 19th century colonial carve-up of the region. But since the 1914 ouster of the Germans, it's been treated as part of New Guinea. As Australia prepared its sole colony for independence during the early 1970s, the Bougainvillians lobbied in vain for the creation of their own independent state.

The island is resource rich, and that's why it's so important to PNG. In 1972 the copper mine at Panguna began operation and has since accounted for almost half of PNG's national export earnings and one-third of total government revenues. But it was also the mine that brought simmering tensions to the surface. Great environmental damage was caused by the huge, open-cut facility located near the island's center. Resentments long held by the black-skinned Bougainvillians toward their red-skinned PNG compa-

triotis were fueled by a feeling not enough of the revenue from the mine was flowing back from Port Moresby. By the late 1980s growing unrest boiled over into armed rebellion.

Though only a tempest in a tea cup by world standards, the insurrection soon got out of hand and the small PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) proved inadequate to put it down. The Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) has been led by Francis Ona and Sam Kaona, who were given officer training by the Australian army before PNG became independent. Made up of a loose collection of gangs, including tribal warriors, independence movement stalwarts, young criminal toughs and cargo cultists, the BRA is a small force with only light arms. But it proved strong enough for the PNGDF, which is also said to have prolonged the war's resolution with its indiscipline and brutality.

In 1989 rebel sabotage activity caused the Panguna copper mine to be closed, depriving PNG of critical export earnings and its government of essential revenue. It has remained closed ever since as a stalemate has ensued. PNG forces have always failed in their repeated attempts to crush the rebels who, in turn, have never managed to eject the national forces from their island. This small war, little known outside the region, could well be described as PNG's Vietnam.

After six years of conflict, Sir Julius Chan became the PNG's prime minister for the second time in 1994. The son of a New Guinea mother and a Chinese father, he is also a knight of the British Empire, hence the title. (Most former British colonies dispense with imperial honors and titles upon independence, but PNG has retained them.) Sir Julius pledged to "solve" the Bougainville crisis, staking his political future on doing so. By that point the war was claiming 1,500 lives and costing his government \$100 million per year. Talks to arrange a peace set-

tlement were convened, but at the last moment the rebel leaders refused to attend.

Enraged by the loss of face, Sir Julius changed tack, deciding to crush the rebels once and for all. In 1996 the PNGDF launched a number of offensives, each of which was promised as the "final" and "decisive" push. But each in turn failed with heavy PNGDF casualties.

On paper the PNGDF appears capable of annihilating the BRA. Its failure to actually do so has more to do with internal PNGDF weaknesses than with the strength of the rebels. Its personnel have been only poorly and irregularly paid for many years. They have a history of taking aggressive action in support of their pay claims, and the nation's police have therefore been called on to act against them several times. To add to that woe, the force is poorly trained and insufficiently equipped, with most of its hardware not in working order. Morale among the troops is low.

As an election approached, which he was doomed to lose unless a miracle materialized, Sir Julius saw his salvation in hiring foreign mercenaries. A quick fix solution seemed to be needed, and he thought highly capable outsiders could accomplish the objectives his own forces couldn't. In January 1997 clandestine moves got under way to enlist the services of a mercenary company. Sandline, a South African subsidiary of a larger corporation called Executive Outcomes (EO), entered into a \$36 million contract with the PNG government. Of that, \$28 million was to serve as remuneration to the mercenaries involved. So 170, mainly South African, mercenaries were sent to Bougainville under command of Lt. Col. Tim Spicer, a former British army officer and Falklands War veteran.

Executive Outcomes is headquartered in Pretoria, where it's headed by Eben Barlow, a former South African army officer who saw combat in Angola during the apartheid era. The company, along with its subsidiaries, carries a total of 800 mercenary soldiers on its books. It has a history of providing security for weak third-

world regimes that require military solutions for internal problems. More specifically, the corporation specializes in providing the means for mineral and oil projects to open and remain in operation in the face of local opposition and rebellion. That's how the EO group made its name and fortune in Africa. The corporation has a record of accepting, as part payment for its services, concessions in the resource projects it's tasked to guard. The Sandline subsidiary has been used efficiently and successfully to reopen mines forced closed by insurrection in Sierra Leone and Angola.

Sir Julius and his government kept their mercenary venture a secret for as long as possible, but the news became public late in February 1997. Howls of protest immediately came from within PNG and from the former colonial ruler, Australia. Canberra feared the appearance for the first time of mercenaries in the region would set a dangerous precedent that could have profound implications for stability across it. It would also jeopardize prospects for the peaceful solution of the Bougainville question, which the Australian government had always advocated.

Australia's capacity to influence PNG government decisions is considerable. It provides \$320 million each year in aid to its former colony, including half of the Port Moresby government's annual budget, while also propping up the value of the kina, PNG's national currency. Understandably, then, the Australian government looked to that aid lever to dissuade Sir Julius from going ahead with his scheme.

One possibility considered involved cutting all aid to PNG. But while that dramatic gesture would have the greatest impact, it would also leave Port Moresby free of all Australian influence. On the other hand, it was felt too small a response from Canberra would not suffice either. The main call in Australia's parliament was therefore for aid to be reduced on a dollar for dollar basis, depending on how much PNG paid to the mercenaries. Such an approach would mean, for example, if PNG paid \$36 million to Sandline, Australian aid would in turn be cut by that amount.

It was also put out at the time that World Bank and International Monetary Fund aid to PNG might be in jeopardy. The World Bank is acutely dissatisfied with Port Moresby's financial management and, like the Australian government, doesn't want to see aid money spent on mercenaries.

At that stage Sir Julius tried to play down the whole affair. He claimed Sandline had been hired only to train and

harden the PNGDF into an effective fighting force. His stance was the mercenaries would not be sent into combat. Of the 140 mercenaries who would be coming, he said, only 40 would actually go to Bougainville, where they would serve purely as an advisory team never going into the front line. He did admit the mercenaries would pilot armored helicopters; but the pilots would be the only ones taking part in combat. Simultaneously news leaked out 44 mercenaries were training near the northern city of Wewak in jungle conditions similar to those on Bougainville.

Sceptics responded by asserting there's no such thing as a front line on the troubled island, so the mercenaries sent there would likely become in-

volved in fighting. Objections were also raised on the ground Sandline had been brutal in its treatment of local peoples in Sierra Leone and Angola.

A meeting was held in Sydney between Sir Julius and Australian Prime Minister John Howard. The latter offered a range of options, including increased aid on condition the deal with Sandline was called off. But Sir Julius refused to budge. For him it would have meant a great loss of face to back flip, and he didn't want to be seen to be pushed around by PNG's former colonial masters. So he and his government continued their journey down the mercenary trail. Then, on 17 March 1997, came a new and unanticipated development — a full blown PNG military mutiny.



The PNGDF is a conglomerate force consisting of 3,400 soldiers, 300 naval and 140 air force personnel. At the time of the mutiny it was commanded by Brig. Jerry Singirok, a veteran of the war on Bougainville. His mutiny took this sequence: 1) he announced at morning parade the PNGDF would no longer cooperate with the government's use of mercenaries; 2) he ordered all troops and mercenaries at Wewak confined to barracks; 3) he personally delivered a letter to the British governor-general demanding Sir Julius be fired and a caretaker government be installed; and 4) he phoned the PNG's talk-back radio station to publicly announce those moves on the air.

Sir Julius responded by sacking Singirok. But that didn't suit the brigadier or his men. He continued to reside in the commander-in-chief's house inside Port Moresby's Murray Barracks, protected by personnel who refused to recognize his dismissal.

The mutiny also sparked rioting in Port Moresby. An ethnic Chinese community there of about 20,000 dominates PNG's commercial sector. They bore the brunt of the rioting, with many of their shops and businesses ransacked and looted. (An expatriate Australian community of about 10,000, a legacy of colonial rule, is the only other non-indigenous group of significance.)

Troops and demonstrators joined together to surround parliament house. Police, who sided with the government, and some PNGDF personnel came close to shooting it out with each other. Only the fact the troops had been locked out of their own armory prevented them from getting hold of their guns and attacking. The frustrated troops then torched a car belonging to the officer appointed by Sir Julius to replace Singirok.

For as long as could, Sir Julius remained intransigent. He condemned Singirok's actions as gross insurrection bordering on treason. The sacked commander meanwhile continued to call for the governor-general to appoint a new government. After four days of intense rioting, the prime minister finally relented, suspended the contract with Sandline, and thereby brought an end to the crisis. The mercenaries flew home, but the \$36 million already paid to their company wasn't refunded.

The standoff between the prime minister and the PNGDF chief continued. Singirok accused Sir Julius of lying, saying his claims the mercenaries were not a real combat force were blatantly untrue. Documents were released showing the mercenaries had indeed been hired to play the key role in future fighting on Bougainville. A

strike force of 70 of them was to conduct offensive operations aimed at securing the Panguna copper mine and rendering the BRA ineffective. Rebel strongholds were to have been destroyed, which in practice would have meant entire villages disappearing from the face of the earth. Weapons intended to be used included missiles armed with fuel-air explosives with a killing range of 500 meters. High civilian casualties would have been certain.

Virtually to a man, the PNGDF felt disgruntled and embittered about the mercenary deal. The amount that had been paid to Sandline was almost equal to the annual defense budget of \$39 million. The troops felt if funds in that amount could be found for mercenaries, they should also be available for upgrading and maintaining PNGDF equipment. For example, in March only one of the force's helicopters was operational, with the rest in mothballs awaiting repairs. The commander of the helicopter force claimed it was impossible to support even just a battalion in the field with only one chopper, but that all of them could be made operational for much less than the government had paid to Sandline.

It was the PNGDF's first foray into politics, and it set a dangerous precedent that augurs badly for the future. Though the PNG's ramshackle democracy survived the crisis, the PNGDF has emerged as the major political force in the nation. It caused the government to reverse course, finally forcing Sir Julius to step down as prime minister on 27 March.

The big winners were thus the Bougainville rebels, who were never more than observers in the Port Moresby drama. They stood back and watched their opponents tear themselves apart without their having to lift a finger. At the conclusion of the mercenary episode, the BRA announced it would never again negotiate with Sir Julius or any of those who'd held the PNG prime ministership before him. Francis Ona, head of the rebel government, also said he would press for full independence for the island, which would henceforth be called Mekamui.

No nation in the world has shown interest in recognizing or supporting

the independence of Bougainville. If the island were to succeed in gaining its freedom, there is real fear in Port Moresby and Canberra it would be the beginning of the complete break up of PNG. After all, PNG is probably the most multi-cultural country in the world, with over 700 different languages spoken. Most of its people are dirt poor and have received little education.

By April things had calmed down and the Melanesian nation drifted toward its scheduled elections in July. Sir Julius was biding his time, planning to resurrect his career afterward. But he miscalculated again. Such was the depth of feeling against him he lost his seat after 29 years in parliament. (In the PNG the average member of parliament rarely lasts more than one term, and this time out two-thirds of the sitting members lost their seats.)

The new prime minister is Bill Skate, a Papuan with whom the BRA is happy to negotiate. Since June, two rounds of talks have taken place between the two sides in New Zealand, which has resulted in a cease-fire now still in place. But any permanent settlement is still a long way off.

— Wayne Skeggs

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Elite Beat...

World War II Japanese Diversionary Units

During World War II, to try to compensate for their lack of air superiority and effective long-range artillery

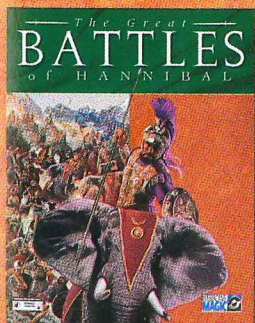
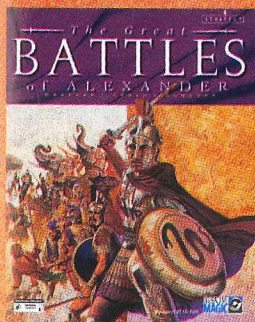
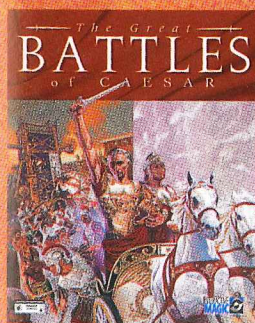
when fighting the western Allies, the Japanese army adopted the practice of organizing special units equipped to

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penetrate enemy lines to raid airfields, supply dumps and headquarters, and to disrupt communications across a combat zone by harassing or destroying trains and motor convoys. Formed into groups officially termed "diversionary units," these soldiers were trained to strike with surprise, create a maximum amount of confusion and destruction, and then withdraw as suddenly as they had appeared. They were usually moved to their operational area by small boat, submarine, plane, or via cross country infiltration in small groups sent directly through the forward positions of the opposing force.

Though never activated on the same scale as the British SAS or US Rangers, diversionary units varied in size from well-equipped companies of picked men to hastily thrown-together raiding parties no larger than a squad. There was in fact no provision in the official Japanese army tables of organization for permanently established or standardized diversionary units. The more complex among them tended to be composed mostly of volunteers placed into temporary companies. Those companies were in turn attached to a larger field command for the duration of a campaign or battle.

A typical diversionary unit was made up of about 200 officers and men organized as three platoons of three sections each. An unusually large percentage of the personnel were officers. An average diversionary platoon consisted of a 1st lieutenant as leader, a dozen 2nd lieutenants as section leaders, assistant section leaders and squad leaders, along with only 18 enlisted. There were practically no men of NCO rank, since those duties were performed by junior officers. About half of each such unit consisted of men who'd volunteered for that type of combat operation.

Though diversionary units were employed in raiding missions against enemy forward positions, headquarters, airfields and similar stationary installations, emphasis was always given to trying to locate and attack convoys of supply trucks or towed artillery, or headquarters in transit. The emphasis was maintained in accordance with the sound theory that during movement enemy security was apt to be far less stringent and their defensive capabilities diminished.

Two methods were advocated for operating against so called "moving objectives," one was termed "attack in force," and the other "concealed attack." Though their theory and approach to this kind of combat was sound, in actual practice the Japanese diversionary units seldom achieved the desired results.

The attack in force was to be carried out as a swift, all-out effort delivered either from ambush against a moving convoy or, by surprise, against a unit in transit that had halted for the night. In either situation, the primary objective was the destruction of vehicles, weapons and supplies. Though no opportunity to deliver hard blows to enemy personnel was to be passed up, the main goal was to destroy, burn or capture as much equipment as possible.

The preparations for such convoy attacks were essentially the same as those involved for ordinary Japanese assault operations. Before the final plan was set, a detailed reconnaissance was conducted. Care was taken to collect terrain information and determine the most traveled enemy convoy routes, customary rest areas, the extent of routine security measures and the type of motor transport operating across the sector.

Along the convoy route an area would be chosen that offered a minimum of cover to the defenders, but at the same time permitted the effective disposition of the ambushing troops. Road blocks or land mines were set up to block the front and rear of the column at the moment the attack began. If necessary, the roadsides would also be mined to thwart the cross country escape of any vehicles.

The deployment of the attacking Japanese varied according to the terrain. Usually they would conceal themselves along one flank of the convoy route, either massed at one spot or dispersed in groups at several points. The distance between the ambushing troops and the road depended on the terrain and degree of security expected to be maintained by the enemy. Fire power was usually concentrated in the foremost ranks, but occasionally the attackers would divide into a covering unit and a demolition unit.

Once the unit had taken its ambush position, every man remained on the alert, ready to strike at any instant. Because a large number of observers might reveal the existence of the ambush, the unit commander usually positioned himself to make the initial sighting of the enemy column.

When the convoy entered the ambush zone, their advance guard was allowed to pass unmolested while the diversionary unit waited for the main body. At the most opportune moment, the road was blocked according to plan, the ambushers opened fire, and a final advance called at the height of the ensuing confusion. The idea of the final ground attack was to completely engage the enemy in close combat, with a climax of hand-to-hand fighting virtually obligatory among the offensive-minded Japanese.

If the convoy had been traveling with a large interval between vehicles, the ambush would not open fire until the lead vehicle had been stopped and those behind had closed up. That was expected as a natural tendency among drivers, and could usually be counted on to happen in all but the most thoroughly trained transport units.

In conducting attacks in force, diversionary units depended for success on the total surprise and disorganization of their target convoy. In the training instructions for them, over-enthusiastic officers were admonished not to foolishly expend their force if it was perceived at the last minute the enemy was prepared for resistance. Similarly, once the shock of surprise and the period of disorder had passed, as much as circumstances permitted, the raiders were not to linger in the area in order to try to mop up surviving, isolated enemy elements. Instead they were to withdraw to a predetermined reassemble point.

It's worth noting the Japanese considered suicide raids by diversionary units to be too costly in key junior officers. Since the most aggressive and experienced leaders were usually the ones selected to lead such missions, it was recognized high casualty rates among them might well have an adverse affect on subsequent combat capabilities. At least one directive was issued ordering that senior privates, rather than officers or NCOs, be assigned to lead any needed "suicide assault patrols," which altogether were to consist of no more than two or three men.

Though there were instances when entire diversionary units were employed on suicide missions, they weren't normally expected to expend themselves recklessly in combat. When a mission had been completed, or when it had become obvious a force could no longer sustain itself in hostile territory, a diversionary unit was to return to Japanese lines either by cross country exfiltration or prearranged evacuation over water.

The so called "concealed attack" was the Japanese term for the covert sabotage of supply lines. In that type of operation, diversionary units would attempt to avoid all contact with the enemy while operating from secret bases set up behind their opponent's lines. Great stress was placed on the use of explosives and mines to destroy vehicles and demoralize rear echelon troops. One set of instructions for concealed attacks emphasized the following methods in particular.

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tree will fall, thus striking the vehicle and also blocking the road. Vehicles crossing a bridge were to be destroyed by pressure mines placed under the structure's planking. One section of a bridge might be damaged to the point the weight of a passing vehicle caused it to collapse. Obstacles were to be laid, whenever possible, on steep, winding roads. Land mines and timed charges were to be set at intervals along extended routes through forests, swamps and along cliffs. They were to be adjusted so the explosion of one would ensure the detonation of the others nearby. (The idea there was to simultaneously damage several vehicles when the lead vehicle of a convoy detonated the first charge.)

Whenever possible, units engaged in anti-vehicle operations were to establish hidden command posts from which the enemy's rear area traffic could be observed. Demolition details would then be dispatched from those posts to execute specific missions. Commanders were instructed to ensure whenever an explosive charge was used a few men were positioned so as to be able to observe and then report on its effectiveness.

Diversionary units employed no exotic gear. They were equipped with standard Japanese infantry weapons, up to and including light machine-guns, 50mm grenade launchers (the infamous "knee mortars"), and sometimes submachineguns. The raiders were taught the simple expedient of

bayoneting truck fuel tanks and igniting the flowing gasoline with matches thrown from a short distance. Hand grenades were also issued in great numbers, as were Molotov cocktails. Bangalore torpedoes were carried if barbed wire obstacles were expected. Picric acid demolition blocks with friction igniters and delay fuses were widely used, along with magnetic TNT demolition charges.

An examination of dead raiders found in the Philippines disclosed musette bags filled with the above equipment along with concentrated food rations. Other small items distributed among them included: compasses, flashlights with colored lenses, binoculars, rope in 30 meter lengths, wire cutters, hatchets, entrenching tools, saws and sickles. Some were also found to be carrying potassium cyanide capsules for committing suicide to prevent capture.

Raiders' uniforms and individual equipage were to be kept light. The danger of leaving footprints was always stressed, and the use of rubber-soled, split-toed, canvas sandals was recommended over boots.

During movement, and when observing enemy activities, individuals were camouflaged using local vegetation. The sickles mentioned above were carried to enable the men to quickly cut vegetation to replace that taken earlier for individual camouflage as a force moved across different kinds of terrain.

The Allies were mostly able to counter Japanese diversionary units through general vigilance, alert sentries, aggressive security patrols, extensive outposts and listening posts, offshore patrol boat routes, and early warning radars. Some raids that seemed initially successful for the Japanese were then countered and defeated by quick and violent Allied reaction forces. That, and a tendency for the Japanese to try to hold on too long in the attack, often led to the defeat of the raiders.

Japanese over-aggressiveness can also be faulted in that it often led to them failing to conduct complete or realistic assessments of their enemy's position and situation prior to their attack. They often displayed tendencies showing they expected Allied units to always take certain courses of action or move in certain ways. Seldom were they able to improvise effective action when they found their targets deployed or moving in some unexpected fashion. That disregard of enemy capabilities could only lead to mission failure no matter how dedicated to the spirit of Bushido the individual attackers may have been.

— Gordon L. Rottman

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I Remember. . .

Notes from the Interrogation of Lt. Nguyen Ba Phac

A lieutenant in the Viet Cong Main Force 804th Regiment, Nguyen Ba Phac was also a staff officer. He was captured by US Army forces in 1968 and subjected to the usual prisoner interrogation. The following extract formed the portion of the interrogation pertaining to American use of tactical air power in support of ground operations and is highly revealing.

Readers should first be aware of certain differences in the use of tactical air support that existed between our Army and Marine Corps. That is, Marine Corps tactical air power was and is an integral part of their air-ground team. Both fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft provide close air support to Marine ground units. Each Marine infantry battalion has at least two Marine officers who are also naval

aviators. They are the Air Liaison Officer (ALO) and the Forward Air Control (FAC). They have radio equipment they can use to request air support; and when those attack aircraft arrive on the scene the FAC can talk to the flight leader and direct him onto the target. Airborne FACs can also be used, but the essence of Marine close air support is the capability of Marines on the ground to communicate directly with their supporting aircraft, both Marine and Navy.

Army ground units got their tactical air support both from their organic rotary wing aircraft ("gunships") and fixed wing aircraft of the Air Force. While the former could communicate directly with the troops on the ground through Army radio nets, the latter were coordinated and controlled by an

airborne Air Force officer. It's often confusing to Marines, whose Service originated modern close air support techniques in World War II and perfected them in Korea, that the airborne Air Force controller is also called a FAC. Thus the FAC referred to in the extracts from this POW interrogation is the Air Force director, not the Marine ground version.

Incidentally, the Army's first real acquaintance with modern close air support occurred in January 1945. A Marine Air Group assigned to support Gen. MacArthur's return to Luzon facilitated the advance from Lingayen to Manila; and the Army liked what it got. In comparison, the Army Air Force's use of tactical air power in earlier campaigns was more in the nature of deep interdiction air strikes aimed at destroying bridges, roads, rolling stock and enemy troop concentrations assembling to reinforce already engaged units. It was not really close combat support of engaged troops on the front line. The establishment of a separate Air Force in 1947, however, put Army fixed wing air support in the hands of another service.



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The following, then, is a summary of the comments and observations made by Lt. Phac concerning US tactical air power during his interrogation.

North Vietnamese Army military intelligence continuously studied US air tactics and sent those analyses to field commanders to help nullify the effect of US air strikes. The following are some of the pointers POW Phac gave to the men in his battalion, and reflect his own opinions on countering air strikes.

US aircraft invariably approached their target exactly as indicated by the FAC aircraft. If a number of aircraft were attacking, each approached on the same line of attack as the previous one. After noting the way the first aircraft attacked, the communists would scatter to the sides of that line, thus avoiding all the following attackers. US aircraft also made wide turns prior to reattacking the target. That allowed the VC even more time to disperse their force.

Phac noted US tactics were inflexible in those regards and suggested a better way would have been for the planes to attack at varying angles and also to hit to the rear and sides of the place marked (with smoke) by the FAC. That would have prevented the establishment of any pattern the VC could exploit, and would have made their dispersal of forces more dangerous. The VC also noted US air strikes were usually made parallel to and along their front line. They would therefore simply retreat straight to the rear and were thus often left completely untouched by an air strike. US aircraft would have been better off attacking directly into the front line in the center, as well as to the rear and sides of it, thereby hitting the retreating enemy.

The command section of each VC unit was also normally in its center and to the rear of the front when engaging Allied forces. The same was true when the battle took place inside a hamlet. US aircraft should therefore have attacked toward the center of the VC front line. In general, though, US strikes came in too far forward. They might also have been more effective if they had come in toward the rear of the last-marked location of the VC. In attacking fleeing VC in hilly country, attacks should have been made toward the far side, since the VC had also noticed a tendency for US aircraft to attack the near side of hills.

US ground forces also invariably broke contact with the enemy and withdrew before air strikes came in. As soon as that withdrawal was noted the VC would also withdraw, causing the air strike to hit completely unoccupied ground. The VC sought shelter

and didn't come back out until they heard the sounds of ground fire heralding a new enemy advance.

The communists also learned to expect an air strike within 15 minutes of initial ground contact. US forces relied heavily on air support. Rather than risk a ground assault, an air strike was usually called in on a suspected enemy concentration. The enemy used that to their advantage when retreating by putting out strong rear guards. When pursuing American troops met with those troops' heavy fire, they would usually halt to call in an air strike to suppress the resistance. The VC were then able to use the time until the aircraft arrived to flee farther. They were thus often successful in evading what otherwise would have been sure capture had the American ground force continued its pursuit uninterrupted.

US aircraft usually also bombed and strafed a landing zone (LZ) before bringing in heliborne troops. The VC learned to retreat and wait until the initial bombing attack ended. Thus such softening up attacks inflicted very few casualties.

The VC considered helicopters our most effective air weapon. Because they can match their speed to that of a moving man, they were feared by the VC because they were difficult to evade. The helicopters' ability to function as mobile gun platforms also produced heavy casualties among them, again because it was difficult to hide from them.

The US tactic of making either a ground attack or an air strike allowed the VC to concentrate on frustrating one or the other, to use their fire power most effectively, or to seek shelter more quickly. Lt. Phac suggested US ground actions be conducted behind a line of advancing helicopters. That would have prevented the VC from concentrating their fires on either the men or the aircraft and, if coupled with other helicopters attacking into the VC rear area, would have effectively squeezed them out of position. On one occasion the prisoner was familiar with, VC troops were completely demoralized when such an approach was used simply because they could no longer retreat according to plan.

As to smoke markers, though their use was practically unavoidable, they also served as the sure sign of an impending air strike. Lt. Phac didn't know of any VC attempts to snuff out the markers, nor any use of dummy markers.

In order to protect a company or larger unit from observation by FAC aircraft, the VC often used small groups of men stationed about 500 meters from their main body. They

were positioned so as to attract the FAC's attention if it was perceived there was a danger of the main force's discovery. Such groups were usually three- or four-man cells sent out in four different directions from the main unit. The group nearest a FAC would fire on him with small arms. As soon as that FAC marked the area for attacking aircraft, the men dispersed to avoid the strike. Lt. Phac acknowledged the tactic wasn't foolproof, since its success ultimately depended on the terrain. It was not useable, for example, in a rice paddy area with no cover for the small cells.

The VC also used PRC-10 radios (US VHF sets captured or stolen in Vietnam) to intercept South Vietnamese forces' calls for air strikes in order to know exactly when to seek shelter. Lt. Phac had heard that at regimental level certain signals units had both intercept and jamming capabilities. He also heard that twice in Quang Ngai and Quang Tri provinces the VC forced an American prisoner from a signals unit to call in an air strike into an unoccupied area while the VC unit itself got away safely.

The VC also noted FAC aircraft are often used to help US ground forces retreat by marking a safe route with rockets and gunfire. But the VC used such "safe" markers to better site their own mortar fire on the US troops. Phac suggested the use of a radio code to facilitate such moves without at the same time helping the VC.

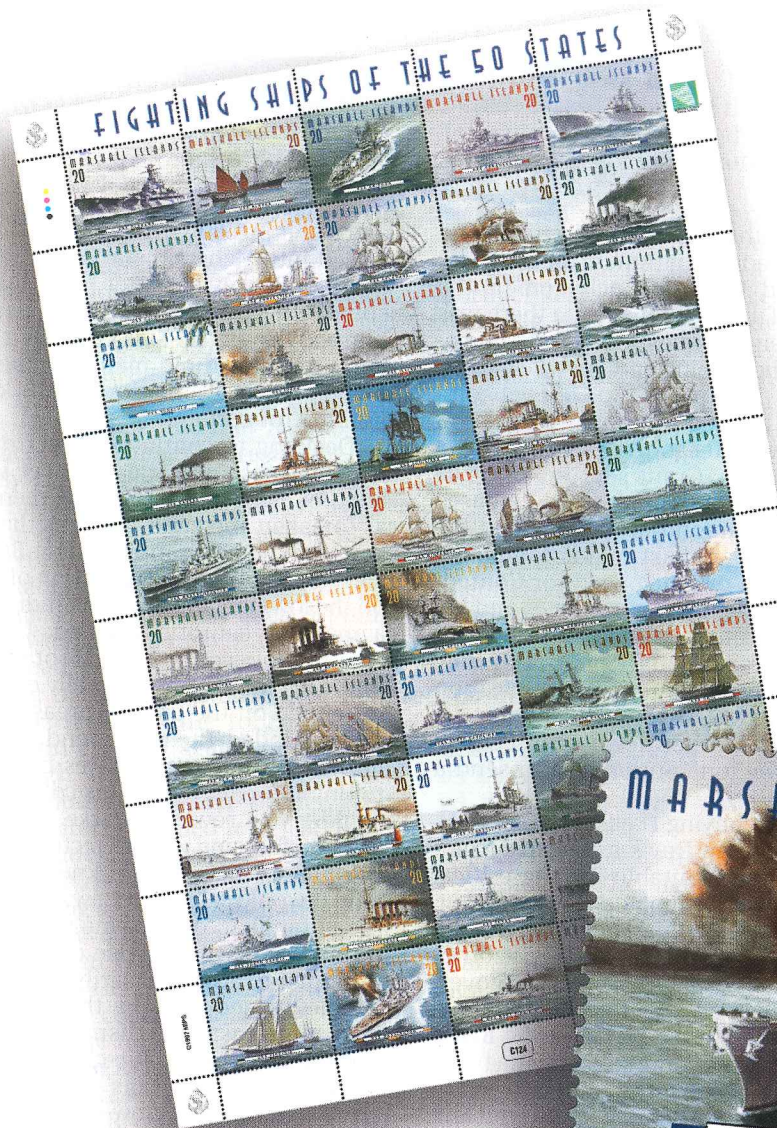
He also noted the VC greatly feared B-52 attacks, and that their raids had great psychological effect on those caught beneath them on the ground. But he also said he'd received early warning of such attacks on many occasions. They came to him from one to eight hours before the attack, and were generally warnings given across an area as large as a whole district. Such messages were sent from regimental or division headquarters. He'd heard it said Soviet and Chinese ships on station between Guam and Vietnam, along with spies on the ground in Thailand, passed the information to Hanoi, where it was analyzed and disseminated to the units in the threatened areas.

He also noted B-52 raids never came in closer than 1,500 meters to any US ground force. Therefore any VC unit in proximity to US ground forces simply closed the distance between themselves and the Americans to less than 1,000 meters when B-52s were believed to be coming. When such "hugging" of US forces was possible, it invariably saved the VC from suffering under the heavy strikes.

— Col. James W. Hammond, Jr.,
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Behind the Lines...

The Last Word

The pathos was both inevitable and widespread as the American Civil War imploded toward conclusion in the spring of 1865. By that time there was no longer any question about the nature of the coming end, just weary resignation. The drama, was not yet completely finished; one man still had a historic chapter to write as epilogue.

When Gen. Grant sent his massive armies against the enfeebled defenses around Richmond, in what would become the war's last major campaign, there was a pressing need for Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his advisors (all of whom fled with him from the capital on 2 April to Danville, Virginia) to remain in communication with Robert E. Lee. But with all the telegraph lines either down or in Federal hands, the lone option was to send a courier.

Accompanying Davis was Gen. H.H. Walker, whom Davis asked to recommend a man suitable for the critical task. Walker nominated 19-year-old Lt. John S. Wise. With aristocratic Virginia roots stretching back to 1635, son of that state's last pre-secession governor, as well as a VMI graduate who'd participated in the 15 May 1864 Battle of New Market and subsequent fighting around Petersburg, Wise seemed to be the kind of well-bred, dedicated and seasoned soldier needed for the assignment. Indeed, the young man longed for more adventure and the thrill of combat and said he looked forward to his later telling of his excursions becoming enthralling for his future grandchildren.

When the Union advance breached the Rebel positions around Richmond, Lee and the remnants of his command fell back to Burkeville. That place was connected with nearby Danville by a single rail line, so Gen. Walker sent off Wise by that method on 5 April.

Knowing Union forces might have driven Lee westward from Burkeville, Walker told Wise to proceed with great caution, using his own best judgement about how far to continue on the train. If the enemy had control of the line, Wise was to abandon it, commandeer a horse and try to reach Lee cross-country.

Armed only with a single navy revolver and a few cartridges, Wise began his trip on an otherwise unnaturally quiet wartime night aboard what he later described as the loudest locomotive he'd ever heard. Passing through darkened, deserted stations, he and the engineer had to load their own coal

and water. At 2:00 a.m. on the 6th they pulled into Meherrin station, 12 miles south of Burkeville. After knocking for some time on the door of a nearby house, Wise finally succeeded in rousing a frightened old man and queried him on the local situation. But he knew nothing for certain.

Deciding to continue farther down the line, Wise and the engineer went another eight miles, finding Green Bay as forsaken and eerily silent as the earlier stops. Finally approaching Burkeville, they noticed the reflection of light on the low-hanging overcast, indicating a mass of campfires ahead. Unsure whether to reconnoiter on foot or stay in the locomotive, Wise finally decided to remain on the train. He reasoned if they rounded the final bend leading into town and saw the fires belonged to Union forces, he and his companion could try to reverse course. But if he went on foot and were detected by hostiles there was no way of knowing how long it would take to get away through the unfamiliar, dusky pine woods surrounding the place. Wise ordered the trainman to advance warily.

They eased around the last turn only to be instantly dismayed by the sight of masses of blue-clad troops at work altering the rails to their own army's gauge. The glow on the clouds was caused by a row of bonfires built to illuminate their work area. Surprised though they were by the train's unexpected appearance, the officers in charge kept enough presence of mind to send some cavalry pounding toward the engine in an attempt to seize it intact.

Wise yelled, "Reverse!" at the terrified engineer, but the man only stammered in reply: "It's no use lieutenant; they'll kill us before we get away."

Sticking the muzzle of his gun against the man's head, Wise repeated his command. Yanking back the control lever, the train went into reverse just as the horsemen opened fire. Then several of the leading cavalymen blundered into a previously unseen cattle guard and went sprawling. The others gave up their pursuit as the engine picked up speed.

After backing to Meherrin, Wise got off and set out along the north road to look for a mount to carry him the rest of the way to Lee. After walking briskly for several miles, he came to a farmhouse at daybreak where he was invited to breakfast by the elderly owner. At the hitching post was a splendid mare, and inside Wise found one Sgt.

Wilkins from the Black Walnut Troop. The NCO was on his way back to his unit after a furlough home to obtain a new horse to replace his former mount, which had gone lame. Showing him his orders signed by Davis, Wise confiscated the animal and pounded off to the south in search of Lee.

As he followed the sound of cannon fire that had begun, the young officer was shortly spotted by a detachment of Federal cavalry. They gave chase, but their horses were worn out from heavy recent use, and they had no real chance of catching the fresh filly that easily outdistanced them. Wise was just becoming pleased at his effortless escape when he ran into another blue-coated cavalry column filing onto the road along which he was cantering, going in his direction, only ahead of him.

He was soon spotted by the Yankees up ahead and came under rifle fire. Kicking the mare into another gallop, he fled west into the forest he saw there and escaped again. Minutes later, though, he was intercepted by a carbine-wielding Southern soldier. The man's uniform seemed too clean to be of authentic C.S.A. issue so late in the war, and Wise suspected he was really confronting a Union infiltrator. But the man turned out to be a genuine Rebel scout named Curtis, who said he was attached to Gen. Rooney Lee's (Robert E. Lee's son) command.

After Wise told him of his mission, Curtis agreed to lead him toward Lee's encampment. As the two forded the Appomattox River they were attacked by yet another of the swarming Union cavalry units. Caught in the middle of the channel, Wise was bracketed by rifle fire. But then Curtis, and a few other Rebels who suddenly appeared on the opposite bank, laid down a counter-fire that allowed the lieutenant to get across in one piece.

Galloping out of range, Curtis and the others parted from Wise after advising him to press on to Farmville before turning back eastward to finally get to Lee's position. Approaching Farmville, Wise saw a line of infantry who were also advancing into the community. Thinking they were surely Union troops, he galloped ahead into town and told the officer he found in charge there his position was about to be attacked. That set in motion a frantic effort at fortification that only stopped when the advancing column was finally recognized as Confederate.

Hastily departing before the angry garrison learned it was he who'd sounded the false alarm, Wise resumed his trek while the pounding of artillery began growing steadily louder as the Battle of Saylor's Creek raged through the afternoon of 6 April. It was nightfall before he encountered two divisions

commanded by Gens. Mahone and Field. They were some of the last stable formations among the otherwise chaotic remnants of Lee's routed Army of Northern Virginia.

Between midnight and one o'clock the exhausted lieutenant found Robert E. Lee in a tent pitched in a field just north of Rice's Station. The general was dictating the next day's orders to his aide when Wise rode up and saluted.

After questioning Wise thoroughly as to the route by which he'd come, Lee gave him a verbal response to take back to Davis and his cabinet. With communications so spotty and his own resources so depleted, Lee said he would be forced to base his decisions on each day's developments as he saw them. He said the situation made it impractical to send Davis even an outline of his future plans beyond declaring an intention to try to retreat along the Southside Railroad, eventually regrouping at Lynchburg. Concluding, Lee bitterly added: "A few more Saylor's Creeks and it will all be over. Ended, just as I expected it would end from the first."

Lee sent Wise to find a bed for the remainder of the night, ordering him to move out at daybreak. The young man spent the night in bivouac after managing to reunite with his father, Gen. Henry A. Wise. At dawn Lee scribbled the younger Wise a further message to take to Davis, in it explaining the lieutenant had been thoroughly briefed and would transmit the real message from his own mouth. He then coached the courier on the best route to try and sent him on his way.

Wise's journey that Saturday, 8 April 1865, was relatively uneventful. He reached Danville around 8:00 p.m. and soon thereafter located the mansion of a Maj. Sutherland, where Davis and his ministers were convened. One of Davis' slaves admitted him to the dining room, where he found a dispirited assembly discussing the situation. After making his report, Wise was questioned by the Confederate president and several of the others present.

When asked how many effectives Lee still commanded, the optimistic youth ventured there might yet be as many as 30,000 men with the general ready to fight. But when he was asked, "Do you think Gen. Lee will be able to reach a point of safety with his army?" he felt compelled to answer, "No."

After that Wise was dismissed. His tidings had told those remaining in the Southern government little of use. But the junior officer had left his mark on the war's history by carrying the last-ever communication between Davis and Lee; and he'd done it with fearless singlemindedness and style.

— Kelly Bell

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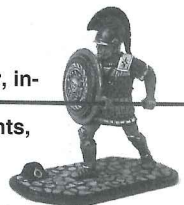
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Little Gain at Great Cost

A Canadian View of the War of 1812

by Robert Malconson

[Ed's Note: British units are in plaintext; US units are in italics.]

With utmost confidence, Thomas Jefferson explained to a friend in August 1812: "The acquisition of Canada this year, as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching, and will give us experience for the attack on Halifax the next, and the final expulsion of England from the American continent."

By the time Jefferson wrote those words, however, it was already coming to be suspected the United States was not going to achieve an easy success in waging what many then were calling a "second war

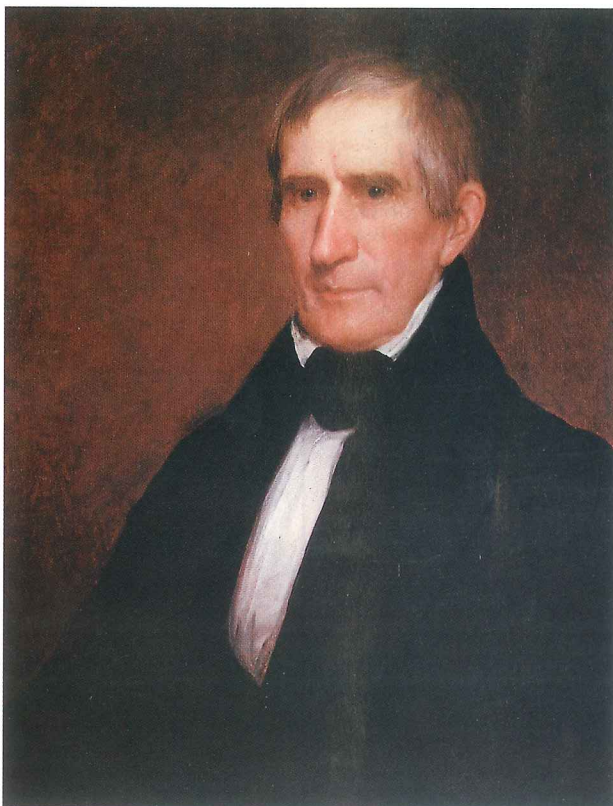
for independence." Indeed, the War of 1812 didn't turn out to be anything like the romp Jefferson had anticipated.

Three key issues had led the government of the United States to declare war on Britain. After fighting resumed in Europe in 1803, American businesses at first began to profit from expanding trans-Atlantic trade. But their free commerce was interrupted when the British government invoked an order in council in May 1806, effectively blockading continental ports. Napoleon responded with his Berlin Decree the following November, which declared the counter-blockade of England. As both sides also implemented additional sanctions, and American vessels began to be regular victims of search and seizure, especially by the British, then-President Jefferson invoked his own embargo in 1807.

Intended to interfere with British and French trade in North America, Jefferson's embargo had the opposite effect. US businesses suffered even more, and smuggling became a serious problem along the border with Upper and Lower Canada. The law was revoked in 1808, and some progress seemed to be made toward easing international restrictions; but continued interference with American ships fueled a cry for reprisals against Britain in particular. During April 1812, another embargo was passed by Congress along with a pledge to follow it in 90 days with a declaration of war if the situation wasn't relieved. The British in fact repealed the orders in council in June, but war was declared before news of the change got across the ocean.

The outright abduction of American seamen was another long-suffered grievance. Perpetually short of recruits, the Royal Navy routinely impressed men into service from vessels of every nation. The low point for American sailors occurred on 22 June 1807, when *HMS Leopard* fired killing broadsides into the *USS Chesapeake* within sight of the American coast and then removed four so-called deserters from her. While some pay back was made when the *USS President* "accidentally" fired into *HMS Little Belt* in May 1811, and the Royal Navy began to reduce its interference with American vessels, national pride had been badly offended by British arrogance.

Though "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights" became the popular rallying cry, the third contentious issue was control of the western frontier. American settlers



William Henry Harrison (1773-1841). Victor at Tippecanoe and the Battle of the Thames.

were moving into Indiana and Michigan, which brought them into conflict with Indian tribes who were being urged to form a great confederacy to resist by the Shawnee leader Tecumseh. Raids and ambushes were commonplace, such as the clashes that took place on the Tippecanoe River in 1811.

There William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory, led a force of 1,000 regulars and militiamen, successfully defeating an all-out attack by about 700 Indians under Tecumseh's brother, The Prophet, on 7 November. Harrison followed up by ordering the destruction of the Indian village known as Prophet's Town the next day. Though his efforts didn't end what was being called the "Anglo-Indian War" in the new territories, they did help to eventually get him elected president in 1840 on the slogan "Tippecanoe and Tyler too!" At any rate, since the Indians were thoroughly tied to the fur trading enterprise of the British North West Company, and they were also being openly wooed to ally themselves with the British army in Upper Canada, many Americans blamed English influence for their Indian troubles.

War talk heated up even more when President James Madison delivered his state of the union address. The recent election had sent a group of warminded Congressmen to Washington, and Madison echoed their "War Hawk" attitudes in his speech when he declared the need to put "the United States into an armor and an attitude demanded by the crisis, and corresponding with the national spirit and expectations."

Congressional committees were formed to determine the expanding martial needs of the republic. But though much was said and written, little was actually done to begin to create effective armed forces as the early months of 1812 passed and Madison's 90 day embargo came into effect. When no significant policy changes appeared to be forthcoming from the British, a bill declaring war was drafted by Attorney General William Pickney and delivered to the House, where a

debate began on 3 June. It was approved the next day on a vote of 79 to 49. On the 17th, 19 Senators voted in favor of war while 13 stood in opposition. That gave a final overall legislator approval rate of only 61 percent, the weakest support for a war bill in American history. Nevertheless, Madison signed the act into law on 18 June and the die was cast.

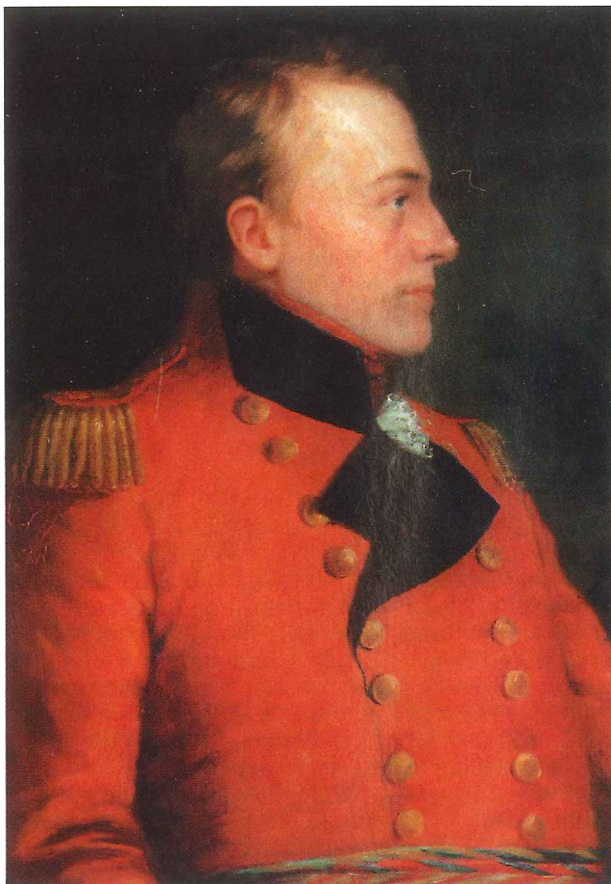
Plans

Madison and his cabinet decided to immediately order the Navy's handful of warships to sea to begin harassing British shipping. The Army was to attack the province of Upper Canada across the Detroit and Niagara Rivers, while also sending a force toward Montreal. By the end of the year the various portions of the Army were to reunite for a push down the St. Lawrence River to Quebec, just as Jefferson had enthusiastically predicted.

Setting campaign objectives was easy to do, but they were far less easy to realize since the US was not on a war footing. Despite the earlier flurry of Congressional paper work, few improvements had actually been made in the Army. In June there were only about 11,000 men in service, most of them raw recruits. Too many of their commanders were aging Revolutionary War veterans like Henry Dearborn and William Hull. A few promising officers, such as Winfield Scott and Zebulon Pike, were rising in the ranks, but it would be necessary to depend on militia leaders at least to get the war underway. Secretary of War William Eustis had also failed to organize adequate supplies of uniforms, weapons and other provisions, and the training manual given to officers was a version of the 1791 French *Reglement*, prepared by the bombastic Brig. Gen. Alexander Smyth.

The Department of the Navy, under Secretary Paul Hamilton, was in similar disarray. Congress had failed to allocate funds to build more ships and make the necessary repairs aboard existing vessels. In June 1812 there were only 15 warships ready for action.





Major Gen. Isaac Brock, 1769-1812. (Compliments of the Canadian War Museum).

On the Great Lakes, where the Washington strategists hoped to put the full weight of the summer campaign, there was one warship, the 16-gun brig *Oneida*, operating out of a bare bones base at Sackets Harbor on Lake Ontario.

Of course, the campaign goals set by Madison and his cabinet counted on Britain's continued heavy involvement in the Napoleonic wars to weaken the defenses of Upper and Lower Canada. Indeed, the British force there was only a thin red line, especially in Upper Canada where a force of only about 1,200 regulars was distributed in posts stretching from St. Joseph's Island in Lake Huron, through Forts Malden, Erie, George, York, Kingston, and down the St. Lawrence toward Montreal. Assistance was expected from militia regiments, but their organization was weak and their patriotism was believed to be inconsistent.

About 4,400 British regulars were in Lower Canada, with the largest garrison at Quebec. That place was also the headquarters of Sir George Prevost. Appointed in 1811 to the posts of Captain General of His Majesty's Forces and Governor General of British North America, he possessed good diplomatic skills but lacked decisiveness and charisma as a military commander. Well aware war was imminent, but ever-hopeful it could be averted by diplomacy, he counted on the extensive experience of the regulars and their officers to defend against invasion. In particular, 43-year-old Maj. Gen. Isaac Brock was looked on as displaying the energy and talent needed to orchestrate the protection of the upper province. As war threatened, Brock hurried to shore up his command's far flung outposts and, in his capac-

ity as Acting Administrator of the Government of Upper Canada, he also called out the militia.

The First Campaigns

Though the official British policy was one of defense, an aggressive drive by one of their small forces won the first victory of the war. In the northern reaches of Lake Huron, at St. Joseph Island, Capt. Charles Roberts received instructions from Brock early in July from which he concluded he was supposed to take the offensive to safeguard the North West Company's fur trading route. He therefore embarked 45 of his 10th Royal Veterans, 180 fur traders and about 400 Indians aboard the schooner *Caledonia* and some canoes, and set out for American-held Michilimackinac Island, 50 miles away.

They landed there before dawn on 17 July, and by noon Lt. Porter Hanks had surrendered the fort, along with his 61 men and large supplies of ordnance, ammunition and provisions. Judging Michilimackinac to be a stronger position than the one on St. Joseph, Roberts kept his main force there. The Union Jack flapping above Michilimackinac would in fact distract the Americans for the remainder of the war.

Maj. Gen. William Hull was the first American commander to commence his assigned portion of the summer's campaign. He'd been ordered in February to form an army at Urbana, Ohio, which he did by assembling 1,200 infantry from the state militia regiments, a troop of Ohio cavalry and 300 regulars from the *4th Infantry Regiment*. After building a road through the wilderness, Hull reached Detroit, then the site of a prosperous village and fort, on 5 July. A week later his army crossed the river into Upper Canada and easily occupied the settlement of Sandwich.

While an advance post had been established by the British on the Canard River seven miles south of Sandwich, the bulk of their army remained at Fort Malden, near the mouth of the Detroit River. Commanded by Lt. Col. Thomas B. St. George, it consisted of 300 officers and men of the 41st Regiment Afoot, the Royal Artillery, the Royal Newfoundland Fencibles, and about 400 militia, plus 400 Indians under Tecumseh. Despite the protests of his subordinates, Hull didn't advance from Malden, choosing instead to remain inactive for weeks.

On 5 August, Col. Henry Procter of the 41st Regiment arrived at Fort Malden to take command. He'd been sent by Brock, who also departed from Niagara the same day with reinforcements for Malden. Procter immediately ordered a probe across the Detroit River to be led by Capt. Adam Muir, also of the 41st. Muir's men encountered a small force of Americans and opened fire. Casualties ran high for such a brief exchange, with 18 US dead and 12 wounded, along with six British dead and 21 wounded.

When Hull heard of the fight, along with rumors a British force was approaching from the east, he ordered a retreat from Canada on 7 August. Expecting some supplies and reinforcements had reached the Raisin River, 35 miles south of Detroit, he also sent a party of 600 men under Lt. Col. James Miller in that direction. But Muir's force intercepted and attacked them, causing even greater casualties.

Brock reached Malden on the 13th and quickly sized up the situation. Under a flag of truce he offered Hull the opportunity to capitulate on the 15th. When the offer was refused, Brock crossed the river early on the 16th with 330 regulars, 440 militia and

five field guns. Tecumseh, his force increased to about 600, had preceded him during the night. A bombardment of Fort Detroit was begun, and that pressure, combined with threatening displays from the Indians, soon reduced Hull to a babbling idiot. He surrendered and was eventually marched off to captivity along with all his regulars, while the surviving militiamen were paroled. Brock's almost bloodless victory earned him a knighthood (news of which didn't get back to Canada until months after his death) and a vast supply of arms, including 33 cannon and 2,500 muskets. It also put a quick end to the first American invasion of Upper Canada.

The commander of the American forces on the Niagara frontier, Maj. Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer, didn't reach his post until just three days prior to Hull's surrender at Detroit. Van Rensselaer had no military training or combat experience, but as senior officer of the New York state militia he was chosen by Gov. Daniel Tompkins to lead when Secretary Eustis failed to recommend anyone else. At first the Niagara army consisted of only about 1,000 militia and 360 regulars, all poorly equipped and spread out in posts along the river. No batteries had been established except at old and crumbling Fort Niagara. Luckily for the Americans an armistice was announced in August — while news of the British government's revocation of its order of council was debated in Washington — during which time more men and munitions arrived and plans for invasion were made.

By the first week of October, then, the American ranks on the Niagara had grown to more than 5,000, and spirit was high in the camps to cross the river. Van Rensselaer remained hesitant, though, because he still felt his men were inadequately trained and equipped. He'd also found it impossible to gain the cooperation of Brig. Gen. Benjamin Smyth, a career officer commanding about 1,000 regulars camped near Buffalo.

Unhappy to find himself superseded by a mere militiaman, Smyth also found excuses for keeping his men in camp instead of marching to link with Van Rensselaer. A plan that would have sent a strong force of regulars in boats around the Lake Ontario shore for a flanking attack on Fort George, while a column of militia created a diversion at Queenston, was discussed then dropped. Finally, Van Rensselaer chose to concentrate all his efforts at Queenston.

The first wave of invaders set off across the wide expanse of the lower Niagara River before dawn on Tuesday, 13 October. They numbered about 400, divided equally between the *19th New York Militia Regiment* under Lt. Col. Solomon Van Rensselaer (the general's cousin), and the *13th US Infantry Regiment* under Lt. Col. John Christie. They were supported by a battery of heavy guns on Lewiston Heights and a pair of field pieces from Lt. Col. Winfield Scott's *2nd Artillery Regiment*.

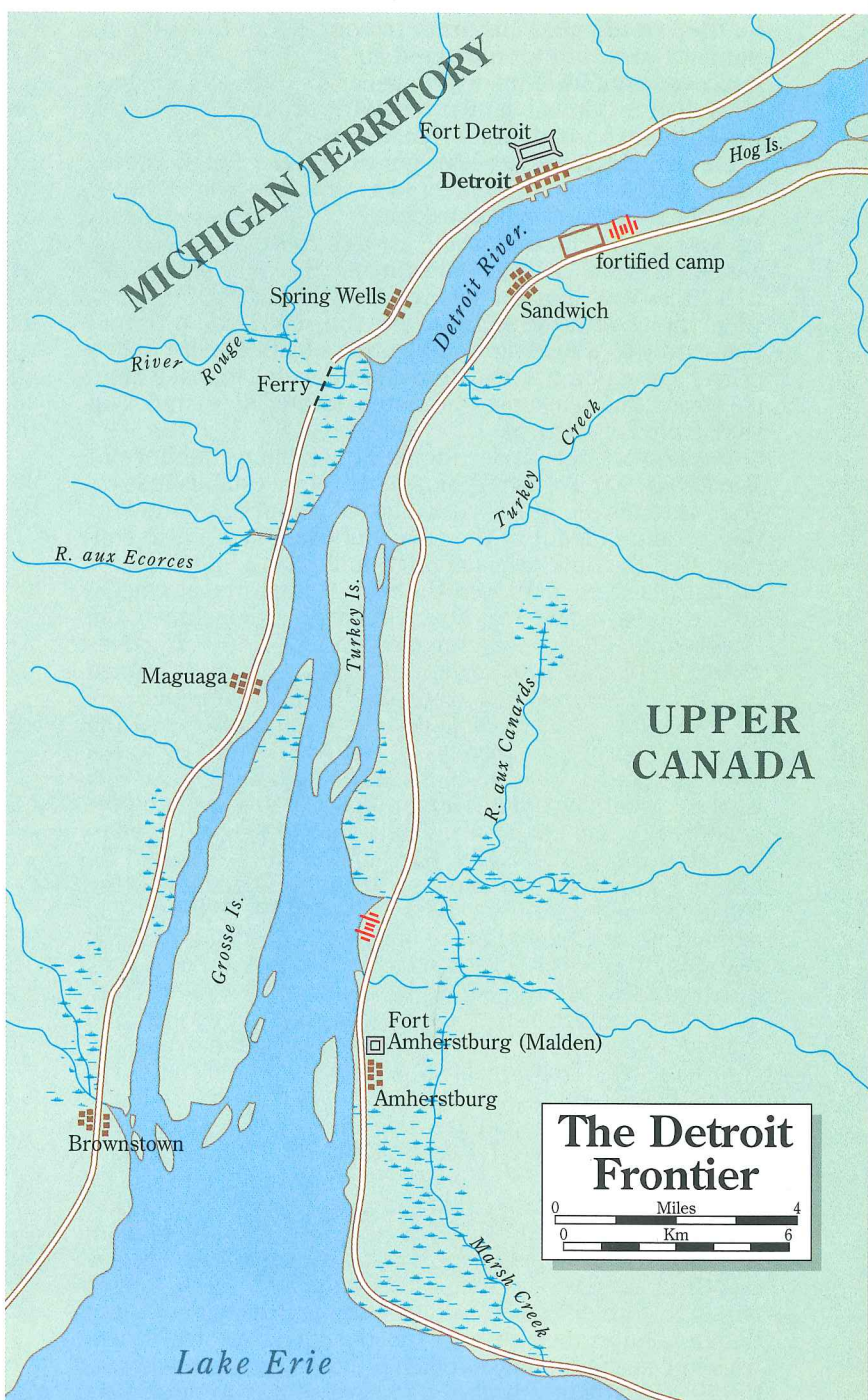
The landing was opposed by about 300 British troops, including the Grenadier and Light companies of the 49th Regiment, and militia companies from Lincoln and York townships. Two long guns and a field gun blasted round shot and canister at the Americans as they made their landing and charged up the shore toward the village. The Grenadiers and militia pushed the invaders back to their boats, where they suffered heavy casualties. Solomon Van Rensselaer barely survived five wounds.

As dawn broke, Capt. John Wool, of the *13th Regiment*, led about 100 men to climb the heights above Queenston by means of a little-used fishermen's path,

to capture a well placed gun on the slope of the escarpment. But Maj. Gen. Brock had arrived at the village by that time and quickly organized a frontal assault on Wool's position to retake the gun. The maneuver was dramatically unsuccessful. Brock was killed, and the British withdrew to the rear of the village while the Americans, their numbers increased by nearly 1,000 more men, occupied Queenston Heights.

Command on the Heights was assumed by another inexperienced militia officer, Brig. Gen. William Wadsworth. Maj. Gen. Van Rensselaer visited the position briefly, then recrossed the river to urge the rest of the men to come over. But he found many had now lost their desire to fight and refused to cross into Canada.

Wadsworth should have prepared entrenchments or advanced beyond the heights, but he was kept from doing either by persistent harassment from an



Stalingrad on the Niagara - The Battle of Queenston Heights, 13 October 1812

The first American invasion of Canada in the War of 1812 failed when Brig. Gen. William Hull surrendered his 2,000-man army to Maj. Gen. Isaac Brock at Detroit on 16 August 1812. President Madison then looked to the forces gathering along the banks of the Niagara River to gain the foothold that would lead to attaining their main war objective, the conquest of British North America.

But the army at Niagara was far from ready to achieve that goal. Its commanding officer, Maj. Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer, was a militiaman with no military experience. His troops lacked proper uniforms, tents, weapons and ammunition. The militia units were poorly disciplined, and even the regulars were composed mostly of fresh-faced, untrained recruits.

During August and September, Van Rensselaer pestered the War Department for provisions and reinforcements as he tried to organize his army to conduct an invasion. Its numbers grew until it mustered about 5,000 men. Though improvements were made, the general's outlook remained bleak. On 8 October he wrote: "With my present force it would be rash to attempt offensive operations."

Nevertheless, pressure from near and far was mounting for an attack. Though he favored a militia-dominated diversion at Queenston while a stronger force of regulars assaulted Fort George, located at the Lake Ontario end of the Niagara River, Van Rensselaer was unable to convince Brig. Gen. Alexander Smyth, encamped with 1,000 regulars at Buffalo, to go along with the scheme. Smyth preferred a different plan and was unwilling to take orders from a mere militia officer. Disappointed, Van Rensselaer decided to make a single strong thrust against Queenston, located seven miles up river from Fort George.

Isaac Brock was expecting an attack along the lines of Van Rensselaer's original plan. He therefore established several batteries along the river and lake shore outside Fort George and in front of the village of Niagara. He also concentrated the bulk of his regular, militia and Indian forces at that place. He deployed the rest of his force at Queenston, Chippawa and Fort Erie, with smaller detachments in between. In all, Brock commanded about 1,500 effectives along the river, of whom more than half were well trained and disciplined members of regular British regiments.

When the sound of distant cannonading disturbed the pre-dawn hours of Tuesday, 13 October 1812, Brock was awakened in his quarters at Government House near Fort George. Assuming a demonstration was being made by the enemy at Queenston, he decided to ride up the river road to see what was going on for himself. Before setting out he ordered a company of artillery to follow. The rest of the force, several hundred regulars and militia, were to remain at the fort under command of Maj. Gen. Roger Hale Sheaffe. With his two aides-de-camp hurrying to catch up with him, Brock charged off into the dark.

Van Rensselaer had gathered a brigade of regulars and militiamen, numbering about 3,000, at Lewiston, which lay across the river from Queenston. He gave tactical command of the operation to his cousin, Lt. Col. Solomon Van Rensselaer (also a militiaman, but one who'd had regular army experience during the 1790s), and Lt. Col. John Christie of the 13th US Infantry Regiment.

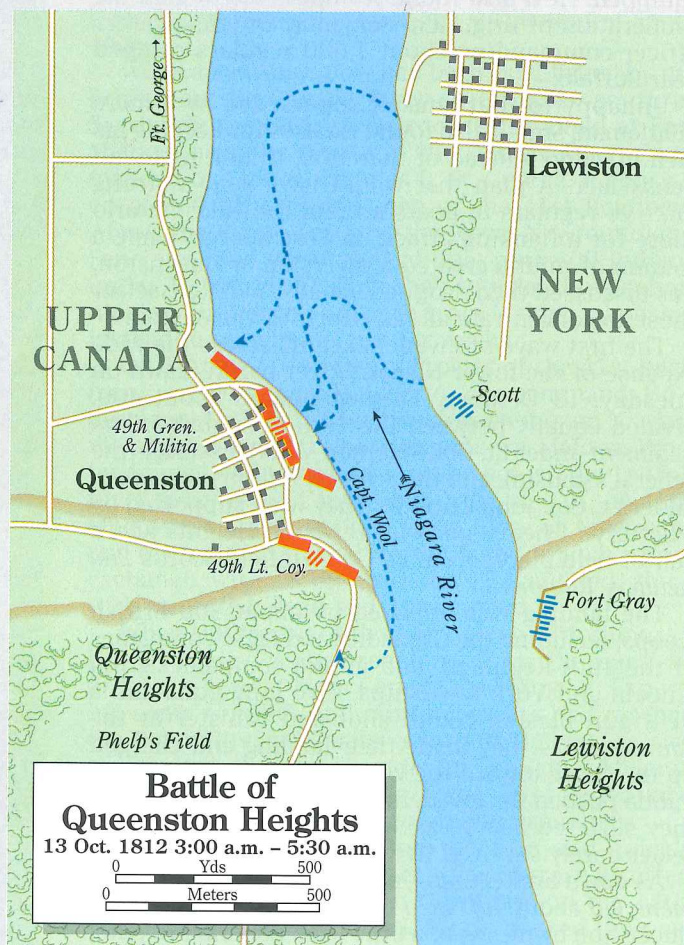
Beginning just before 3:00 a.m. on 13 October, Christie's men and members of the 19th New York Militia Regiment filed into 14 large bateaux that had been gathered for the crossing. When all was ready the flotilla began its 300 yard trip across the eddy strewn waters of the lower Niagara. Within minutes their advance was detected by watchful sentries in Queenston. The Grenadier and Light Companies of the 49th Regiment, supported by several militia companies,

quickly formed up and fired volleys into the moving boats. As well, three long guns welcomed the invaders, the most dangerous of which was an 18-pounder set in a redan half-way up the slope of the escarpment that towered above the village. The Americans fired back at the defenders, but the main support for the flotilla came from a battery situated on Lewiston Heights, and a pair of field guns under the command of Lt. Col. Winfield Scott of the 2nd US Artillery Regiment at the embarkation point.

Several of the bateaux were damaged by the British fire, including Christie's, which returned to the American side; but the majority grounded on the Canadian shore and about 225 troops splashed ashore. Van Rensselaer quickly formed his units, climbed the river bank and succeeded in pushing back the redcoats toward the village. But a sharp crossfire from the Light Company, deployed near the top of the escarpment, became too deadly, and the Americans moved back down the embankment to the shore. Christie was nowhere to be seen, and as the boats returned to pick up a second wave of troops the situation verged on chaos.

At that moment Capt. John E. Wool of the 13th Regiment suggested to Van Rensselaer an attempt be made to scale the gorge wall of the Niagara River, using a fishermen's path to outflank the British on the escarpment and seize the redan gun. The plan was approved, and Wool and about 150 men headed upriver to find the path.

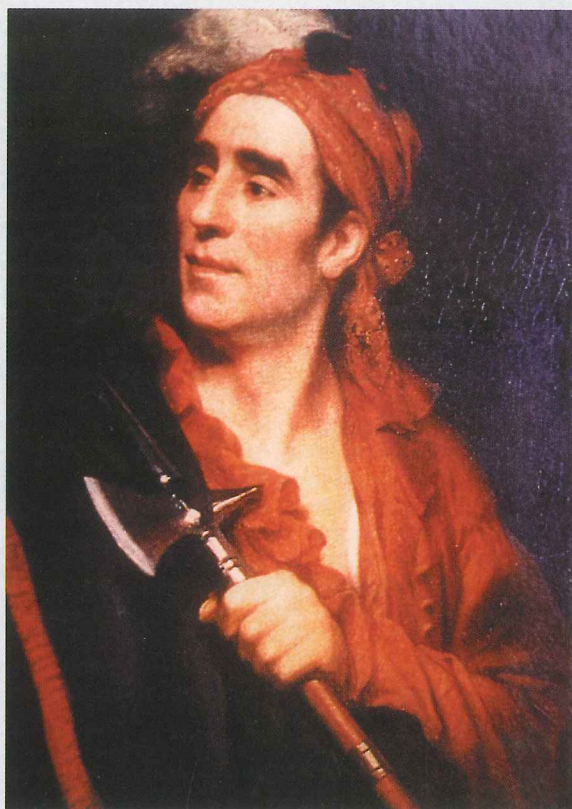
About that time, as dawn was breaking, Brock galloped into Queenston. He called down the Light Company to the village to repel a new wave of invaders, which left the redan gun unprotected. Minutes later, Wool and his men, having successfully and secretly scaled the gorge, surged down from the crest of the heights, routing the gunners and secur-



ing control of the high ground. Wool deployed his men in a defensive perimeter and began to manhandle the 18-pounder around to fire on the British.

Brock saw the tide of battle turning before his eyes. Leaving the main body of defenders to contain the invaders at the river, he gathered a portion of the Light Company and led them up the hillside toward the cannon. The American muskets picked away at them. Brock suddenly stumbled and fell, shot through the chest. By the time the nearest man reached him, he was already unconscious. The redcoats backed down the hill carrying their dead commander.

While one of Brock's aides supervised the removal of his body to a private residence, where it was hidden, his other aide, Lt. Col. John MacDonnell, of the York militia, renewed the charge. A body of militiamen had joined the 49th, and now a line of about 70 men moved along the slope of the escarpment, firing volleys that pushed back Wool's infantrymen. As the British drew near, one of the American gunners spiked the 18-pounder so effectively it was

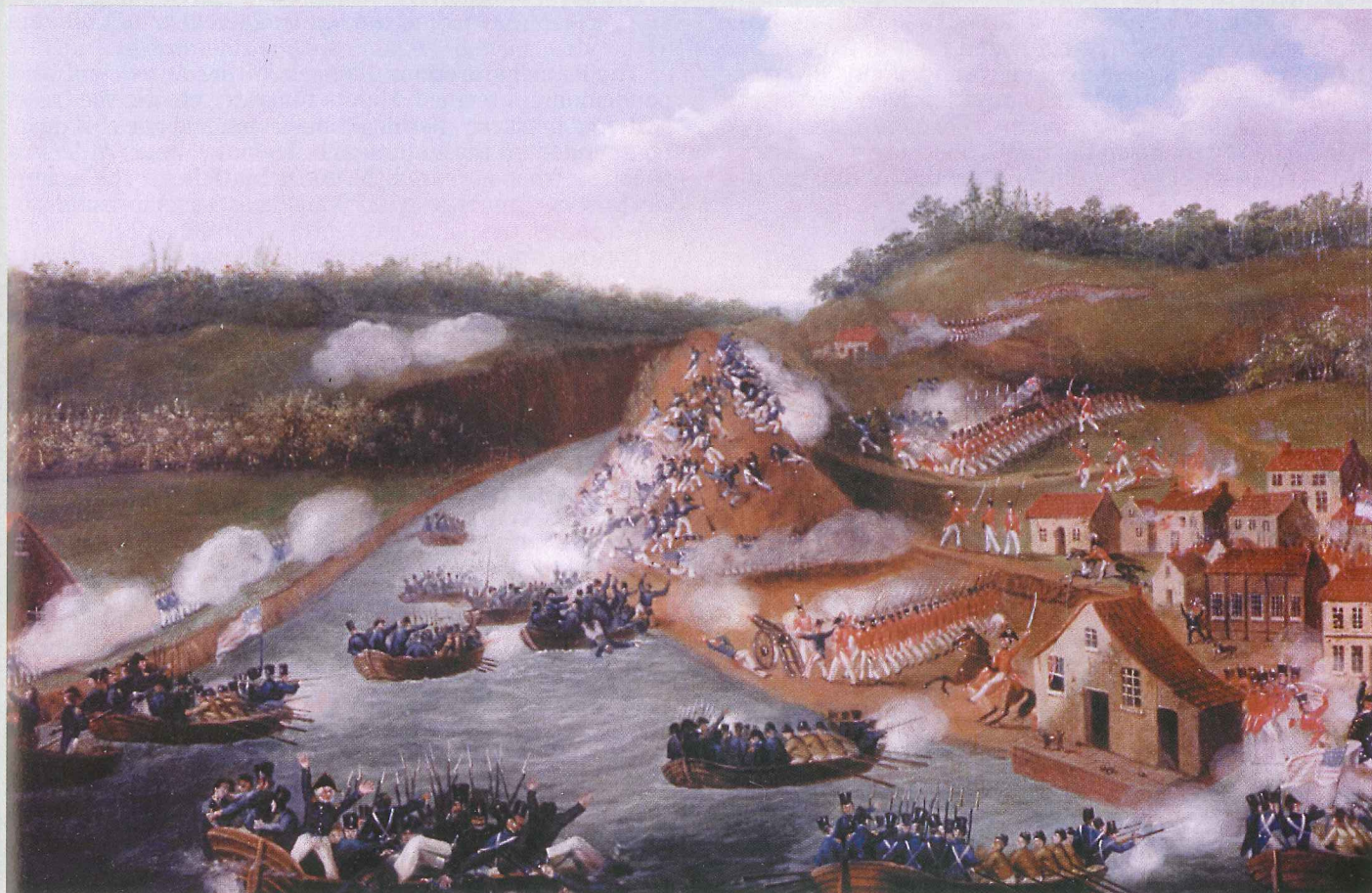


Captain John Norton, 1784-1825?. (Compliments of Parks Canada).

unusable for the remainder of the day. The British had taken heavy casualties, though, and when Macdonell was knocked off his horse with a mortal wound through his abdomen the order was again given to retreat.

The failure to recapture the redan, coupled with the news of Brock's death, deflated the British. They ceased firing and backed away from the river, eventually taking up a new position at the north end of the village. There they were soon met by the company of artilleryists and a company of the 41st Regiment coming from Fort George. Gen. Sheaffe also visited the scene and, realizing the fight at Queenston was no diversion, sent orders to the fort for every available man to be marched up the river road to the battle.

Hundreds of American reinforcements crossed the river, though their transport was slowed by the inadequate number of bateaux their general had procured. Command on the battlefield passed to Maj. Gen. William Wadsworth, another inexperienced militiaman. He immediately



The Battle of Queenston Heights by James Dennis (Grenadier Captain, 49th Foot during the battle). (Compliments of the Weir Foundation, Queenston).

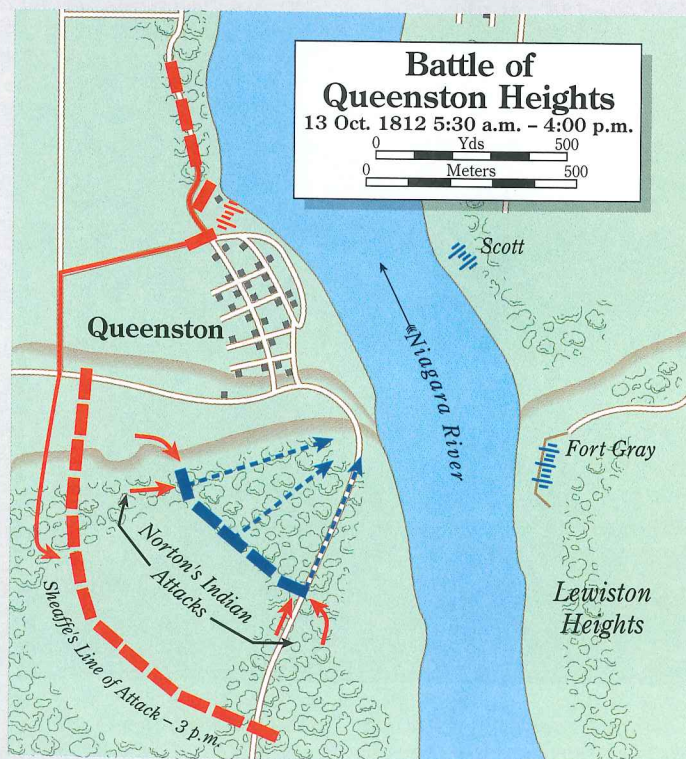
began seeing to the establishment of a fortified position among the trees on the heights above Queenston.

But the Americans were soon interrupted in their preparations. A party of Indians from the Grand River reservation, under the direction of Capt. John Norton, had come from Niagara to join the fighting. Having kept to the woods, they outflanked the Americans on the heights to execute a series of quick and deadly raids. Working in small groups, the Indians appeared and disappeared at different places along the perimeter, inflicting casualties and terrifying the inexperienced soldiers.

The sound of those skirmishes and the Indians' shrieking carried across the river, prompting the men still waiting for boats to turn away from their duty. Maj. Gen. Van Rensselaer made a brief visit to the heights, then returned to try to organize more reinforcements. Once Norton's band made their appearance, however, few other Americans crossed to join the battle. Van Rensselaer himself thereafter remained on the Lewiston shore, trying in vain to rally more support.

The role played by the Indians during the middle stage of the battle was crucial. They effectively kept the Americans from preparing to meet the major counterattack they knew was coming, as well as exhausting their ammunition. When a column of British infantry was spotted marching to ascend the escarpment a mile or so west of the American position, there was little fight left in the invaders. Fearing a defeat and the wrath of the unrestrained Indians, hundreds of soldiers crept away from the line, scrambling aboard the few remaining bateaux or seeking refuge in the dense bush at the base of the gorge.

Having climbed the heights and approached the Americans under protection of the forest, Sheaffe assembled a patchwork battleline of regular and militia companies numbering nearly 1,000 effectives. Around 3:00 p.m. he gave the order to advance. In unison the British stepped out of the woods and onto the large cultivated field in front of the Americans. Volleys were exchanged and clouds of smoke obscured the scene. At first the Americans held their places, but the steadfast advance of the redcoats disheartened them and a retreat down the hill to the shore was ordered. Then somebody began to run, and the retreat deteriorated into a panic.



Maj. Gen. Roger Hale Sheaffe, 1763-1851. (Compliments of the National Archives of Canada.)

The British stayed on the heels of the Americans, and pandemonium reigned. Shouts for order among the trees, scattered musketry, flashing tomahawks, and cries for quarter sounded on the summit and down the slope. At length Sheaffe's troops secured the entire battlefield. The American prisoners numbered 925; Van Rensselaer's invasion had failed completely.

For the Americans the butcher's bill was never accurately tallied. Estimates have varied between 100 and 500 dead. Some were lost in the river; others were hurriedly buried, uncounted, by the British the next morning; and many of the wounded fled or were evacuated to Lewiston. Stephen Van Rensselaer's military career also died at Queenston. He retired from the service and later failed in his challenge to take the governorship from Daniel Tompkins.

Smyth later attempted his own invasion in November, which was also unsuccessful. He too thereafter passed out of the annals of US military history.

The cost of the victory for the British was 77 wounded and 20 dead. Brock was universally mourned, a reflection of his popularity among soldiers and civilians alike. He was buried beside John Macdonell at Fort George three days after the battle. For his textbook handling of the counterattack, Sheaffe was honored with a baronetcy and the command of Upper Canada.

The victory at Queenston Heights was critical for the British. It proved to the populace their homeland could be defended, and created a sense of loyalty among the militia men who fought there shoulder to shoulder with the regulars.

On the other side of the river, it was clear significant changes were needed if the conquest of Canada was to be achieved. During the subsequent winter, alterations were made from the front line to President Madison's cabinet, and the next invasion attempt at least enjoyed a more favorable beginning.

80-man party of Grand River Iroquois under Capt. John Norton. That officer's efforts allowed Maj. Gen. Roger Hale Sheaffe time to assemble nearly 1,000 British regulars and militia across a field from Wadsworth's position. Around 3:00 p.m. Sheaffe's men advanced on the US line, which collapsed in a riotous retreat. In their panic some of the Americans leapt to their deaths in Niagara Gorge.

More than 900 Americans were captured, while an uncounted number were killed or wounded. The British lost 21 taken prisoner, 77 wounded and 20 killed, including Brock, whose death in the earlier, ill-conceived counterattack robbed the British of an ambitious and charismatic leader at a time when such men were in great demand. Stephen Van Rensselaer's military career ended at Queenston Heights, though he escaped the censure of a court martial. Brig. Gen. Smyth attempted another invasion near Fort Erie late in November, but it also failed.

The right flank of the American invasion plan was even less successful than the other efforts. After numerous delays, Maj. Gen. Henry Dearborn finally led an army of 6,000 northward from Plattsburgh on 19 November. The next day an advance party crossed the border only to be stopped by Maj. Charles de Salaberry leading companies of the Canadian Voltigeurs and Seven Nations warriors. Dearborn ordered a fast withdrawal to winter quarters back at Plattsburgh.

The only bright spot for the Americans during those first campaigns on the northern border was they took control of Lake Ontario. At the outset of the war the brig *Oneida* was outnumbered by Comm. Hugh Earl's three British warships, which were manned by the Provincial Marine (a naval branch of the army in Canada). But Earl lacked combat experience and initiative, and his squadron failed to destroy the fledgling naval base at Sackets Harbor during a weak attack launched on 19 July.

In September, Capt. Isaac Chauncey, USN, arrived to take over command of all operations on the Great Lakes. With the help of Lt. Melancthon Woolsey, who'd established the US Navy's presence there in 1809 with the building of the *Oneida*, he was able to purchase and convert nine commercial schooners into gunboats. He also directed master shipwright Henry Eckford to lay the keel for a 22-gun corvette at Sackets. That vessel, the *Madison*, was launched late in November.

Despite inclement weather, Chauncey's squadron chased the largest Provincial Marine ship, the 20-gun *Royal George*, into Kingston on 9 November, bombarding the nearby land fortifications as they did so. Other Provincial Marine vessels were also chased into Kingston, or simply stayed put at York for fear of capture by the *Oneida* and the gunboats.

Lake Ontario was a linchpin in the entire war effort, and its domination by Chauncey gave the Americans some much needed momentum as 1812 ended. But little progress was made by the US on Lake Erie, where another Provincial Marine squadron remained in control. A search and destroy expedition led by Lt. Jesse Elliott, USN, burned one British vessel and captured a second, the *Caledonia*, in October. It was taken to Black Rock, where a naval base was being set up. But the Provincial Marine establishment at Amherstburg remained unscathed, and no attempt was made by the Americans to retake Michilimackinac.

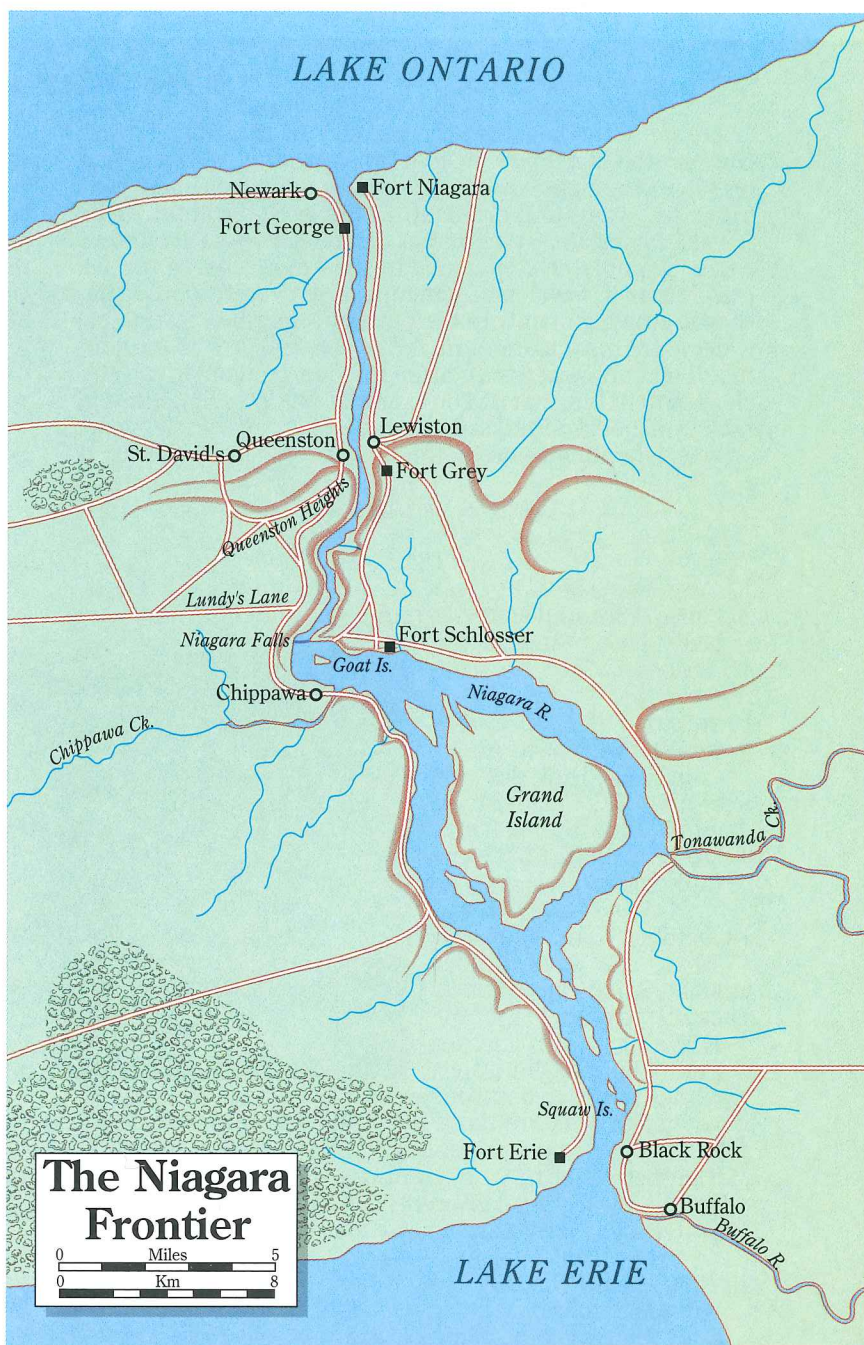
Campaigns of 1813

Since the war was obviously not going to be a quick or easy affair, the British home government

decided to reinforce the army and navy in North America. Units from 13 different regiments were scheduled for transport to Quebec, and more than 460 Royal Navy officers and men, under command of Comm. Sir James Lucas Yeo, were detached for service on the lakes. But those reinforcements wouldn't arrive until May, so Prevost ordered the improvement of defenses at the key garrisons and the construction of three new warships, a corvette at Detroit and another at Amherstburg, and a frigate at York.

Two engagements took place during the winter, both of which influenced later developments. William Henry Harrison had been appointed major general of the new Northwestern Army in September 1812, with the intent of recapturing Detroit. Realizing an autumn campaign wasn't practical, he laid plans to develop the necessary supply posts and forts to properly provision a force numbering more than 6,500.

One division of his army, commanded by Brig. Gen. James Winchester, chased the British out of their



outpost at Frenchtown, Michigan, on 18 January 1813. On the 22nd, Henry Procter retaliated by attacking Winchester's force of some 900 with about 1,300 troops, half of whom were Indians led by Chiefs Roundhead and Walk in the Water. Though he suffered 200 casualties, Procter was able to stall the American advance. More than 400 of Winchester's men were killed, many of them butchered by vengeance-seeking Indians, and the balance, including Winchester himself, were captured.

At the other end of the front, elements of the *US Rifle Regiment* under Maj. Benjamin Forsyth began to harass settlements along the St. Lawrence in the vicinity of Prescott in February. To put an end to those depredations, Lt. Col. George MacDonnell led about 500 men, including a company from his Glengarry Light Infantry Fencible Regiment, members of the 8th Foot, Royal Newfoundlanders and militia across the river to attack Forsyth's post at Ogdensburg on 22 February. Twenty Americans were killed and 70 captured, but Forsyth got away with most of his men.

While those events unfolded on the frozen border, President Madison and his cabinet prepared campaign goals for the new year. Eustis and Hamilton were both replaced. John Armstrong, a strong-willed man little liked by his peers, took over the post of secretary of war, and William Jones became the new navy secretary. Two main objectives were set for 1813. Detroit was to be reclaimed, while Fort Malden and Michilimackinac were also to be secured through the joint efforts of Gen. Harrison's army and a Navy squadron on Lake Erie. Comm. Oliver Hazard Perry was appointed to organize the latter effort under the overall direction of Chauncey.

The second invasion was to be conducted from Sackets Harbor, where a new and larger corvette would be built and the naval squadron reinforced with large contingents of men from east coast ports. A strong army under Henry Dearborn would assemble at the harbor in preparation for attacking Kingston early in the season. If that place could be secured, Armstrong felt the British supply route on the St.

The War at Sea

Probably the best known episodes of the War of 1812 concern the startling naval victories won by the fledgling US Navy. The names of Hull, Decatur, Bainbridge and "Old Ironsides" were immortalized in fights that humbled the Royal Navy on the Atlantic. But those high seas encounters weren't completely dominated by the Americans. Of the sea war's 25 main naval engagements, only 13 were won by the US Navy, owing mainly to the power of their heavy frigates, which were most successful during the first year of the conflict. Thereafter they were often forced to remain in port by close British blockades. For example, the *USS Constitution* accomplished nothing in 1813 and 1814. Nevertheless, the prowess demonstrated by the upstart US Navy left British

observers reeling at the time and gave birth to traditions that helped the evolutions of both services leap forward.

The ordnance reported below for the various vessels is based on the best-available information regarding them. In practice, warships often went to sea more strongly armed than their official ratings indicated. For instance, when the *Constitution*, rated at 44 guns, met the *Guerriere*, rated at 38 guns, the former actually carried 55 pieces and the latter had at least 49. Though those numbers seem equal at first glance, the American frigate's 24-pounder long guns outmatched the British 18-pounders.

The capture of commercial traffic and the escapades of both nation's privateers are omitted from the list below.

AMERICAN VICTORIES AT SEA

1812

13 August - The *USS Essex*, 32 guns, under Capt. David Porter, captured *HMS Alert*, 16 guns, under Cdr. Thomas Laugharne, near the Azores.

19 August - The *USS Constitution*, 44 guns, under Capt. Isaac Hull, destroyed the *HMS Guerriere*, 38 guns, under Capt. James Dacres, south of Newfoundland.

18 October - The sloop *USS Wasp*, 18 guns, under Mast. Comdt Jacob Jones, captured the brig *HMS Frolic*, 18 guns, under Capt. Thomas Whinyates, while it escorted a convoy north of Bermuda.

25 October - The *USS United States*, 44 guns, under Capt. Stephen Decatur, captured *HMS Macedonian*, 38 guns, under Capt. John Carden, south of the Azores.

29 November - The *USS Constitution*, 44 guns, under Capt. William Bainbridge, destroyed *HMS Java*, 44 guns, under Capt. Henry Lambert, near Brazil.



The fledgling United States Navy maneuvering at sea.

1813

24 February - The sloop *USS Hornet*, 18 guns, under Master Cmdt James Lawrence, captured the brig *HMS Peacock*, 18 guns, under Commandant William Peake, near British Guiana.

5 September - The brig *USS Enterprise*, 12 guns, under Lt. William Burrows, captured the sloop *HMS Boxer*, 14 guns, under Commandant Sam Blyth, near Portland, Maine.

22 September - The *USS President*, 44 guns, under Capt. John Rodgers, captured the British tender *HMS High Flyer*, 5 guns, under Lt. George Hutchison, near Newport, Rhode Island.

1814

28 April - The sloop *USS Peacock*, 22 guns, under Master Commandant Lewis Warrington, captured the sloop *HMS Epervier*, 18 guns, under Commandant Richard Wales, near Jamaica.

28 June - The sloop *USS Wasp*, 18 guns, under Master Commandant Johnston Blakeley, captured the sloop *HMS*

Lawrence River would be strangled. Only a matter of time would then be needed for the posts above Kingston to give up for want of food and munitions.

At first Armstrong wanted Dearborn and Chauncey to attack Kingston across the ice in early March, but the rout of Forsyth's detachment and the fear of an enemy build up at Kingston aborted the idea. Next the decision was made to try a combined operation in April, before the ice on the St. Lawrence melted. Arrangements went ahead, but were then suddenly stopped. Several factors contributed to the puzzling change. Rumors of the growing strength of the Kingston garrison and British intentions to attack Sackets made Dearborn and Chauncey hesitant to commit their resources against uncertain odds. They began to lean toward first attacking York, seizing the new frigate and naval stores there, then proceeding to Fort George and invading the Niagara peninsula. After that Chauncey could send some of his vessels to blockade Kingston, while he took most of his men to win control of the upper lakes.

Historians have since criticized Chauncey for lack of ambition and a surplus of caution, but his attitude was influenced by a stream of correspondence from Navy Secretary Jones, in which he was urged to achieve success in the northwest while down playing the importance of Lake Ontario. Dearborn has also been blamed for lackluster leadership, which may be more deserved than the criticism directed at Chauncey; for as events revealed, both men were poorly served by those in Washington. Jones was overly concerned with the upper lakes; and Armstrong's directives were consistently ambiguous.

The ice broke at Sackets Harbor on 19 April, and three days later the embarkation of Dearborn's army began. About 1,800 men were ferried out to Chauncey's squadron, which by that time included his flagship *Madison*, the *Oneida*, and 11 schooner-gunboats. The army consisted of companies from the 6th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 21st Infantry Regiments, detachments from the 3rd Artillery and Light Artillery Regiments, plus Forsyth's Riflemen and volunteers from militia

Reindeer, 18 guns, under Commandant William Manners, near the Bay of Biscay.

- 1 September - The sloop *USS Wasp*, 18 guns, under Master Commandant Johnston Blakeley, destroyed the sloop *HMS Avon*, 18 guns, under Commandant James Arbuthnot, near the Bay of Biscay.

1815

- 20 February - The *USS Constitution*, 44 guns, under Capt. Charles Stewart, captured *HMS Cyane*, 22 guns, under Capt. Gordon Falcon, and also the sloop *HMS Levant*, 18 guns, under Capt. George Douglas, near Madeira.

- 23 March - The sloop *USS Hornet*, 18 guns, under Mast. Comdt James Bidle, captured the sloop *HMS Penguin*, 19 guns, under Comdt James Dickenson, near Tristan de Cunha.

BRITISH VICTORIES AT SEA

1812

- 17 July - A British squadron captured the brig *USS Nautilus*, 14 guns, under Lt. William Crane, near New York.
- 18 October - The *HMS Poitiers*, 74 guns, under Capt. John P. Beresford, captured the sloop *USS Wasp* and also recaptured the sloop *HMS Frolic*, while escorting a convoy north of Bermuda.

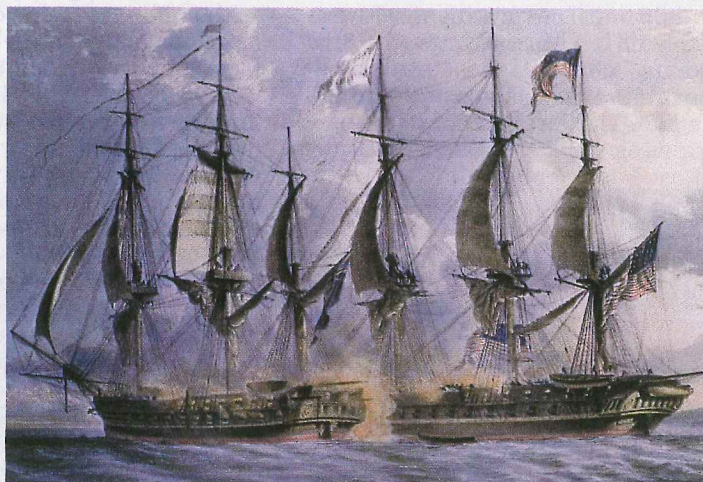
- 22 November - The *HMS Southampton*, 32 guns, under Capt. Sir James Lucas Yeo, captured the brig *USS Vixen*, 14 guns, under Master Commandant George Read, near Jamaica.

1813

- 17 January - The *HMS Narcissus*, 32 guns, under Capt. John Lumley, captured the brig *USS Viper*, 12 guns, under Lt. John Henley, near Belize.

- 1 June - The *HMS Shannon*, 38 guns, under Capt. Philip Broke, captured the *USS Chesapeake*, 38 guns, under Capt. James Lawrence, near Boston.

- 14 August - The sloop *HMS Pelican*, 18 guns, under Capt. John Maples, captured the brig *USS Argus*, 16 guns, under Lt. William Allen, near the Irish Sea.



The HMS Shannon engages the USS Chesapeake.

- 25 December - The *HMS Belvidera*, 36 guns, under Capt. Richard Byron, captured the brig *USS Vixen (II)*, 14 guns, under Lt. Thomas Hall, near the mid-Atlantic seaboard.

1814

- 28 February - The *HMS Phoebe*, 36 guns, under Capt. James Hillyar, and the sloop *HMS Cherub*, 18 guns, under Capt. Thomas Tucker, captured the *USS Essex*, 32 guns, under Capt. David Porter, near Valparaiso.

- 20 April - The *HMS Orpheus*, 36 guns, under Capt.

Hugh Pigot, and the schooner *HMS Shelburne*, 12 guns, under Lt. David Hope, captured the sloop *USS Frolic*, 18 guns, under Master Commandant Joseph Bainbridge, in the Florida Straits.

- 22 June - The *HMS Leander*, 50 guns, under Capt. Sir George Collier, captured the brig *USS Rattlesnake*, 14 guns, under Lt. James Renshaw, near Cape Sable.

- 3 September - A British attempt to seize the *USS Adams*, 28 guns, under Capt. Charles Morris, results in Morris burning the frigate near Hampden.

1815

- 15 January - A British squadron captures the *USS President*, 44 guns, under Capt. Stephen Decatur, near New York.



Ft. George as viewed from across the Niagara River at Ft. Niagara.

regiments from New York, Maryland and Vermont. Conditions aboard the vessels were extremely crowded; 600 sailors and soldiers crammed themselves onto the *Madison* alone, a ship that measured 120 feet in length on its upper deck. The squadron departed Sackets Harbor on 25 April, heading west for York.

Following Brock's death, Sheaffe was awarded a baronetcy for his victory at Queenston and also inherited command of all the forces in Upper Canada and administration of its government. He was at York on government business when the Americans were sighted late on 26 April. At his disposal were 300 regulars from five different regiments (the 8th, 49th, Royal Artillery, Glengarry and Royal Newfoundland Fencibles), 50 Mississauga and Ojibwa warriors, and 300 militia. The garrison consisted of a single blockhouse, a weak palisade, storehouse and



Gen. Henry Dearborn.

small barracks. Only six guns were mounted in three batteries. Sheaffe waited until dawn of the 27th to deploy his troops, sending the majority to oppose the American landing.

While Chauncey anchored the *Madison* and *Oneida* in deep water and the shallow-draught schooners provided a covering barrage, the army went ashore in ships' boats and bateaux around 8:00 a.m. That combined operation was the most ambitious of its type ever undertaken by American forces to that time; and though the wind pushed the boats west of their intended landing site, it began with great expectations. Indian sharpshooters and the Grenadier Company of the 8th Regiment presented a stiff opposition, but were nevertheless soon pushed off the beach.

Brig. Gen. Zebulon Pike, to whom Dearborn had given tactical command, arrived and began consolidating the forces ashore just as the British retreated to a battery west of the garrison. As Pike's column approached, the battery suddenly erupted in flame and smoke when a carelessly ignited magazine within it blew up, wounding dozens of the British. The survivors fled to the garrison, pursued slowly by the Americans who moved to within a few hundred yards by noon. Expecting a counterattack, Pike formed line of battle but allowed the men to relax in their ranks.

Suddenly there was a new and massive explosion, this time with fatal consequences for the American troops. After witnessing the size and strength of the enemy, Sheaffe decided to withdraw with his regulars toward Kingston. He handed command of York to the militia officers, ordered the destruction of the large magazine near the garrison along with the frigate being built in the dockyard. The Americans were caught completely unprepared when the magazine was detonated, raining such a mass of debris down on them 38 were killed outright and 222 wounded. Among the casualties was Pike, his back broken by a falling block of stone.

When order was restored, the Americans secured York without fighting. Dearborn described the battle as a victory to Secretary Armstrong, but the attack had not really been a great success. Most of Sheaffe's little army had escaped; the frigate *Sir Isaac Brock*, which Chauncey had planned on adding to his fleet, had gone up in flames, while 55 Americans were killed and another 265 wounded.

The army was reembarked for passage to the Niagara frontier, but a storm kept Chauncey's squadron wind-bound at York until 8 May. Exhausted by exposure to the weather and sea sickness, the army finally encamped near Fort Niagara, where a quick attack on Fort George was postponed to allow them to recover their strength and health.

Sheaffe's survivors reached Kingston on 5 May. He'd saved more than half his 300 regulars, but had lost 68 killed and 71 wounded or captured. Despite the unfavorable odds he'd faced, Sheaffe was censured by Prevost, removed to a post at Montreal and eventually sent home.

By the final week of May, Dearborn's army was recuperated and reinforced to a strength of 4,500. Final plans were laid for the attack on Fort George. But since Dearborn was still too ill to command in the field, Maj. Gen. Morgan Lewis was given the job of deploying three brigades under Brig. Gens. John Boyd, William Winder and John Chandler. To soften up their opponents, the Americans began a bombardment of the fort on the 25th with hot shot, which soon reduced the place to burned out rubble. Late that night Chauncey charted and buoyed the British shore.

Awaiting the attack was Brig. Gen. John Vincent with about 300 militia and 1,000 regulars from the 8th, 49th, Glengarry and Royal Newfoundland Regiments. The first wave of invaders rowed out of the fog on the placid lake around 9:00 a.m. on 27 May. Among the first Americans to step ashore was Lt. Col. Winfield Scott, who'd won permission to lead the initial effort. The fighting on shore was the bloodiest of the day, and resulted in the British retreating through the village of Niagara toward the ruins of Fort George.

Gen. Vincent decided to make a full retreat, and led his column up the road to Queenston. Fifty-two British died at the Battle of Fort George, 44 were wounded and 262 captured, while American losses were 39 killed and 111 wounded. But like Sheaffe at York, Vincent escaped, and by 29 May, after calling in the garrisons at Chippawa and Fort Erie and disbanding the militia, he'd withdrawn to Burlington Heights with some 1,600 men.

Once the American camp was established on the plain near Fort George, two brigades, numbering about 3,500 in all, were sent after Vincent's army. On 5 June they exchanged shots with Vincent's outposts, then camped at Stoney Creek. Late that night Vincent launched an assault with bayonets fixed by about 700 officers and men from the 8th and 49th Regiments. After an initially silent infiltration, a melee erupted in which Vincent lost his way in the dark (he wandered back into Burlington the next morning), and two American generals, Winder and Chandler, were captured. The British retreated, taking along 113 prisoners, after having lost 23 killed, 136 wounded and 55 captured. The attack, soon called the Battle of Stoney Creek, inflicted lighter casualties, 17 dead and 38 wounded, on the Americans, but left them in a state of disorganization.

As senior officer, Col. James Burn assumed command of the brigades and ordered a counter-march to Forty Mile Creek, while he also hurriedly communicated with Dearborn. On 7 June alarm spread

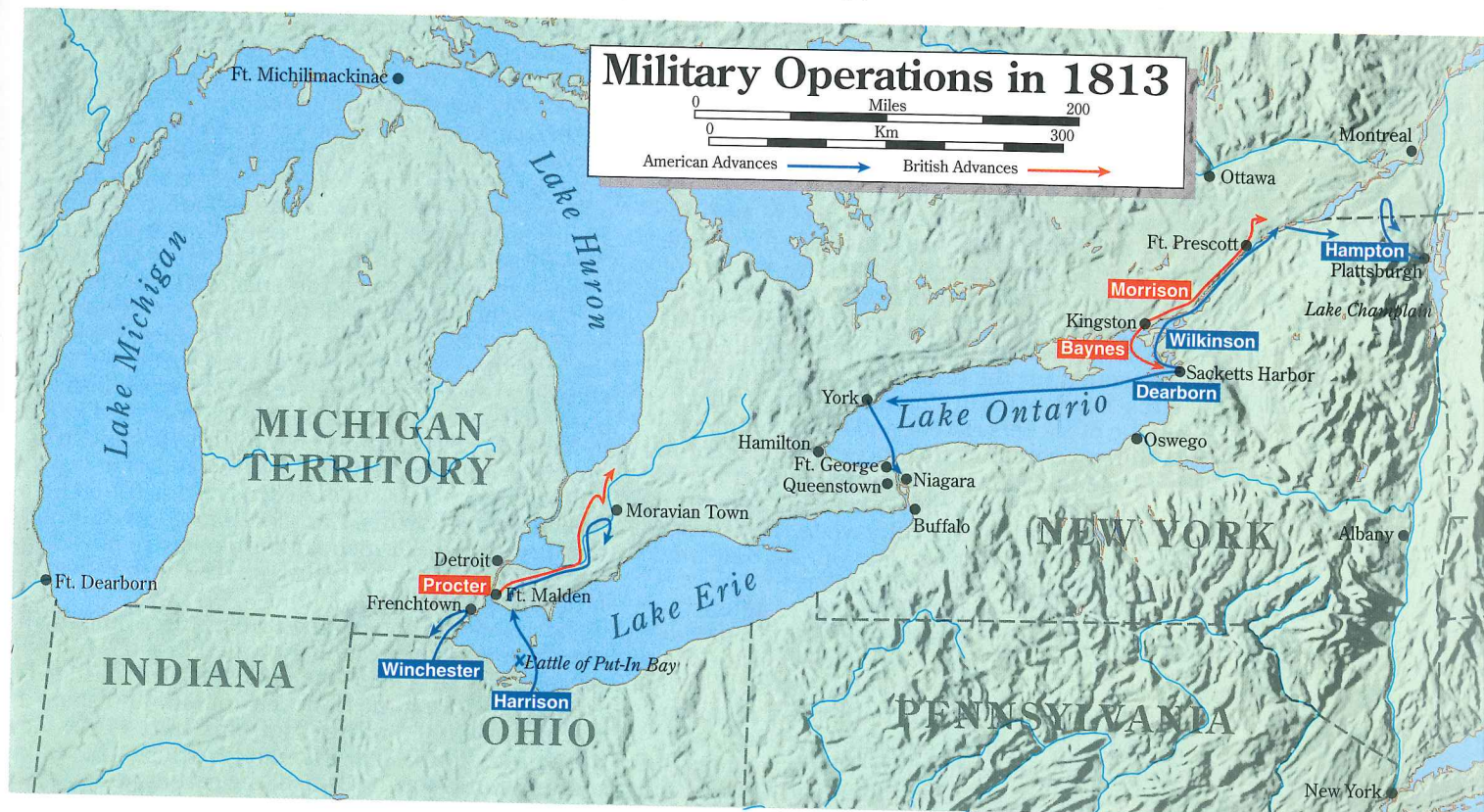
through the American force again as the British squadron appeared, sailing for Forty Mile Creek. Shots were exchanged between the ships and land batteries, and a landing of British troops seemed imminent. Fearing Burn's force would be cut off, Dearborn ordered him to return immediately to Fort George.

For the first time in the war, British naval forces on Lake Ontario had helped neutralize the power of a sizeable American force. The question immediately arose as to how that had been allowed to happen — where was Chauncey?

The commodore had received word shortly after the Battle of Fort George that Sackets Harbor was under attack. He therefore sailed immediately, arriving at Sackets on 1 June only to discover a battle had already been fought and won, but at the expense of the naval storehouses and barracks. Most of the booty from the raid on York was also lost, but the new corvette, the *General Pike*, had been saved from a fire in the shipyard.

The British had attacked Sackets on 29 May, intent on distracting the American forces threatening the Niagara peninsula and on capturing or destroying Chauncey's new ship. Some 800 men from the 1st, 8th, 100th, and 104th Regiments, the Canadian Voltigeurs and 40 Mississauga and Mohawk warriors, were embarked on the squadron, which was now commanded by Comm. Yeo, who'd arrived at Kingston in May with about 460 Royal Navy officers and men. Overall command of the mission was entrusted to Col. Edward Baynes, but Prevost also accompanied the expedition and was influential in its management.

Lt. Col. Electus Backus commanded about 600 regulars at Sackets, while Brig. Gen. Jacob Brown led 800 militia. They deployed along the shore and in the batteries and blockhouses of Fort Tompkins, while a detachment of sailors, under the charge of Lt. Woolcot Chauncey (the commodore's younger brother) guarded the shipyard.





Maj. Gen. Jacob Brown, commander of U.S. forces at the Battle of Sackett's Harbor.

The British came ashore in a hail of fire shortly after dawn, and within two hours had advanced as far as the palisades of Fort Tompkins when the order was suddenly given to withdraw. Apparently shocked by the high casualties (45 dead, 174 wounded, 13 missing), Baynes, in consultation with Prevost, terminated the attack, ordering a return to the ships. Some of the officers urged Prevost to allow them to continue, since a fire was seen roaring in the shipyard; but their protests were to no avail. On shore the Americans celebrated their startling victory. About 21 officers and men had been killed, and 80 others wounded (Col. Backus mortally).

The event was Jacob Brown's baptism of fire and raised his star to prominence. Only the fire in the shipyard marred the success of the day. A court of inquiry revealed the naval officers, assuming the British had captured Fort Tompkins, had ordered the destruction of the storehouses. No individual was officially blamed for the order, but tongues wagged for months about Woolcot Chauncey's culpability.

The Battle of Sackets Harbor had a number of long lasting effects. Thereafter Chauncey was hesitant to leave his base unprotected, especially when a new warship was nearing launch. He kept his squadron anchored there until late in July, when the *General Pike* was finally ready for service. During that time Yeo's squadron was free to run supplies to Vincent's army and to raid the coast of New York state from Sodus to the Genessee River. But Prevost's unwillingness to commit his forces decisively on the battlefield left a bad taste in the mouths of his subordinates. His hesitant leadership continued throughout the war as mistrust spread among his officers.

The American campaign on the Niagara peninsula remained virtually stagnated around Fort George for

the remainder of the summer. Dearborn, asked by Secretary Armstrong to retire, was replaced first by Morgan Lewis and then by John Boyd. Only one significant aggressive move was made during that period. On 23 June a detachment under Col. Charles Boerstler marched to destroy a British depot near the village of Beaver Dams. Early the next day the 600-man force (most of the 14th Regiment, along with companies from the 6th, 23rd, Light Artillery, 2nd Light Dragoons and militia volunteers) was ambushed by about the same number of Indians from the Six Nations tribes of the Grand River and the Seven Nations tribes from the vicinity of Montreal.

About 50 Americans were killed and the rest captured. Though regular British companies arrived on the battlefield late in the action (and subsequently received most of the official credit), the Battle of Beaver Dams was gained by the Indians who'd been led by Capt. William Kerr and Dominique Ducharme. Following Beaver Dams, the British tightened the noose around Fort George, hemming in the Americans for the remainder of the summer.

From their vantage points on the opposite shores, the Americans and British spent the long summer days waiting for a decisive naval action to occur on Lake Ontario; for it was thought either Yeo or Chauncey would soon move to take complete control of the lake. Such a victory would have guaranteed the success of one army or the other; but the battle didn't take place. Well aware of the significance of such an engagement, the two commodores maneuvered around each other on several occasions after the first days of August without drawing near enough to wage an all-out battle.

A pair of American schooners, the *Hamilton* and *Scourge*, sank in a storm later that month, while another pair were captured during a night engagement. Yeo's flagship was partially dismasted by a broadside from *General Pike* late in September near Burlington Bay; but Chauncey failed to press his attack. A week later a convoy of schooners carrying troops back to Kingston was chased and seized by the American squadron. In November the navigation season ended with the two naval commanders still steadfastly avoiding each other.

On Lake Erie naval affairs evolved in a much more decisive manner. There Commander Robert Barclay led a small party of Royal Navy officers and men to take over the Provincial Marine squadron at Amherstburg in June, and sailed about with impunity until Oliver Hazard Perry, who'd been building and assembling a squadron since the spring at Presque Isle, Pennsylvania, finally took to the water early in August. The British withdrew to Amherstburg to wait for the launch of a new corvette, the *Detroit*, a 21-gun ship. Perry, with his 20-gun brigs, *Lawrence* and *Niagara*, and seven other small vessels, anchored in Put-in-Bay at the Bass Islands on the 16th. He kept an eye on the British in the Detroit River and also visited William Henry Harrison to discuss plans for an invasion of Upper Canada. Harrison wanted to wait until the threat of the British squadron was removed, so Perry sailed off to the mouth of the Detroit River as if calling out Barclay to fight.

Harrison had fought the British twice since Winchester's disaster in January, when Procter, quickly promoted to brigadier, then major general, attacked Fort Mieg's during the first week of May and again at the end of July. Both expeditions hurt Harrison's army, but they also weakened Procter's. To make matters worse for the British, the battles at York and



The 104th or "New Brunswick" Regiment of Foot Private, Light Infantry Company, Summer 1814

The 104th Regiment of Foot was raised during 1803-1805 as the *New Brunswick Regiment of Fencibles*. Fencible regiments were considered regulars, but were required to serve only "locally" — in this case, British North America (an added incentive to recruiting, considering the situation in war-torn Europe during this period). Serving as the garrison for New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, it became a standing regiment of foot on the British Establishment in 1811 and numbered the 104th. In February 1813 it was ordered to Upper Canada (present-day Ontario) and performed an epic overland march during the brutal Canadian winter, braving extreme cold and heavy snow while covering 350 miles in 24 days.

It participated in the British attack on Sackett's Harbor, where the 104th received its baptism of fire during the failed amphibious landing of May 29, 1813. The regiment was then ordered to the Niagara frontier in June, arriving in time to participate in the battle of Beaver Dams. The light infantry and grenadiers were detached from the regiment (then quartered in Kingston) in July 1814 and ordered back to the Niagara Peninsula, arriving in time to fight in the bitter night action at Lundy's Lane. The remainder of the regiment joined them in time for the siege of Fort Erie, where the regiment suffered tragic losses in the August 15 assault on the fort. Of the 77 light infantrymen who were part of the column that had penetrated into a bastion, only 23 returned to the British lines following the explosion of the bastion's powder magazine. The regiment fought its last battle on October 20 at Cook's Mill. It was dissolved three years later.

This light infantryman wears dark grey trousers and short gaiters, officially adopted in 1812 for all foot regiments "on service." His felt cap is the new 1812 "Belgic" form, covered with its "cap case of prepared linen. . . worn in wet weather."

The cartridge pouch is the new form adopted in 1806-1808, capable of holding 60 cartridges for his India Pattern musket. A cast-brass regimental plate bearing the regimental number and title is attached to his bayonet belt of buff leather. Rolled and strapped to his black-painted "Trotter" knapsack is the soldier's grey greatcoat. Thus uniformed and equipped, the 104th performed brave service during the Niagara campaign of 1814. — *James L. Kochaw*

Private, 15th U.S. Infantry Regiment, 1812-13

Organized in 1812 and commanded by colonel Zebulon Montgomery Pike (already famous for his western explorations in 1806-1807), the 15th Infantry was one of eleven new regiments authorized by Congress in anticipation of war with Great Britain. With the exception of Pike and a few of his commissioned and noncommissioned officers, the regiment was composed of men principally recruited in the state of New Jersey. Despite the regiment's inexperience, it soon developed a reputation for precise military bearing under the firm hand of its commander.

During the winter of 1812-13, as the regiment trained at Greenbush Cantonment (near Albany, New York), Pike introduced a new system of military drill to replace the conventional two-rank formation then practiced in American and British armies. Drawing inspiration from a contemporary English work that recommended reintroduction of a then-archaic polearm, Pike instituted a three-rank formation — the first two ranks armed with muskets and the third carrying twelve foot-long pikes. Thus formed and equipped, a battalion could bring nearly all of its men into direct contact with the enemy in a bayonet charge with a correspondingly greater shock power (bayonet-tipped muskets would have proven too short to be of any effect in such employment by the third rank). However, Pike also equipped his pikemen with muskets for use in volley firing from a greater distance, but with shortened barrels to reduce weight and for ease in slinging while the pike was employed. He also acquired 200 swords for these troops for use in close quarters, as the short muskets were not furnished with bayonets.

This pikeman of the 15th Infantry is dressed in the distinctive uniform first received by the regiment in late 1812 and worn during the York campaign of 1813. Prior to the War of 1812, most cloth for the U.S. Army's uniforms were imported from Europe and the British naval blockade, coupled with wartime speculation, led to shortages and soaring prices. As a result, it was impossible to furnish sufficient quantities of the officially prescribed blue, faced with scarlet, infantry uniforms to all of the newly raised regiments. Instead, many regiments drew stop-gap uniforms made in a variety of alternative color combinations, such as drab and green or brown and scarlet, although still cut in the accepted pattern. "Mixed" grey uniforms were issued to the 15th, with black cloth tape sent to trim the buttonholes on the breast, collar and cuffs in lieu of the normal white binding.

The woolen overall or "winter pantaloons" are also of grey cloth and he wears a cylindrical felt cap, trimmed with a regimental plate of tinned iron, leather cockade and pewter eagle, feather plume, and cotton "band & tassels". His sword is one from the Rose 1812 contract for noncommissioned officers swords, slung on a Model 1808 bayonet belt. This belt and corresponding cartridge box crossbelt are made of blackened harness leather — a wartime substitute for buff leather. His canteen and "Lherbette patent" knapsack are both painted with light blue paint, regularly called for in Army contracts. — *James L. Kochaw*

Artwork by Don Troiani. This material is from Don Troiani's forthcoming book *Soldiers in America, 1754-1865*.





Capt. Isaac Chauncey - commander of United States naval forces on Lake Ontario.

Fort George drained provisions from the army in southwestern Upper Canada, leaving those men at the edge of starvation by summer's end.

Perry's naval blockade worsened the situation to the extent Barclay, with Procter's approval, decided to fight him for control of the lake. Though his squadron was undermanned and ill-equipped, Barclay sailed on 9 September. The next day Perry accepted the challenge, and between noon and 3:00 p.m. the Battle of Put-in-Bay was fought. Perry's brig *Lawrence* took the brunt of the British broadsides in the early phase of the clash. More than half her crew was killed or wounded, while Perry conducted the fighting unscathed. The same couldn't be said for the British. Barclay was wounded twice and finally had to leave the quarterdeck. His second in command was then killed, and on four of his other five vessels the commanding officers and their immediate subordinates also went down.

Perry eventually abandoned the ruined *Lawrence* to board the brig *Niagara*, which had failed to get into the fight to that point. In short order Perry coned the new flagship across the British line, pounding those already wounded vessels into surrendering. Casualties were high: the British lost 41 killed and 94 wounded, while the Americans had 27 killed and 96 wounded. All six British warships were captured as was uncontested control of the lake.

After moving 4,500 of Harrison's troops in stages from their camps on the Maumee and Sandusky Rivers, the Americans finally disembarked from Perry's ships to step ashore at Amherstburg on 17 September. Procter had been slow to retreat, and was within range of Harrison's army, but that general took his time in pursuing the British. The American's deliberate advance followed the line of the Thames River, culminating near Moravian Town on 5 October. That morning the rearguard of Procter's 41st Regiment formed in the woods along the road to block the Americans.

Lt. Col. Richard M. Johnson's regiment of 500 mounted infantrymen was ordered by Harrison to break the defense. As one wing charged the main line, a second wave crushed the Indians trying to hold in

a swamp on the flank. The fighting was brief but sharp. Nearly 500 British were captured, their casualties uncertain due to the chaos of Procter's retreat. While he escaped to safety in Burlington with his family and about 200 officers and men, he wasn't spared the ignominy of a fault-finding court martial. About 400 Indians also survived the battle, but among the dead was their irreplaceable Chief Tecumseh, who more than one American claimed to have killed and mutilated.

The southwestern region of Upper Canada thus fell into American hands, where it remained for the rest of the war. But Harrison and Perry's intention to sail up Lake Huron to reclaim Michilimackinac was aborted by bad weather and an order from John Armstrong calling the army to the Niagara peninsula. Some 1,200 of Harrison's regulars were ferried to Buffalo aboard Perry's ships. At first it seemed they would be used in a combined operation with Chauncey against Burlington, but that plan was cancelled since bigger things were afoot.

Throughout the summer, Secretary Armstrong had corresponded with his various generals about finally attacking Kingston and the upper St. Lawrence. A plan was developed that would have one army moving from Sackets Harbor while a second marched from Plattsburgh. The command of the New York wing, and overall charge of the operation, was given to 56-year-old Maj. Gen. James Wilkinson, a Revolutionary War veteran who had a reputation for unscrupulous private and public behavior. At the head of the Plattsburgh army was Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton. He hated Wilkinson and told Armstrong he would only obey the other general's orders if the two forces happened to be combined on a single battlefield.

After persistent delays, Wilkinson assembled 8,000 men at Sackets Harbor by mid-October, comprising four brigades of infantry, two regiments of cavalry and 24 guns. Rumors the British were rapidly reinforcing Kingston prompted him to change his target, with Armstrong's hesitant approval, to Montreal. In the meantime, Hampton had moved out from Plattsburgh with 4,200 men, advancing along the Chateaugay River, 15 miles south of Montreal. His progress was abruptly checked, however, when his forward division was opposed and turned back on 26 October by 800 Canadian regulars and militia under Lt. Col. de Salaberry. Hampton then withdrew to American territory to await further developments.

Wilkinson, unaware of Hampton's repulse at the Battle of Chateaugay, moved down the St. Lawrence River in a flotilla of 300 boats, supported by a brigade under Jacob Brown (promoted to major general in the regular army) marching along the Canadian shore.

Pursuing Wilkinson was a British force commanded by Lt. Col. Joseph Morrison, and consisting of 1,200 regulars from the 49th, 89th and Royal Artillery Regiments, the Fencibles, some militia, a few Indians and a group of Royal Navy officers and men on gunboats under Capt. W.H. Mulcaster. On 10 November contact between the two sides was made when some long distance shots were exchanged between Mulcaster's gunboats and the Americans.

That night Morrison positioned his brigade at right angles to the river across the property of a farmer named John Crysler. The next morning in the American camp a short distance down river, confusion reigned as Wilkinson, stricken with illness, issued contradictory orders about advancing, staying put and dealing with Morrison's force. Finally, at noon,

he instructed Boyd to beat back the British. That general heeded his new orders, directing three columns of infantry (Brig. Gen. Robert Swartout's *11th, 14th and 21st Infantry Regiments*; Brig. Gen. Leonard Covington's *9th, 16th and 25th Infantry Regiments*; and Boyd's own *12th and 13th Infantry Regiments*) to march on the enemy supported by light dragoons and artillery.

Though significantly outnumbered, the steady volleys from Morrison's regiments, and their demonstrated ability to maneuver smoothly in the heat of battle, deflected the American advances, finally forcing them off the field late in the afternoon. Twenty-two British were killed, 148 wounded and nine went missing; Boyd lost 102 killed, 237 wounded and more than 100 captured.

The Battle of Chrysler's Farm spelled the end of Wilkinson's St. Lawrence campaign. On 12 November his flotilla sailed down the river, eventually turning away from Montreal to set up winter camp at French Mills on the Salmon River. Hampton also withdrew his army to Plattsburgh. The objective that was supposed to have been secured in the spring — throttling British supply lines on the St. Lawrence River — was left undone, so Upper Canada continued to survive.

The war's final action of the year served to erase the gains made by Dearborn and his subordinates in the spring. The weak force left in Fort George abandoned that position on 10 December, crossing over to

Fort Niagara. As they went, the Americans torched the village of Niagara, turning out its inhabitants into the winter cold. Though the US government quickly proclaimed the burning had neither been ordered nor endorsed, British demands for vengeance rang loudly.

The new commander of the forces in Upper Canada and administrator of the government, Lt. Gen. Gordon Drummond, reached the Niagara peninsula on 16 December. Three days later, 550 regulars under Lt. Col. John Murray captured Fort Niagara under cover of darkness and at the points of their bayonets. In doing so they killed 67 Americans and wounded 11 others, at the cost of only eight casualties of their own. Over the next two weeks British raiding parties burned most of the settlements along the US shore of the river, bringing an acrimonious end to a fitful and unproductive year of fighting.

Campaigns of 1814

The new year began with the British war effort in an upswing. In Europe, Napoleon was beaten, which meant London's full attention could be focused on the American war for the first time. Reinforcements were lined up for transport to Canada, and plans were laid for combined operations against the eastern seaboard and the Gulf coast.

In Washington, Madison and his cabinet met to discuss the poor results of the 1813 campaigns, and

The War Along the Coast

The closest that American forces came to bringing the war home to the British came about through some raids conducted against shipping in the waters around the United Kingdom. As the war proceeded, however, British attacks on American soil increased.

Apart from imposing harsher limitations on commerce, no attempt was made in 1812 to intrude on American territory south of the Canadian border. But when the fleet commanded by Adm. Sir John Borlase Warren, operating out of Bermuda, was reinforced early in 1813, he began to use his ships along the republic's eastern seaboard.

After failing to obtain water and supplies ashore, the 74-gun *HMS Poitiers* bombarded the town of Lewes, on Delaware Bay, in April. That same month a squadron under Rear Adm. Sir George Cockburn prowled around the shores of Chesapeake Bay burning towns, seizing supplies, plundering plantations and destroying fortifications.

In June, Warren decided to use 3,000 troops under Col. Sir Sidney Beckwith to attack Norfolk, which meant getting past Craney Island in Hampton Roads. That part of the venture was unsuccessful, but a later effort on Norfolk finally resulted in its sacking. Through the summer the elements of Warren's fleet and Beckwith's troops continued to raid the Chesapeake communities, along with the coastal towns of Georgia and the Carolinas.

In 1814 British seaboard activity escalated considerably. On 7 April a flotilla of barges infiltrated eight miles up the Connecticut River to destroy 20 vessels anchored there. Moose Island in Passamaquoddy Bay was captured in July by a squadron headed by one of Nelson's favorite captains, Sir Thomas Hardy. He also supervised the bombardment of Stonington, Connecticut, between 9 and 12 August, which failed to suppress the stiff resistance offered by that town's militia.

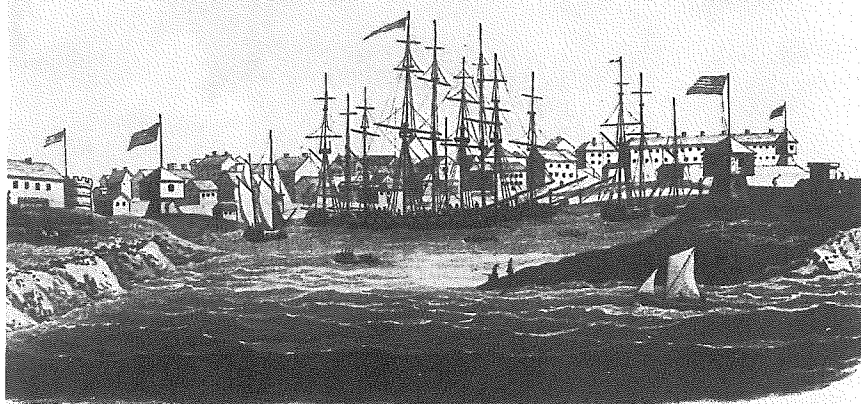
Of course, the most significant incursion onto the mainland came during the latter half of August, when 4,000 troops under Maj. Gen. Robert Ross combined with Cockburn's naval elements to land along the Patuxent River and

begin a march toward Washington. Brig. Gen. William Winder was in command of that military district, but his defensive preparations were totally inadequate. He made a stand with about 2,000 militia, regulars and seamen at Bladensburg on 24 August, but was soon put to flight. Later that day Ross and Cockburn led their men into Washington.

The shipyard and the several men of war docked there had already been set aflame by the defenders, and the British added to the inferno by torching the Capitol, the War and Treasury Department buildings and the President's Mansion (which was afterward renovated and painted white). Having administered a national humiliation, the invaders reembarked for an attack on Baltimore.

That was begun with the landing of Ross' army southeast of the city on 12 September. A more successful resistance was coordinated by militiaman Maj. Gen. Samuel Smith, and the British advance was halted in sharp and costly fighting (Ross was killed). Cockburn meanwhile bombarded Fort McHenry and the Baltimore shore through the night of the 13th, prompting a Washington lawyer, Francis Scott Key, to compose a poem expressing his rapture at seeing the American flag still flying above the fort the next morning. Stymied by the increasingly determined American resistance, the British withdrew, giving up on Baltimore.

The final British invasion got underway in the final weeks of the year. A fleet under Vice Adm. Sir Alexander Cochrane disembarked about 9,000 troops, most of them veterans from Europe, led by Maj. Gen. Sir Edward Pakenham, near New Orleans on 12 December. Rather than a quick advance, the British delayed, which led to a series of small fights with mixed results. The main attack came on 8 January 1815, but by then Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson had built up a substantial defensive line for his 5,000 men, and the British were thrashed. Some 2,000 attackers fell, including Pakenham, killed by grapeshot, while the Americans suffered fewer than 100 killed and wounded. New Orleans was saved; Jackson's reputation was made, and the invaders withdrew to their fleet at the end of the month.



Sackett's Harbor on Lake Ontario.

an investigation into those failings was launched by Congress. A second pressing issue was the invitation that had been received in November from British Prime Minister Lord Castlereagh to convene peace talks. In time, five representatives (John Quincy Adams, James A. Bayard, Henry Clay, Albert Gallatin and Jonathan Russell) would be sent to Ghent, Belgium, to meet with Adm. Lord Gambier, Henry Goulburn and William Adams. An unsuccessful attempt was also made to negotiate an armistice with Prevost.

The Americans were slow to develop campaign objectives for the new year. Two new brigs of war were laid down at Sackett's Harbor, with two larger frigates planned for later, and bounties were offered to bolster enlistments in the Army and Navy. Once again, War Secretary Armstrong pushed the idea of attacking Kingston. He wanted Jacob Brown to lead the way with Chauncey from Sackett's Harbor; but his directives were so poorly and ambiguously worded that Brown, believing he'd been ordered to march to Niagara, accordingly left Sackett's Harbor, and thus the Kingston scheme was finally dropped.

Meanwhile the British were also busy plotting their own maneuvers. Having taken the war south of the border in December, Lt. Gen. Drummond was eager to continue to attack the Americans. In January he began plotting with Yeo to reclaim the southwestern region of the province. A large combined force would be transported by sleds to seize Fort Malden, while a second group crossed the Lake Erie ice to Put-in-Bay to retake Barclay's warships. But logistical difficulties, the mild winter weather, and Prevost's conservative views all combined to cancel those schemes. In there place an all-out assault on Sackett's Harbor was put under consideration. Again Prevost resisted Drummond's and Yeo's arguments. As they continued to debate the governor general, the two commanders on their own formulated a plan for a raid to put Chauncey's shipyard out of business.

On 3 May, 950 soldiers from the De Watteville, Glengarry Light Fencibles, the Royal Artillery, the Sappers and the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Marines boarded Yeo's squadron, which had been strengthened by the recent launch of the 60-gun frigate *Prince Regent* and the 42-gun frigate *Princess Charlotte*. They headed for Oswego, where ordnance and naval fittings meant for Chauncey's new vessels were thought to be awaiting transshipment.

Around 1:00 p.m. on 6 May, the British, under Lt. Col. Victor Fisher of the De Watteville, landed to the west of the American fort on the bluff above Oswego Bay. Only 300 men of the *3rd US Artillery Regiment*, commanded by Lt. Col. George E. Mitchell, reinforced by a small party of seamen, defended the garrison.

Their four big guns returned the bombardment from Yeo's ships and their musketry slowed the advance of Fisher's column, but only briefly. Within half an hour, Mitchell signalled retreat, escaping up the Oswego River with most of his men. A disappointing half-dozen or so pieces of ordnance and about 1,000 barrels of provisions fell into British hands at the expense of 18 killed and 70 wounded, including one of Yeo's best officers, Capt. William Mulcaster. Mitchell lost six dead, 38 wounded and 25 missing.

All hope for an assault on Sackett's Harbor was given up when the cost of the raid against weakly defended Oswego was weighed against the profits. Yeo instead blockaded Sackett's Harbor through May, until one of his captains, Stephen Popham, unwisely led a 200-man raiding party into an ambush at Big Sandy Creek, just west of Oswego, on the 30th. The entire detachment was captured, causing Yeo, his ships' crews now dangerously depleted, to withdraw to Kingston, where he then stayed with most of his squadron until October.

Plans for the American summer campaign weren't confirmed in Washington until the first week of June, when Madison and his cabinet decided some military successes were needed to influence the peace talks in their favor. But rather than focus on the critical Kingston and St. Lawrence River area, two distant objectives were selected: the recovery of Michilimackinac and a new invasion of Upper Canada at Niagara.

While the Lake Erie squadron embarked 700 men under Maj. George Groghan and headed for Lake Huron, Maj. Gen. Brown prepared his army near Buffalo. Numbering about 3,500 regulars and militia, plus about 600 New York Iroquois, Brown's force was organized into three brigades under Brig. Gens. Winfield Scott, Eleazer Ripley and Peter B. Porter. They crossed the Niagara on 3 July and quickly captured Fort Erie.

Two days later the Americans bumped into the British at Chippawa Creek, 17 miles down river. Maj. Gen. Phineas Riall had collected regulars, militia and Indians from the various Niagara garrisons, and he was eager to halt the invaders. Brown sent about 500 *Pennsylvania Volunteers* and Indians under Gen. Porter to probe the British flank during the afternoon of 5 July, but they were repulsed. In the meantime Riall moved south along the river road with his main force of 1,360 regulars from the 8th, 1st and 100th Regiments, some artillery and few light dragoons. He deployed them at the northern end of a long, wide field on the shore of the river. Under a hail of British fire, Scott's 1,400-man brigade, consisting of the *9th*, *21st*, *22nd* and *25th Infantry Regiments*, soon arrived at the field's southern end.

The opposing forces marched to within 70 yards of each other and exchanged a vicious series of volleys for nearly 40 minutes. Riall had assumed he was facing militia, owing to the fact the Americans were clad in short, grey jackets rather than the traditional blue coatees. Scott had trained his men relentlessly, however, and they succeeded in pushing the British off the field. Riall retreated to safety across Chippawa Creek, having suffered 148 dead, 321 wounded and 46 missing. The Americans lost 58 killed, 241 wounded and 19 missing.

On 7 July the Americans also crossed Chippawa Creek and advanced to Queenston Heights. Riall had meanwhile withdrawn toward Burlington, leaving Forts George and Niagara well garrisoned, but Brown didn't attack them. Instead, he waited above Queen-

ston for a glimpse of Chauncey's squadron on the lake.

The orders that had come from Washington in June had stated the Navy was to work "in concert" with the Army to capture Niagara. But the launch and equipping of Chancey's two new frigates, the *Superior* and *Mohawk*, had been delayed, and he was unwilling to leave Sackets Harbor unprotected. It wasn't until August he finally sailed, but by then it was too late to join Brown, who, along with many in Washington, began to openly and loudly criticize the naval commander.

The bloodiest battle in the entire northern war took place on 25 July. It was put in motion by Brown withdrawing from Queenston to Chippawa and Riall rallying his troops to pursue. The opponents began to gather together near Lundy's Lane, a roadway leading westward up a hill from Portage Road in modern-day Niagara Falls, Ontario. Gordon Drummond arrived to take command of the British force, which, as reinforcements arrived, rose in strength to 2,900 regulars and 600 militia. Brown sent Scott's brigade ahead in the early stage of the fighting, then committed Ripley and Porter's brigades, bringing his total to 1,900 regulars and 300 volunteers.

The fighting began just after 6:00 p.m. Scott's regiments were ravaged by British artillery early on, while another regiment, the 25th Infantry, succeeded in pushing in Drummond's left, capturing the badly injured Gen. Riall and his escort. In the falling darkness, Ripley's brigade managed to pry the British off the high ground in a hand-to-hand struggle. Drummond and Brown were both incapacitated by severe wounds, and command control over the battle weakened for both sides.

Strong British reinforcements bumbled into the action, and Drummond ordered renewed attacks against Ripley's men. In the darkness around midnight the fighting had degenerated into a scene reminiscent of some renaissance painting of hell. Scott, having gotten his force reorganized, attacked and

broke through Drummond's line, but was then devastated by confused volleys from Ripley's regiments. Without a fresh regiment in reserve, Brown felt he had to order a retreat. Too exhausted and weakened to pursue, Drummond was satisfied to regain the little hillside on Lundy's Lane.

The butcher's bill was enormous by the earlier standards of the war: 81 British killed, 562 wounded, 233 missing; 171 Americans dead, 573 wounded and 117 missing. Brown called for the attack to be renewed in the morning, but an advance simply could not be managed. Instead, only funeral pyres, unusual in any North American war, produced the next pall of smoke to hang over Lundy's Lane.

Within a week, Brown's army withdrew to a greatly strengthened and expanded Fort Erie. For the rest of the campaign it remained penned up by a British siege. Drummond attempted to take the fort on the night of 15 August, but his attack was poorly planned and cost him another 366 casualties and 539 missing or captured, while the defenders lost only a total of 84 killed and wounded. A month later, Brown raided Drummond's siege line in a pelting rain storm, inflicting a further 291 casualties and capturing 315, but also losing 511 himself.

Reinforcements were ferried to Fort Erie by the Lake Erie squadron — which had meanwhile failed in its attempt to retake Michilimackinac — but the fighting was essentially over on the Niagara frontier. Drummond returned to Chippawa, and Brown evacuated Fort Erie in November after demolishing the battlements.

Along the northern frontier only one other significant engagement occurred in 1814. On 1 September, Prevost crossed the Vermont border at the head of three brigades totalling 10,350 men, two-thirds of them veterans from the Napoleonic Wars who'd been rushed to Canada for more fighting. His target was Plattsburgh, where he arrived on the 6th and deployed. The defense of the region was in the hands of Brig. Gen. Alexander Macomb, who retreated across



the Saranac River at Plattsburgh and prepared his 3,300 men (only 1,500 of whom were considered trained and fit enough for action) to receive the British attack.

Despite his advantage in numbers, Prevost didn't attack immediately, for he was waiting to act in conjunction with the Lake Champlain squadron. But Capt. George Downie, RN, had taken charge of those vessels only days before and he was still hurrying to complete the equipping of a recently launched frigate, the 37-gun *Confiance*. As Prevost waited he also pressed Downie to engage the American squadron under Capt. Thomas Macdonough, USN, even to the point of charging Downie was purposely delaying.

Finally, on the morning of 11 September, the British squadron rounded Cumberland Head and moved into Plattsburgh Bay. Downie brought his four main vessels and a dozen gunboats up to Macdonough's anchored line of four ships and 10 gunboats, and the fighting began about 8:30 a.m. The exchange of broadsides was supposed to be the signal for Prevost to launch an advance on Macomb's defenses, but he continued to hold back. On the water the adversaries blazed away at each other for more than two hours in an evenly matched battle that virtually destroyed all the larger vessels engaged. But, then, one by one the British crews gave way and surrendered, giving Macdonough a victory to rival that of Perry.

Downie was killed beneath an over-turned long gun on his quarterdeck, and 56 British sailors and soldiers also fell in the action, while 72 were wounded. Fifty-two Americans were killed or wounded. While Macdonough's success was outstanding, Prevost's reaction to it carried the real significance. He'd concluded at the time of the first British vessel's surrender that all hope for any kind of a successful campaign had been lost. Though some of his troops had

begun to cross the Saranac to dislodge the American flank, he ordered a retreat back into Canada.

In the wake of the Plattsburgh debacle, Yeo let out his long-simmering disgust with Prevost. He submitted charges against him for having "urged" Downie into action before the naval force had been adequately prepared. The situation prompted officials in London to recall both men — both of whom had been criticized there for their separate and combined efforts in the war — so the matter could be taken up thoroughly. Weakened physically and emotionally, Prevost died in January 1816, just weeks before his court martial was due to begin; Yeo followed soon after, dying at sea in 1818.

As the recall orders were coming across the sea, the representatives of the warring nations successfully culminated their peace negotiations in Ghent. Since neither side had achieved much in the fighting, neither had much bargaining power; so both sides finally agreed to accept a treaty based on the *status quo ante bellum*. On 24 December 1814, the Treaty of Ghent, which contained no reference to any of the issues that had started the war, was signed. News of the war's end reached North America in February, and was greeted by the quick halt to preparations for new campaigns.

Several effects had been produced by the war. The border between British North America and the United States became a sharper line of demarcation all along its length. Canadians grew more loyal to Britain and less American-like in their outlook. Britain afterward gradually diminished her army and navy in Canada, while the US armed forces benefitted from the officers who'd earned leadership experience on the battlefield. Friendly relations began to blossom between the two countries, though Canadians continued to fear invasion, on and off, for the next 60 years. Abandoned by both sides were the Indian nations who'd sent their young braves to the war. None of their concerns were addressed by the peace, and the steady erosion of their culture and freedom continued. ☛

Robert Malcomson is a Canadian freelance writer who specializes in the War of 1812. His most recent book, *Sailors of 1812: Memoirs of Officers on Lake Ontario*, was published by the Old Fort Niagara Association in July 1997.

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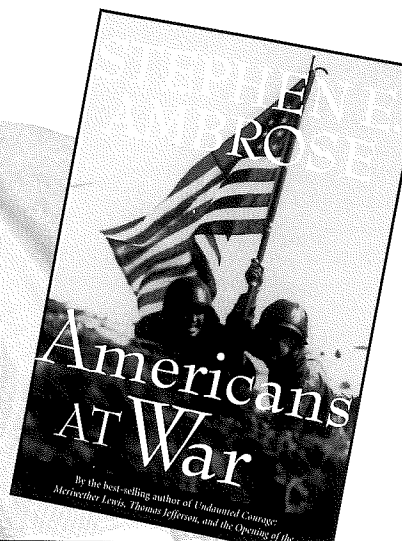
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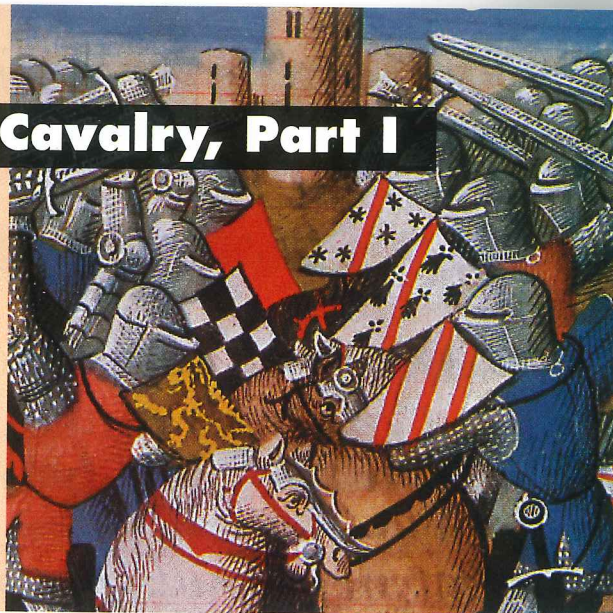
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Command Looks at Cavalry, Part I

The Rise & Fall of Medieval Heavy Cavalry

by Brian Todd Carey



The origin of the dominance of heavy cavalry in the medieval period can be traced to the last centuries of the Roman Empire and the increasing presence of barbarians within the ranks of its army. That barbarization eroded the disciplined combat effectiveness of the Roman infantry in particular, while the disintegration of the empire's political and economic infrastructure took away the essential props for a professional army. In the west, the professional army, along with its well trained heavy infantry capable of assuming numerous combat formations, was replaced by a Germanic militia that went into battle in loose squares. With that the "Dark Ages," at least in the tactical sense, had firmly arrived.

The fall of the Western Roman Empire in fact created a power vacuum into which two different institutions were drawn: the Church and various Germanic kingdoms. Frankish King Clovis' conversion to Catholicism then brought the Church's organization-

al abilities to the Germans. Sanctioned by the Pope and allied with Catholic missionaries, a period of Frankish cultural and political dominance was ushered in that shaped the early Middle Ages, profoundly influencing the art of war.

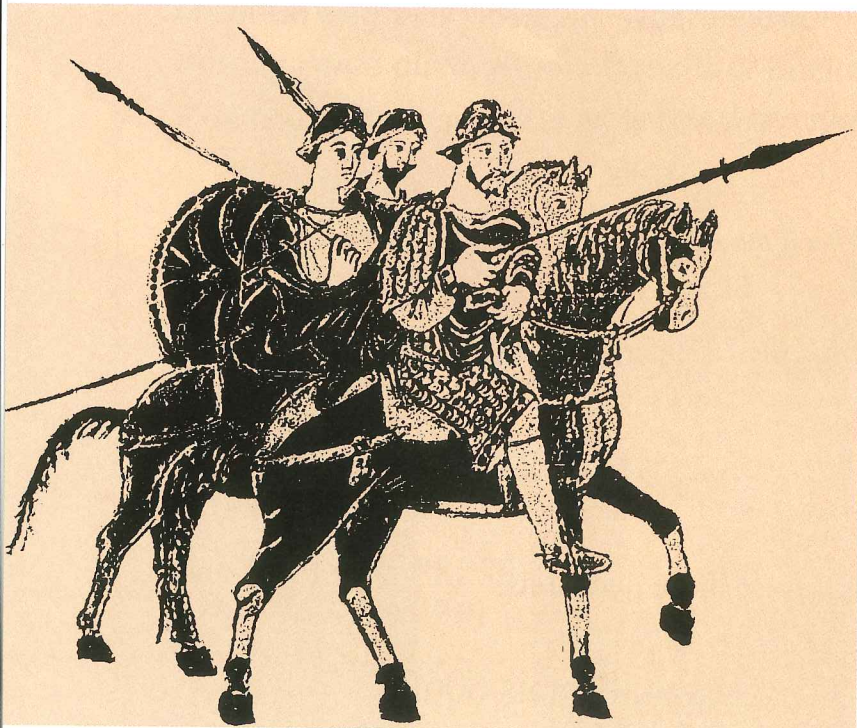
From the early 6th century to the beginning of the 8th, the Franks and surrounding Germans fought with similar tactics. Infantry was by far the most prevalent combat arm, with most going into the field loosely organized at best, armored only in leather or sometimes chainmail, carrying round shields and medium-to-long swords.

In line with ancient Indo-European barbarian traditions, German infantry usually fought in the so-called "hundred formation," or "boar's head wedge." Such roughly formed battle squares were launched into the enemy mass to try to break up his formation in a single movement. But if the initial impetus miscarried before determined resistance was broken, the battle square would retreat in disorder; and control could only be regained with great difficulty. If the boar's head advance broke up the opposing formation, individual combats began that suited both the Germanic hero-warrior ideal and the realities of unorganized heavy infantry combat.

Light cavalry was almost nonexistent in early German warfare. In fact, the original tradition of light cavalry within western armies came almost exclusively from contact with steppe nomads, which then stimulated a few German tribes to develop fine equestrian and horse archer skills. But heavily forested western Europe was less than ideal for light cavalry, a combat arm that needed a great deal of maneuver room to be successful. Likewise, mounted archery is a skill that takes years in the saddle to perfect, a pastime more suited to Turkic and Mongol steppe warriors than it was to German agriculturalists west of the Elbe.

Lancers did exist in western Europe in the 6th and 7th centuries, but due to their high cost relative to infantry it was rare to find significant numbers of them at any one place and time. But then two developments occurring starting in the 6th century changed the importance of cavalry for the rest of the Middle Ages: the rise of feudalism and the diffusion of the stirrup.

When the empire of Charlemagne disintegrated in the face of Muslim, Magyar and Viking raiding and invasion, a new social organization had to arise to meet those threats. Distances were too great, communication too primitive, local aristocracies too firm-



9th Century Frankish mounted knights with the basics: helmets, mail, stirrup saddles, accoutrements, and spears. (From the contemporary Golden Psalter of St. Gall).

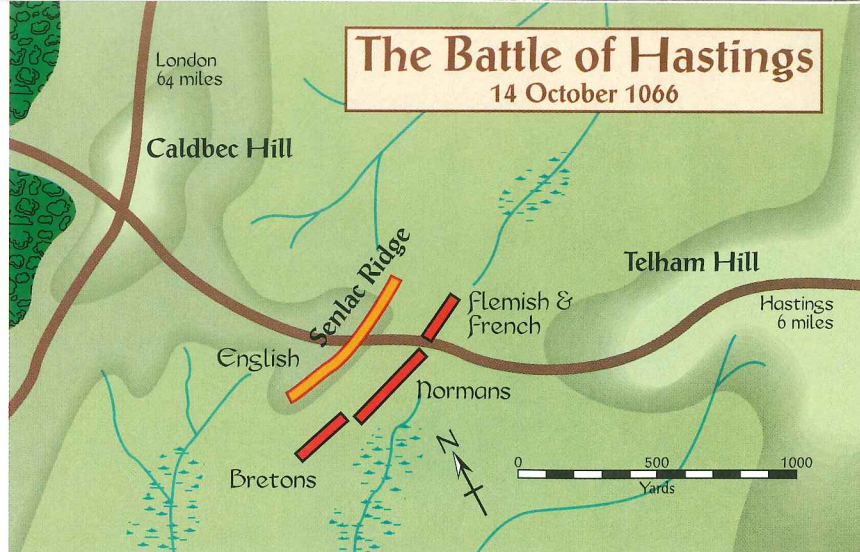
ly entrenched, and the imperial army too small and unwieldy for the Holy Roman emperors to maintain a central leadership role in defending the realm. Military responsibility therefore descended more and more to the local aristocracies, who were better able to protect their own regions from sudden attack. That response to the new wave of barbarian invasions was thus the development of a sophisticated social system, feudalism, which was in turn centered on the practice of vassalage.

Vassalage was derived from yet another old Germanic custom. It was based on charismatic chiefs attracting followers to themselves for military service. In the rough and tumble of field life, the relationship between the chiefs and their followers evolved toward that of social equals.

The cavalry of that era had attacked primarily with the throwing axe, and also lobbed their spears during passes at the enemy. But by the 8th century, with the introduction of larger breeds of horses and the universal adoption of the stirrup, heavy cavalry finally began to emerge as the powerful combat arm that would dominate the battlefields of Europe for half a millennium.

When combined with a saddle extended at the front and back for longitudinal support, the stirrup worked to weld rider and animal together. Rather than leaning out to thrust with a spear, the lancer could now hold his weapon at rest in the crook of his arm, using the combined weight of his body and charging mount to deliver blows of unprecedented violence. Just as this new heavy cavalry gained dominance on the battlefield, so too did those riders use that success to cement their position at the top of the social hierarchy. The Franks, previously an almost exclusively infantry force, soon became famous for the irresistible charge of their heavy cavalry. Their method quickly spread across all of western Europe.

The rise of heavy cavalry can also be traced in terms of the technological evolution of arms and



armor. Throwing axes first disappeared in favor of longer swords, which were better suited for mounted combat due to their reach. The chainmail shirt lengthened to cover the hips, while leg protection (chauses and greaves) also appeared. The round shield gave way to a kite-shape better suited to protect a rider's leg. All those changes offered superior protection against unmounted foes while also giving cavalymen the necessary reach to kill enemies on the ground. Thus by 950 all the essential elements of classic knightly equipment were in place.

Also as mentioned above, during the 9th and early 10th centuries western Europe was besieged by raiders. New barbarian inroads were threatening the emerging civilization of the Latin-German kingdoms. One monarch, Frankish King Charles the Simple, hit on the solution of employing those who couldn't be defeated. That is, in 911 he signed a treaty with a Nordic chief named Rolf, allowing him and his people to settle at the mouth of the Seine River. Rolf also converted to Christianity and married Charles' daughter. In effect, a friendly Viking buffer state had



The Norman cavalry, covered in front by archers, attacks the Saxon shield wall. (The Bayeux Tapestry)



The Battle of Crecy, 1346. This detail shows the duel of Genoese crossbowmen and English longbowmen – although 15th century equipment is used for mid 14th century.
(Miniature painting from a late 15th century manuscript of the *Chronicles of Froissart*).

been created in northern France: Normandy, “Land of the Northmen.” The newcomers steadily assimilated French culture and began exercising their military prowess within the framework of feudalism.

Armed with longswords, protected by their trademark conical helmets, chainmail haubers and kite-shields, the Norman knights formed an irresistible juggernaut. In fact, by the middle of the 11th century they had become the preeminent heavy cavalry force in all of western Europe. As their military power grew, so too did their political aspirations, with southern Italy and Sicily becoming their first new conquests.

At first the Normans went to Italy as mercenaries, serving the Byzantines against the Moslems, while at other times fighting for Lombard noble families against the Byzantines. Between their first success at Salerno in 1016, to their unification of lower Italy and Sicily into the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1129, Norman strength became great enough to drive the German Emperor Henry IV out of Rome and compel Pope Gregory VII to accept their protection.

Nor were Norman conquests limited to the Mediterranean. William, Duke of Normandy, laid claim to the English throne after the death of the Anglo-Saxon King Edward the Confessor. He made good on the claim by crossing the English Channel in 1066 with 7,000 men, half of them heavy cavalry, the rest archers and infantry. The resultant Norman conquest of England offers an excellent example of the dominant position heavy cavalry had assumed, while the Battle of Hastings provides the quintessential example within it.

Hastings was a deadly struggle between the infantry of Harold, Edward’s successor, and the heavy cavalry and archers of the Normans. At first standing firm on a deep front of 1,100 yards on the slope of Senlac Hill, the axe- and spear-wielding Saxons threw back the charge of William’s heavy cavalry. But when the Norman left began to retreat, the Saxon infantry pursued only to be cut down by William’s knights in the center, thus supremely illustrating the superiority of mounted shock combat against unorganized infantry.

When Harold managed to reform his broken line before the Normans could exploit their advantage, William ordered his archers to shower the English with their missiles. When a weak point in the reformed line was spotted, William sent in his heavy cavalry to exploit it. Though the Saxon position’s depth on the side of the hill made it difficult to dislodge, Harold’s men again made a mistaken pursuit, with similar result. William then directed another charge, this time into the English flank. Again the Saxons suffered, but still remained on the hill.

The Normans continued to alternate between shock and arrow attack, gradually causing more casualties and demoralization among the defenders, who began to understand they had little choice beyond passively receiving both forms of assault. When an arrow mortally wounded Harold, the Saxon army — physically exhausted — gave way before a third heavy cavalry charge.

Another good example of the dominance of heavy cavalry during the high medieval period is provided by the Battle of Dyrrachium in 1081. After driving the Byzantines out of Italy and founding the Norman Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the adventurer Robert Guiscard crossed the Adriatic to lay siege to the town of Dyrrachium. Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus sent a relief force, the vanguard of which consisted of unorganized infantry carrying axes with five-foot hafts.

Disdaining to wait for their main body to come up, the Byzantine infantry rushed to attack the Norman line. Guiscard countered with a cavalry charge, surrounding and isolating the erstwhile attackers atop a small hill on the coast. Then, just as at Hastings, the Normans made good use of alternating shock and missile attacks. The Byzantine infantry died to the last man.

By comparing those Norman examples from England and the Balkans, a general understanding of their tactical system can be offered. In both regions the Norman heavy cavalry was the main agent of success, but it by no means acted alone. At the same time, though, the good use the Normans made of

combining the various combat arms can't really be called "combined arms tactics" in the modern sense. That is, their groupings of the various arms didn't have the purpose of mutual support, which is the necessary ingredient for achieving true combined arms tactics. Rather, all the other arms served only to aid the one force believed decisive, the mounted knights. At both Hastings and Dyrrachium the heavy cavalry was assisted by light infantry archers. At both places those archers' fire served to protect the mounted knights while also causing attrition among the enemy ranks, creating tears in their formation that could then be exploited by the horsemen.

The 13th century in particular became a pivotal one for medieval warfare. In England, border wars against the Welsh and Scots produced a profound respect for the range and power of the longbow. On the continent, however, an area more deeply grounded in chivalry and feudalism, the dominance of heavy cavalry in tactical decisions continued.

Of course, light infantry archers and crossbowmen had not been unknown in western European warfare prior to the 13th century. Bow armed light infantry were fairly easy to conscript, since that was the most common peasant weapon used for hunting. More, the crossbow was a mechanical device that took only a short time to learn to operate, and was thus useable by city dwellers. But the high Middle Ages was also the plateau of chivalry, a time when the mounted nobleman lancer ruled the courts and dominated the battlefields. In such a social climate, weapons of the common man, no matter how effective, were looked on with contempt (and growing fear).

So powerful did that fear become that the medieval period's most powerful institution, the Catholic Church, issued a decree at the Second Ecumenical Lateran Council in 1139 condemning all who used crossbows or longbows in wars among Christians. (The killing of infidels with missile weapons was later reaffirmed as acceptable.) In issuing the decree, the Church was bowing to the demands of the nobility who feared death by arrows and bolts shot by distant and anonymous killer commoners.

Decree or not, crossbowmen and archers continued to be used on all battlefields. On the continent, crossbowmen were often favored over archers because the lesser amount of time required to learn to operate the weapon. In England, however, King Edward I's conquest of the Welsh led to the assimilation of their national weapon, the longbow, into his own army, thereby creating a new and deadly tactical system.

The Welsh longbow was a "selfbow," one constructed from a single, carefully shaped piece of wood, usually yew. Finished bows ranged in sizes up to six feet, four inches, and could achieve draw weights up to 120 lbs. (compared to about 85 lbs. for most modern hunting bows), which allowed them to hurl arrows out to 300 yards. The only drawback to the weapon came from the fact the skill required to shoot them was substantial. To master the longbow took years of constant practice. Fully trained longbowmen were thus a formidable military asset. Their weapons were capable of piercing chainmail out to maximum range and armor plate at short range. Skilled longbowmen also attained rates of fire of up to 12 arrows per minute, which was far faster than any crossbow.

In response to their growing vulnerability to the arrows and bolts fired by light infantry, as well as to constantly improving cutting and thrusting weapons

carried by opponent horsemen, the knights began to use more and more metal plates to reinforce their chainmail. By the close of the 13th century, the process climaxed with the introduction of complete suits of plate armor.

To conquer Wales, Edward in fact had to learn tactical lessons about how to effectively employ light infantry. Beginning in 1276, he sent southern Welsh longbowmen against their still-hostile cousins in the north. Earlier attempts at conquest there by other Anglo-Norman kings had failed because the heavy cavalry was almost always too severely restricted to charge in the mountainous terrain. Though for over the two decades after the initial conquest Edward continued to face Welsh rebellions, his effective use of castle building and an archer/infantry centered army eventually subdued them.

Edward's next target, Scotland, was likewise a rugged country peopled by men with strong feelings of independence. The Scots fielded armies centered on militia heavy infantry, which primarily used a battle circle (schiltron) formation that had much in common with the boar's head of the early Middle Ages. Both formations lacked sub-unit articulation but, being militia formations, were easy to field and inexpensive to maintain.

The schiltron placed countryman beside countryman, each holding a long polearm to his front to dis-

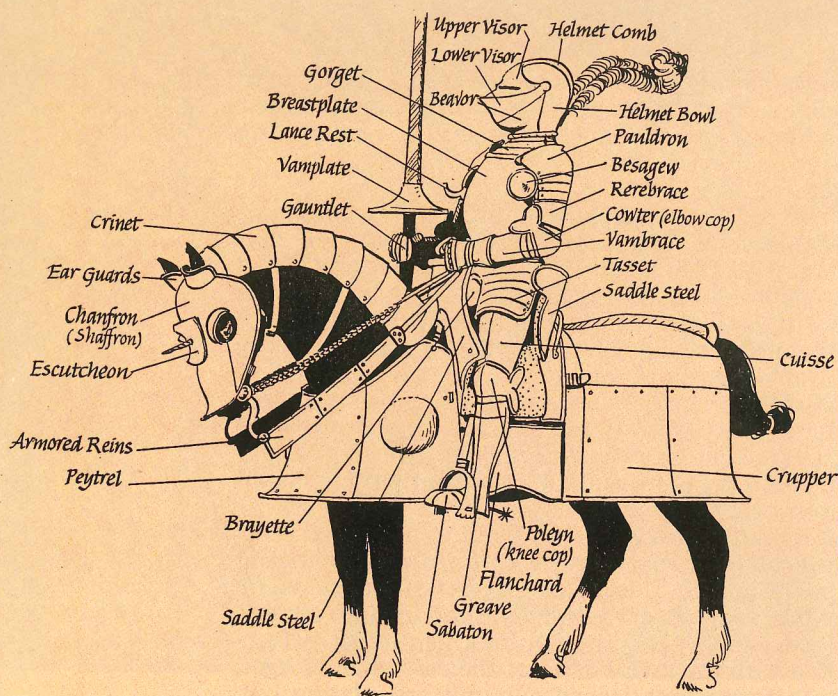
Charge!

For a typical heavy cavalry charge, the knights would draw up in a line three or four ranks deep. A frontage of up to half a mile might be used for a deployment of 1,500 to 2,000 horsemen. Each such group of noblemen cavalry was called a "battle." Battles were in turn subdivided into elementary tactical units called "banners," which were usually recruited according to family and feudal relations. In combat, banners were supposed to stay centered on a flag or single leader, and its members might also use a common war cry.

In the chaos of medieval battle, close order was a necessity for effective communication. But the tendency toward mass was refined to such a point by the high Middle Ages that a glove thrown among an assembled battle would not have fallen to the ground among the horsemen. Such close order prevented defeated defenders from escaping among the passing chargers, while also presenting the knights with excellent opportunities to mow down fleeing infantry with lances, maces, swords, axes and their mounts' hooves.

Ideally, a heavy cavalry battle would seldom charge all at once, instead going forward banner by banner. As each banner's charge began, the pace would at first be slow so care could be taken to keep in line. Speed was picked up until just before the moment of contact a full gallop was reached. Charges seldom extended over more than 300 yards. It was also best to have some room beyond the targeted defenders to allow for momentum, follow-through and turn-around.

That, at least, was the theory. In practice, the keeping of good order and straight lines didn't come naturally to the noblemen of the heavy cavalry. The fighting ethic of the knights was based on a quest for personal fame, honor and enrichment, all the while displaying personal courage. But to fight in a disciplined way alongside peers and social superiors in a well articulated charge meant subordinating all that to group loyalty and objectives. Not surprisingly, then, the usual trend on the battlefield was for individual knights and small groups to break ranks and dash forward when it most suited them. Thus their desire for personal fame over tactical discipline contributed to the continental nobility's decimation on numerous battlefields of the late Middle Ages.



The Well-Mounted Knight

courage heavy cavalry charges. Thus the schiltron was primarily a defensive formation; and it proved particularly difficult to adapt to the offense because its participants were neither trained nor self-disciplined enough to stay together in close order while attacking. But the Scots also possessed some heavy cavalry and light infantry archers; so, as a combined-arms defensive force, they actually presented Edward with more of a challenge than had the Welsh.

Nevertheless, the war in Scotland began well for Edward. In 1296 his forces captured Berwick and massacred its garrison. The next year, with Edward himself gone off to fight the French, the Scots rebelled, defeated an English army at Sterling Bridge and began raiding northern England. Edward retaliated in 1298 with a large army consisting of 3,000 heavy cavalry and 20,000 infantry. Marching overnight from Edinburgh, his vanguard attacked the Scottish muster point at Falkirk. When the surprised Scottish cavalry fled, William Wallace, the overall Scottish commander, ordered his infantry into four schiltrons to brace themselves for the sure-to-follow heavy cavalry charge.

The English did charge, though they failed to disrupt the schiltrons. As they reformed for a second effort, Edward arrived and called instead for his longbowmen to fire on the enemy battle circles. Under that deadly rain of arrows, gaps formed in the Scottish line, creating openings for the armored horsemen. The English knights drove in, dispersing Wallace's men into the nearby woods.

Edward's victory at Falkirk was clearly reminiscent of earlier fights where heavy cavalry and archers worked well together against massed heavy infantry standing on the defense. In fact, throughout the high Middle Ages such cooperation served Norman and English commanders well. At the same time, Edward's use of longbowmen to break up Scottish schiltrons also illustrated the possibility of committing them — with their outstanding range, impact power and rate of fire — in a purely defensive capacity against the flower of continental chivalry, the French heavy cavalry. It would in fact be Edward I's grandson, Edward III, along with later English monarchs,

who would perfect a new defensive tactical system during the Hundred Years War. That development proved key to once and forever breaking the dominance of heavy cavalry.

The Hundred Years War (1337-1453) pitted the new English tactical system against the orthodox French/continental system. Though the French way of war appeared on the surface to have combined-arms elements, in practice their almost complete reliance on heavy cavalry lancers generally precluded them from effectively deploying their light forces. Two major campaigns in the Hundred Years War pointed up the differences between the two approaches. In both campaigns, the French continued to try to use what by that time had been successful for centuries, while the English displayed a consistent ability to adapt tactically over the course of a long war.

The army Edward III brought to France was essentially a professional one, made up of both noblemen knights and well paid, highly motivated freemen. The latter were for the most part light infantry longbowmen who'd perfected their archery skills over years of campaigning. They fought well beside and among their army's knights on the attack, but on the continent the English tactical system came to be used primarily on the defensive. With it, they relied on the inevitability of the heavy cavalry charge to let their French enemies seal their own fate — and the French nobility never let them down in that expectation.

At the same time, the English nobility became the backbone of their army's defensive system by displaying a willingness to fight dismounted. Thereby exposing their noble selves to the same dangers as those faced by the commoners, the change considerably bolstered the foot soldiers' morale. The knights gained their fondness for dismounting because their preferred offensive tactic on the continent, the *chevauchee* (mounted smash-and-grab raids into French territory that left the English army heavily laden with booty), generally slowed them sufficiently to allow the enemy to intercept. When the French caught up to such encumbered forces, the English would move to the nearest good ground, dismount and prepare to face the inevitable onslaught.

The resultant difference in character between the continental and English systems was thus significant. The former remained centered on knighted heavy cavalry, favored the offensive almost exclusively, and elevated the role of individual heroism on the battlefield. The latter was based on freemen infantry/archers reinforced by dismounted nobility, favored the tactical defensive, and centered on a near-modern concept of combined-arms cooperation. The addition of the light infantry/archers to the English system also created a "killing zone," a narrow-fronted area about 200 yards deep into which up to several thousand arrows could be launched per minute. That new and deadly rain of arrows proved instrumental in defeating the French.

The relationship between the English nobility and their freemen men-at-arms was thereby made into a professional one, based on mutual respect for each others' fighting capabilities. On the other side, however, the relationship between the French nobility and their men-at-arms was often antagonistic, with the knights looking on the infantry/archers as little more than conscript battle fodder.

The two systems clashed many times during the Hundred Years War, but the two campaigns that stand out most were those climaxing at Crecy (1346)

and Agincourt (1415). Separated in time by almost three-quarters of a century, they point up how the French refused to seriously adapt over the duration of a long war to the consistent and superior tactical doctrine of the invading English.

The Battle of Crecy was part of Edward III's fourth campaign in pursuit of his hereditary claim to the French throne. Treasure laden after a successful chevauchee, Edward withdrew his army to the small village of Crecy, while being pursued by numerically superior French forces commanded by their King Philip VI. The 10,000 English formed on a hill overlooking the road up which the French were approaching. The hill's steep terracing allowed Edward to deploy his longbowmen to best advantage in both the center and on the flanks of the infantry and dismounted cavalry. Woods protected their rear, and wagons were lined up on the flanks, while a windmill provided a convenient command post.

Philip divided his 20,000 men into eight divisions for marching, placing his 6,000 Genoese crossbowmen in the lead. Expecting a long chase, he was surprised when the English were discovered arrayed for battle. Since it was late in the day, Philip gave orders to defer attacking until the next morning. But his knights insisted on an immediate attack even though no supporting arms had arrived other than the crossbowmen. Unable to control their ardor, Philip gave the order to go forward.

The Genoese crossbowmen went ahead to exchange fire with the English archers, but they lacked the protection of the large, rectangular shields they usually carried, which were still on the approaching baggage wagons. Unprotected and unable to match the enemy longbowmen's rate of fire, the Italians were soon out shot and forced back. As they withdrew, the French horse crashed into them on their way up the hill.

Though they did considerable damage to their own crossbowmen, none of the French cavalry got through the withering barrage of English arrows to reach the enemy line. A second charge failed as well, as did all of the 13 other efforts that followed. When a few Frenchmen finally got into the defenders' lines, Edward's dismounted knights simply massed to counterattack, forcing them back out. In spite of a two to one numerical advantage, then, the French lost the battle along with 1,500 of their bravest.

Sixty-nine years later, another English king, Henry V, faced a similar situation. At Agincourt he fought a French army of 20,000 with barely 6,000 men. Of that latter number, though, 5,000 were longbowmen. The battle resulted when, unable to cross the Somme River because of flooding and French defenses, the English were forced to turn inland in their effort to try to get back to Calais. The detour allowed the French to catch up to the Henry's increasingly hungry and tired army, forcing a fight.

Near the village of Agincourt, Henry chose a position at the end of a muddy ploughed field between two patches of woods. That narrowed the front to only 800 yards, which worked to somewhat mitigate the French advantage in numbers. He placed his few dismounted cavalry and men-at-arms in the center, with longbowmen on each flank, then moved all of them forward to within bowshot (200 to 300 yards) of the French. The archers set up an artificial hedge of sharpened poles, then got behind it to repel the inevitable charges.

The French, under command of Constable Charles d'Albret and Marshal Jean Boucicaut, planned an ini-



The Battle of Patay, 1429. (Chroniques de Charles VII, 15th c.)

tial, mounted charge intended to disperse the archers. Showing a slight effort at tactical adaptation, the first advance was to be followed up by a second — decisive — charge conducted by 8,000 *dismounted* knights and men-at-arms.

Predictably, though, the opening cavalry charge failed completely. The muddy field slowed the horses, which made the English archers' job of dispatching them that much easier. When the survivors fled, they — again, not surprisingly — smashed into their own army's dismounted force, which had just then begun its own slip-slide advance across the mud. Disorganized by their own cavalry's retreat and tired by the clinging mud, the French foot had little impetus



The Battle of Agincourt, 1415: with archers to the front and cavalry massed behind. (Chroniques d'Enguerrand the Monstrelet, early 15th century.)

left as they approached the English line. The French nobility did manage to push forward far enough to meet the smaller number of English knights in hand-to-hand combat, but not before many had been shot down by longbow fire.

Yet another 6,000 dismounted French slogged forward, but the narrow and by this time entirely clogged battlefield meant their added numbers provided no advantage. The closely packed attackers hardly had room to wield their weapons, and those who fell were mired in the mud due to the weight of their armor. Henry brought matters to a head when he ordered his archers to go forward into the melee. Dropping their bows, the freemen pulled hand axes and short swords from their belts, sallied out from behind their artificial hedge, and began what became a slaughter. Hundreds of French knights were killed, while some 2,000 others were taken prisoner.

While that was going on, a flanking force of French managed to find the English camp. Fearing he was being surrounded by a previously unsuspected second enemy force, Henry ordered the massacre of the prisoners. His own knights refused the unchivalrous order, but the killing was begun by the English commoners. We don't know the exact course of events in the next minutes, but since Henry did eventually return to England with at least 1,000 noblemen prisoners, he must have called a halt to the murder at some point. Nevertheless, his actions that day demonstrated the English could adopt a completely cold and fully professional approach to warfare when it was required.

After their successes in the Hundred Years War, the English longbowmen found themselves to be a

much-wanted supplement to the ranks of continental armies. That recognition of the power and importance of light forces began the return to balanced combined-arms tactics all across Europe. No longer was the foot subservient to the horse; by the end of the Middle Ages the infantry had returned to the center of military doctrine. ✱

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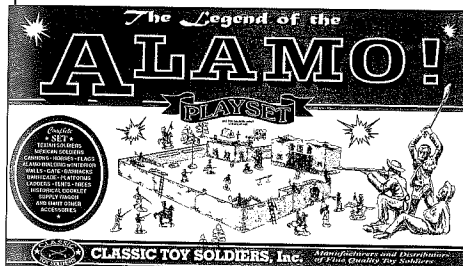
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TOMORROW THE WORLD

Could the Axis Have Won World War II?

by Shawn P. Rife

A Nazi Evening Ceremony in the Königsplatz (15 October 1933) by Fritz Gaertner. (Text added).

[Ed's Note: Other than the maps, the illustrations in this article are examples of actual Axis propaganda published during the first half of World War II.]

There is a tendency among academic historians to regard the outcomes of major historical events as having been virtually inevitable. For instance, in most discussions of the course of the Second World War, it's almost taken for granted the Axis powers were defeated because they *had* to be defeated. That is, the Allies are seen to have had simply too many men and too much materiel to have allowed for any other outcome. To an extent that view is valid; however, the Allies' advantage in numbers really didn't make itself fully felt on the battlefield until after the war's tide had turned at places like Stalingrad, Midway, Guadalcanal and El Alamein. Even the outcomes of each of those single battles could hardly have been called a foregone conclusion — or at least the commanders on both sides waging them at the time didn't think so.

In fact, in each turning-point battle of the war the Axis forces reached, or at least came near, victory. Only after those key defeats did the overall initiative swing decisively to the Allied side and stay there. Only from that time on — the last half of 1942 through the first half of 1943 — did the quantitative expansion of, and qualitative improvement within, the Allied forces make Axis hopes of victory impossible.

But from September 1939 through mid-1942 the Axis had a number of opportunities that, had they exploited them better, could have given them victory in the war. Those pivotal events were resolved the way they were not because of some unchangeable, tidal, megaforce of historic predetermination, but because one commander said "No," rather than "Yes," to subordinates advocating a course of action other than the one he chose. Otherwise, Nazi and Imperial Japanese battle flags might well have eventually been raised over most, or even all, of our world.

To Dunkirk

There was nothing sophisticated in Hitler's overall war aims. He viewed the progress of the world in

Stormy Weather Over Germany: An Allegory. By Lindemann (1931).

terms of a Darwinian struggle waged among races. That the Germanic peoples were superior in all respects to all other peoples, there was no doubt in his mind. Further, his study of history had led him to conclude a people's long term security lay in maximizing the size of their national territory. The smaller a nation, the more easily it could be conquered or made subject to siege, thereby exposing its inhabitants to extermination at the hands of foreign rulers. Hitler's plans therefore called not for the absorption of rival peoples captured in the lands to be conquered by the Germans, but for their eradication.

If one wanted to acquire strategically decisive tracts of land in Europe, there was really only one direction to go: east into Russia. The invasion of Poland in September 1939 was only one of several steps already taken along that path during the previous three years. It was intended to remove the last territorial obstacle between the German army and its entry into the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, and even though he apparently held no territorial ambitions in the west anywhere near as sweeping as those in the east, Hitler had also long recognized the inevitability of a final showdown with France and Great Britain.

The original German plan for attacking the western democracies in 1940 called for a loose replay of the First World War's Schlieffen Plan, a powerful "right hand" thrust into France via the Low Countries.

But early in the year, partly in recognition of the fact it had likely been compromised, but also as a result of careful reconsideration of the potential inherent in a bolder scheme that took better account of the deployment of British and French mobile forces, that first scheme was abandoned.

The revised approach downgraded the invasion of Holland and northern Belgium to diversionary status. As the well known events unfolded, the Allied armies rushed north into a trap created by the panzers driving through the supposedly impregnable Ardennes forest in the south. The surrounded armies of Belgium and Holland capitulated, the French dithered, and the British moved toward Dunkirk on the Channel coast.

It's at Dunkirk, then, we encounter the first of the great Axis "what ifs" that could have changed the war's outcome. Between 26 May and 3 June 1940, about 220,000 British soldiers, plus another 120,000 French troops, were allowed to retreat in fairly good order, albeit without their heavy equipment, through that Channel port and away to safety. That huge withdrawal was made possible by Hitler's much-maligned decision, taken on 24 May, to halt the advance of his armored units while still some 12 miles from the water.

Of course, at the time Hitler thought he had sound military reasons for ordering the halt. That is, though the panzers' field commander, Gen. Heinz Guderian,

An Alternative Post-War Europe in 1945

This map shows the possible organization of Nazi-controlled Europe shortly after an Axis victory in World War II. Note that Burgundy was to have been set up as a kind of territorial fiefdom for the SS. The unconquered territory in the east also posits a kind of frontier zone beyond which a rump-Soviet Union might have been allowed to exist.

Map based on original research and cartography by Robert F. Burke.





The Flag Bearer or The White Knight, by Hubert Lanzinger (1943). Hitler was to personify the leader of the western nations in the struggle against communism.

immediately protested the order, the more immediate problem from the perspective of German general headquarters was the large number of unengaged French divisions being assembled to the south. There was particular concern those units, attacking north in conjunction with an all-out effort by the forces surrounded at Dunkirk, might catch the German mobile divisions in the wet and canal-cut terrain of Flanders.

Only after the fact was the extent of the French army's demoralization made clear. Until that revelation, Hitler felt justified in accepting Hermann Goering's assurances his Luftwaffe could finish off the Allied forces trapped at Dunkirk. But hampered by spotty weather, a lack of forward airfields, and the spirited resistance put up by the Royal Air Force (RAF), the German air force proved unable to succeed alone in its new mission. Hitler recognized his error and ordered the ground attack resumed, but by then it was too late. The Allied forces not yet sea-lifted out had still used the time to reorganize themselves sufficiently to cover the remainder of their withdrawal.

Though Dunkirk can in no way be termed an Allied victory, its importance to the Allied cause cannot be underestimated. The evacuated men provided the essential nucleus around which to rebuild the British army. Their value can't be gauged only in their overall number; importance must also be given to the career officers and NCOs among them whose escape allowed for essential training and reorganization to begin almost immediately.

Without Dunkirk the whole character of subsequent British operations in the entire war would have been drastically changed — assuming they could have even found the political and moral strength necessary to go on. By providing the core of a defense, however meager, against possible German invasion, the Dunkirk evacuation encouraged those who would otherwise almost certainly have called for an accommodation with Berlin.

The Battle of Britain

With or without Dunkirk, the success of any invasion of Britain hinged on the Germans being able to make a crossing of the Channel. For that, control of the air was prerequisite. At first, on paper at least, the task didn't seem overly difficult. For it the Germans could deploy about 2,500 combat aircraft, manned by well trained and veteran crews, all of them made eager by their recent successes. The RAF could muster less than a third that number. Further, they were short on pilots with combat experience and their morale was not at first up to that of the Germans. Goering initially boasted his planes would make short work of the defense, and his confidence didn't seem misplaced.

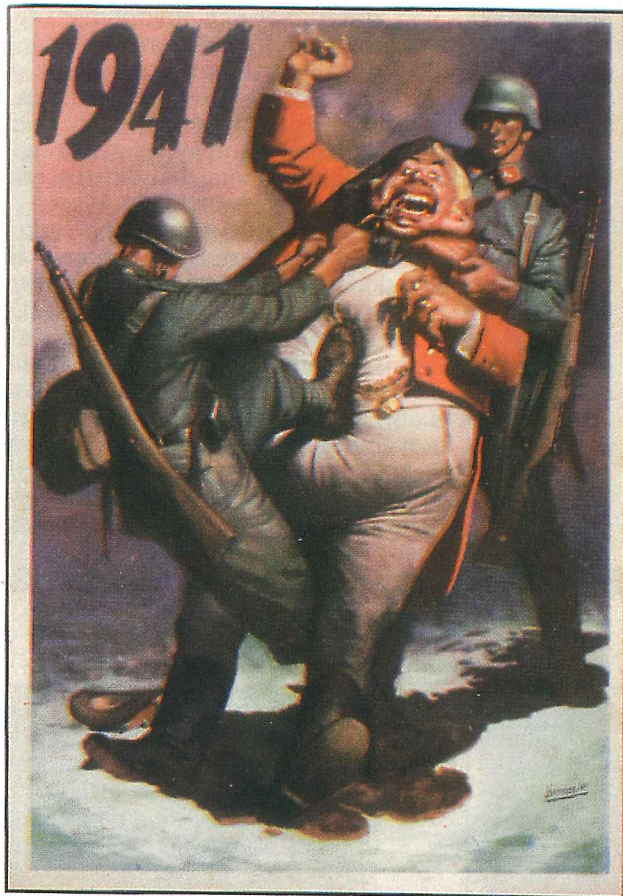
The operation intended to win control of the skies over southeast England was given the codename *Adlerangriff* (Eagle Attack), and after some preliminaries the campaign got under way in earnest in August 1940. Over the next month the planes of the two air forces fought an epic struggle. By the standards of that early portion of the war, German losses were horrendous, with over 950 aircraft downed by 6 September. But the RAF suffered as well, with more than 500 shot down in the same period — and the British were much less able to absorb the cost.

If the battle of attrition had been kept up a little longer, the Germans were bound to win. Accustomed to relatively easier victories, however, the losses began to unnerve both Goering and Hitler. They shifted targeting priorities several times, searching for the objective that would produce a quicker kill. The last of those shifts proved to be the winner for the British.

The turning point came the night of 24 August, when two German bombers became separated from their formation and inadvertently jettisoned their bombs over London, a target up until then expressly forbidden by Hitler. Even though it was clear the strike had been unintentional, Churchill immediately ordered a retaliatory raid on Berlin. After four such missions had gone out, Hitler furiously ordered the Luftwaffe to change its targeting emphasis from destroying the RAF to razing the British capital city.

In a less emotional sense, the German command did have hopes a campaign of massed bombing raids on London might work as a less expensive way to break British morale and force them to sue for peace. But though the residents of the city suffered in the subsequent blitz, the Germans' change in tactics also gave a needed rest to the exhausted RAF. In actuality it soon became apparent the real effect was to end the Germans' quest for air supremacy.

Goering tried to blame the defeat on a lack of aggressiveness among his pilots, but poor judgment on his part was the real culprit. In addition to the mistaken switch to London, he made two other crucially faulty decisions. The first was the premature removal of British radar installations from the targeting list. Though the Germans had themselves also been in possession of that technology for some time, Goering didn't grasp its implications for aerial war-



Italy and Germany against England.
An Italian military postcard.

fare. Conversely, the British did grasp those implications and used them to more efficiently employ their smaller resources. Had the Germans continued their attacks on the radar sites, keeping the net non-operational, they would have effectively blinded Fighter Command, thereby greatly diminishing their own losses in relation to those of the defenders.

Goering's other major error lay in ordering his fighters to fly *close* escort to the bombers, thus denying his Me-109 pilots the ability to fully exploit their aircraft's superior speed and altitude capabilities. That error was then compounded by the Germans' failure to employ auxiliary fuel tanks on those same fighters, thereby greatly reducing their operating time over England.

All in all, compared to the fight in the skies over Britain, there is no other battle of the Second World War the German armed forces could have been expected to win but didn't.

Sea Lion

With the RAF defeated, the two remaining obstacles to German success in their projected "Operation Sea Lion," their plan for landing an army in southeast England late in the summer of 1940, would have been the Royal Navy and the weather. Rough seas were not uncommon in the Channel at that time of year and could have impeded, or even swamped, German efforts to transport men and supplies. Unable to do much about that factor, other than hope for the best, the Germans planned to ferry their forces across the Channel through a narrow corridor protected by minefields, U-boats, shore batteries and the Luftwaffe.

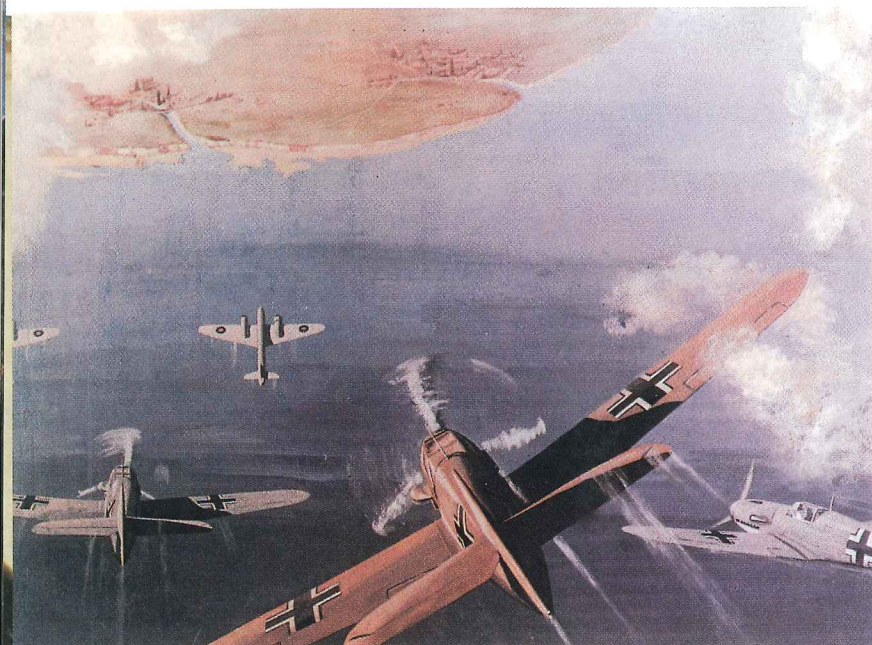
In meeting that challenge, there's no indication Churchill would've been unwilling to risk sacrificing the Royal Navy. And "sacrifice" is not too strong a word, for Royal Navy losses no doubt would have been horrific. Still, just as much as a handful of destroyers operating off the German beachhead could have wreaked havoc among the invaders. That the British were indeed prepared to resort to desperate measures is indicated by Churchill's approval to use poison gas against any German lodgement that couldn't be eliminated by conventional means. That was a truly bold decision in that German air superiority would have allowed Hitler the ability to retaliate in kind at any time and place.

It's impossible to know exactly how a German invasion attempt would have gone; it may well have been defeated at the water line. In any event, we can be certain that, in being committed to inflict such a defeat on the invaders, the Royal Navy's losses would have been heavy. With their crucial service arm crippled, then, a British victory over Sea Lion would have been Pyrrhic in terms of its effect on the subsequent course of the war. They would have lost the one weapon — their navy — which allowed them to go on fighting in the historic conflict, despite reversal after reversal on land, until America could pick up the main burden of the war in its second half.

On the other side, even in a complete invasion fiasco, the Germans could have been expected to lose no more than about 150,000 men, along with a large portion of their supply and transport craft. The destruction of those vessels would have caused economic disruption, but it would have been nothing compared to what the Germans would later overcome to go on fighting during the second half of the war. Likewise, from 1942 on, Germany would sacrifice that amount of men over and over again, on average



An Officer and Two Lookouts on the Bridge of a U-Boat (1943) by Rudolph Hausknecht.



Messerschmitt Bf-109s Dive on a British Bomber Formation As It Nears the Flemish Coast. *H. Recksiegel (1942).*

every few months, and still go on fighting to the bitter end.

U-Boats

Historically, of course, the RAF won the Battle of Britain, thereby aborting the necessity of sacrificing the Royal Navy to save England from invasion. But it can also be argued the campaign that actually won the war in Europe for the Allies was fought at sea in the waters of the North Atlantic. After the war, Churchill confessed: "The only thing that ever really frightened me...was the U-boat peril."

His fears were justified in that oceanic trade was Great Britain's lifeblood: half of their food needs and two-thirds of their raw material requirements were met by importation aboard ships. The Royal Navy, and later the US Navy, simply had to keep the Atlantic shipping lanes open and secure if Britain were to be kept in the war.

When the war began, the British believed they could deal with the menace of the German submarines by using their sonar detection technology in conjunction with the convoy-escort system devised in the First World War. But the German submariners soon practically nullified the sonar advantage by adopting the tactic of making night attacks on the surface. And they often had foreknowledge of convoy routes thanks to the success of their cryptographers in breaking British naval codes. Further, the Germans' capture of the French coast meant the British couldn't attempt a close blockade of the U-boat force in the North Sea as had been done in the earlier war.

As a result, by the end of 1940 over 2 million tons of Allied shipping had been sunk by U-boats. The figures for 1941 were roughly the same, even though Churchill had declared anti-submarine warfare the top priority early in the new year. When the United States entered the war, the numbers increased dramatically. The Germans had added to their U-boat force, including the addition of "Milk Cow" supply boats that allowed the attack vessels to refuel and resupply at sea. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor

also opened a new and target-rich environment for them in the coastal waters off the American coast.

Five million tons of Allied shipping were sunk in World War II. The Germans were for a while winning the campaign simply by sinking ships faster than they could be replaced. Confident, Hitler declared it would be seen it was his U-boats that "in the end determined the outcome of the war."

As the worst of the North Atlantic winter weather subsided in early 1943, the Germans continued to score potentially decisive tonnage numbers, with 600,000 tons going to the bottom in March alone. (The Germans themselves calculated they needed to sink at least 400,000 tons per month to eventually win the attrition battle.) Grand Adm. Karl Dönitz, who began the war as Germany's U-boat chief and was eventually promoted to overall naval command, felt victory was near. But in April the Allies permanently turned the tables, and number of merchant sinkings plummeted while at the same time there was a dramatic rise in the number of U-boats destroyed. By June, U-boats were being sunk faster than Allied cargo vessels, and Dönitz was forced to restrict operations.

The reversal was due to the cumulative effects of several factors: increased numbers of modern destroyers; better trained crews and refined escort tactics; the proliferation of improved radar and sonar capabilities able to find submarines near and at the surface; the addition of escort carriers to the convoys, which gave them air cover for the entire journey; and the commitment of large numbers of long-range, land based planes, many of them carrying spotlights capable of picking out U-boats in the darkness.

But the struggle clearly could have gone the other way. A change in German production priorities toward U-boats could have made all the difference. As early as 1936, Dönitz predicted he'd need a force of 300 boats to be able to sweep Allied commerce from the seas. But just as with most nation's armed forces, the Germans sometimes put more emphasis on glamorous weapons over useful ones. Hitler repeated the Kaiser's costly pre-World War I mistake of pouring immense resources into building a surface fleet to try to rival Great Britain's.

Germany thus began the war in 1939 with only 36 ocean-going U-boats. With the wartime production increases that were made, Dönitz got his 300 boats in 1942, but by then the Allies were already putting the factors into place that would defeat them in the next year. Had the switch in naval production emphasis been made sooner — and the Germans' nearly victorious U-boat campaign in World War I provided an undeniable example of what could have been expected from such an expanded underwater force — those submarines undoubtedly would have strangled Britain into submission before the development of successful Allied countermeasures.

The Med

The greatest impediment to Axis success in North Africa was Hitler's inability, or perhaps simple unwillingness, to regard the theater as anything more than a sideshow. Had he been willing in 1941 to send just a portion of the resources he gave to Rommel after the Allies' Operation Torch was launched in 1942 — after it was too late to accomplish much more than add to the eventual Allied haul of prisoners — that commander probably could have at least reached, if not also jumped, the Suez Canal. That would have at least destabilized the British position throughout the rest of the Middle East. Turkey might well have joined

the Axis, with subsequent ramifications not only in the Near East, but on the campaigning in Russia too.

But Hitler's thoughts on the Mediterranean were never far reaching. His sole motivating interest in the region seems to have been nothing more than to prevent the collapse of his Italian ally until such time as the main war was decided in Russia. He wanted the southern flank secure, but only in so far as it contributed to his freedom of action in the Soviet Union.

Given that view, it would have been better for the Axis cause had Hitler urged Mussolini to stay out of the war altogether. In fact, during the first months after the invasion of Poland, Mussolini himself made no secret of the fact he was at best lukewarm toward the idea of fighting Britain and France without several more years to prepare. Had Hitler worked to keep Italy neutral — and it wouldn't have taken much effort on his part at all — the German diversions to Yugoslavia, Greece and North Africa would have been unnecessary. Likewise, there was really no other loca-

tion available at the time where Britain could have effectively deployed the forces such a changed German strategy would have given her.

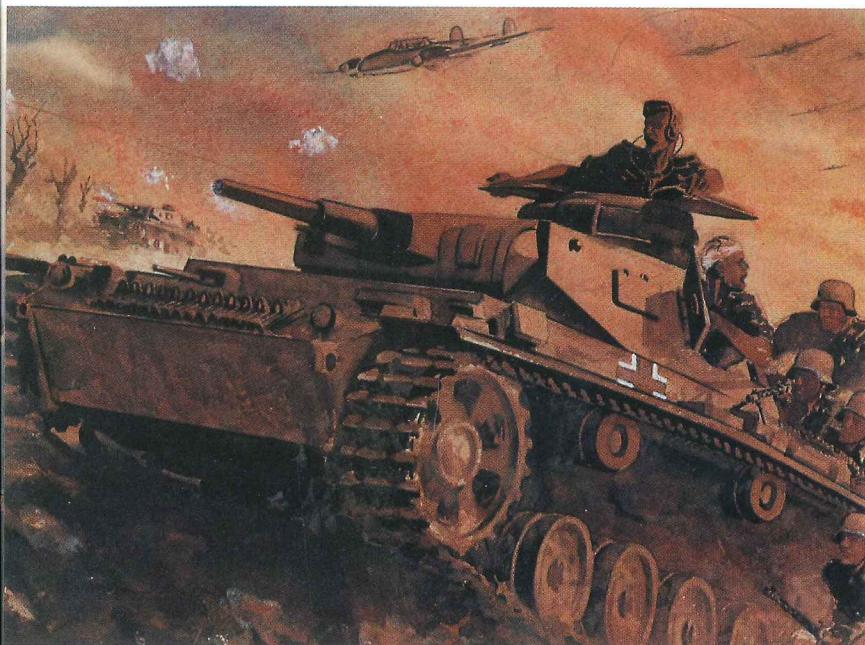
Into Russia

Though the western democracies played a decisive role in defeating Hitler's Germany, it was without doubt the mauling his forces took at the hands of Stalin's Red Army that opened the way toward final Allied victory in the war. Hitler's decision to attack the USSR in 1941 is therefore often referred to as his greatest mistake. Of course, given Hitler had made the acquisition of territory in the east the centerpiece of his ambitions since the publication of *Mein Kampf*, not attacking Russia was really never an option. The only question really was *when* he should do it.

Following his air force's defeat in the skies over Britain, Hitler's judgement of what was needed to finally win the war changed. He now reasoned the elimination of the USSR — as soon as possible —



Russian Soldiers Run in terror as Stuka Dive Bombers Strafe Their Wagon Train. Willfried Nagel (Russia, October 1942).



Panzers on the Attack with Air Support from Me Bf-110's.
E. Gross (Russia, 1942).

would not only fulfill his ultimate territorial objectives, but would also extinguish Britain's last hope for an effective ally. Defeating Stalin would also open the communist empire's vast natural resources to German exploitation and remove the last sizeable military force left on the continent that could possibly threaten the Fatherland. Indeed, with the Soviet Union defeated and all Hitler's mechanized divisions thereby freed to concentrate against any Western Allied incursion back onto the continent, and German industry at the same time able to reemphasize ship and aircraft production, British hope for victory — even with eventual American participation — would have been dim.

The awful showing the Red Army made in the Winter War against tiny Finland seemed to confirm the already low opinion the Germans had of Russian fighting capability based on their experience in the east in World War I. The quality of their officer corps had clearly been devastated by Stalin's "Great Purge" of 1937-38. The Winter War also revealed many Soviet tanks and aircraft were obsolete and in bad repair. Training was also shown to be deficient in that defensive considerations had been all but thrown out in favor of an ideologically dictated offensive stance.

But the Soviet high command also drew much the same lessons from their war against Finland. Thus, when the Germans invaded in June 1941 the Red Army was in the throes of a massive reorganization. Those in the Kremlin realized their earlier decision to disband the mechanized corps had been a mistake, and 20 new tank corps were set to be operational by October. New and formidable models of tanks and airplanes were being put into production at a rapid pace. Though by far the greatest progress in Soviet warmaking capability was forged in the fire of battle, they were not stagnant in the preceding peace. That modernization effort must be taken into account by those who argue Hitler would have better postponed his invasion until 1942 to allow his own forces more time for preparation.

Criticism is also offered Hitler should have known better than to violate his own long-held precept

against launching Germany into a two front war. But even if we ignore the fact the Germans had defeated the Russians while fighting a two front war a quarter-century earlier, there really was no "western front" in 1941. The German timetable for victory in the east in 1941 was about 10 weeks, which was an estimation seconded at the time of their invasion by the majority of British and American military experts. A campaign of that length would have been ended before the British could take advantage of it to intervene elsewhere.

Of course, that German timetable appears laughable in retrospect. Yet when the invasion was first unleashed, the German advances went beyond even their most confident predictions. Gen. Franz Halder, chief of the army general staff, wrote in July: "The Soviets have in fact been beaten." That statement's often been ridiculed since, but careful scrutiny of the record argues he was at least technically correct. In the first two months of fighting, the Germans — aided in their efforts by the Soviets' initial concentration of troops in the most forward sectors — took nearly a million prisoners, while killing or wounding another 700,000 and advancing about 500 miles. The bulk of the Red Army had indeed been destroyed, the only question remaining was how to exploit the initial victory so as to achieve the decisive end.

By early August 1941, the Germans were less than 200 miles from Moscow. Certain their capital was the primary German objective, the Soviets concentrated every available unit along the Smolensk-Moscow highway. Many German officers — including the commanders of *Army Group Center's* 2nd and 3rd *Panzer Groups*, Hermann Hoth and Heinz Guderian — argued Moscow was indeed the logical, final target. Halder also maintained at the time "major operations should be directed exclusively toward Moscow." That had also been the position of Gen. Walther von Brauchitsch, commander-in-chief of the German army, ever since the invasion's earliest planning stages.

Hitler, though, was at best lukewarm to the idea of going to Moscow. From the start he showed more interest in the agricultural and industrial resources to be found farther south in the Ukraine. In August he therefore ordered the panzers of *Army Group Center* to split off in two directions: one force north to assist in the advance around Leningrad, and the other south to complete the conquest of the area around Kiev. Guderian noted ironically the latter switch meant his panzers would for a time "be advancing in a south-westerly direction, that is to say toward Germany."

Some apologists for Hitler's strategic turn have defended his decision by claiming *Army Group Center* lacked the logistical capability in August 1941 to mount a drive on Moscow, and that had they attempted to do so the Germans would have exposed the flanks of their panzer groups to counterattack from the Soviet units then massed opposite *Army Group South*. Further, they argue, even if successful, a Moscow offensive could finally have been depended on to achieve nothing more in 1941 than it did for Napoleon when he captured the place in 1812.

But closer analysis casts doubt on those arguments. In mid-July the quartermaster general of the German army estimated the logistical system could even then have supported a rush on Moscow consisting of four panzer, three motorized infantry and up to 10 regular infantry divisions. That was while the bulk of *Army Group Center's* forces were still engaged in the massive battle then going on around Smolensk. At the time their most advanced railhead

was still back at Minsk. In August that railhead had advanced to Smolensk, much closer to Moscow.

To make any move on Moscow maximally effective, German resources from other sectors could have, and probably would have, been diverted to it. That would have been done in accordance with the strategic principle of economy of force: allocate only the minimum strength necessary to secondary objectives to maximize the concentration of force against the primary and decisive objective.

Since the Germans actually got within a few miles of the Kremlin in December, after having been diverted away to other objectives for months and across hundreds of kilometers, there seems little doubt they would've actually gotten there had they decided to go all-out for the city in the summer. The only real unknown is: was Moscow truly the decisive objective? Napoleon had thought so, but was proved wrong.

Unlike Napoleon, however, the German generals who advocated concentrating the advance on Moscow were not so much interested in its political importance — which was never the less far greater in Soviet Russia than it had been in Czarist Russia — but, rather, were concerned with its direct military value. That is, with rail lines emanating from it in all directions, Moscow was the transport and communications hub for all of the European Soviet Union. With the Red Army so dependent on those rail lines, due to the abysmal state of their nation's road net, Moscow's loss would have put the Soviet armies north and south of there in immediate and ever more severe logistical straits. Further, given their demonstrated operational ineptness throughout the campaign to that time, it's doubtful those northern and southern armies could have disengaged and redeployed in time to seriously threaten the German salient.

We know from Soviet records that Stalin considered suing for peace. "All that Lenin created we have

lost forever," he said following the loss of Kiev in September. His gloom would certainly have been even deeper, perhaps decisively so, had it been his own capital city that fell into German hands at the time.

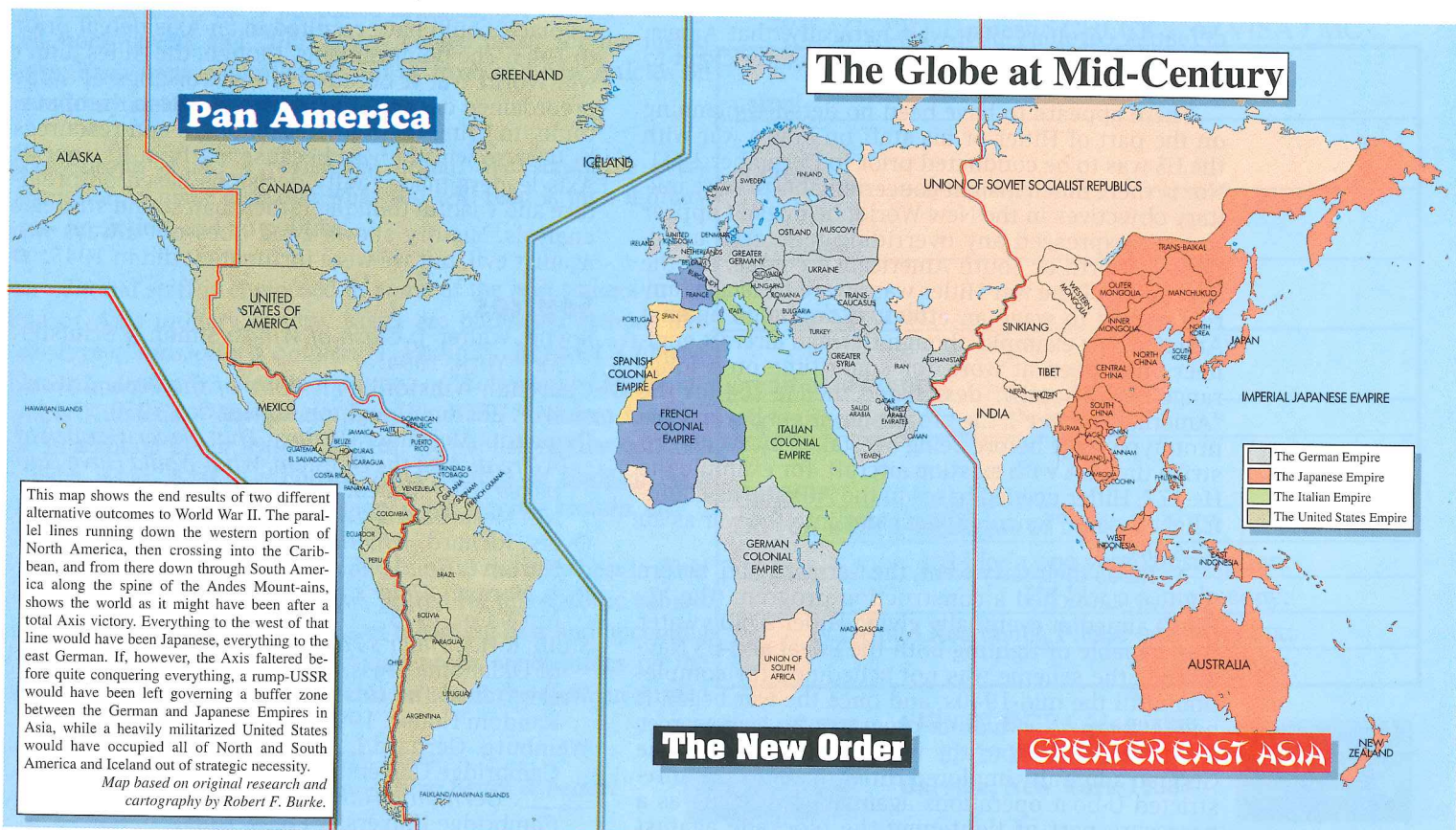
Japan & America

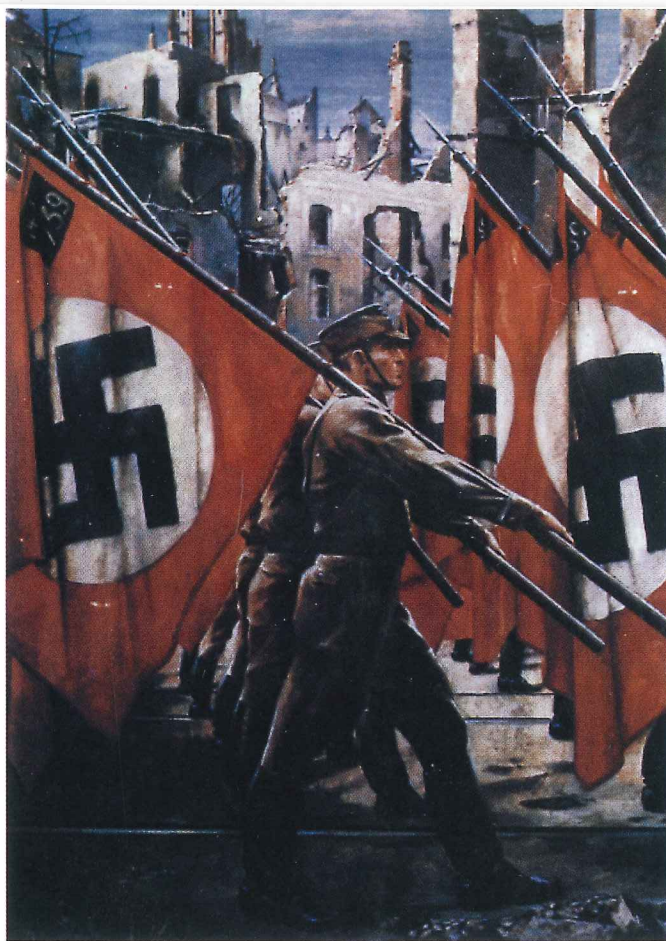
Since the material factors weighing against Japan were far greater than those against which Germany struggled — for example, Japan's industrial capacity was only about a tenth that of the US — it also seems less likely different outcomes at places like Coral Sea, Midway or Guadalcanal could have greatly affected the war's overall course. But despite the failure of Japan and Germany to cooperate strategically to any meaningful degree throughout the whole war, it would be wrong to view the Pacific and European theaters in isolation in this regard.

Greater Japanese successes in 1942 — though not winning the war for Tokyo — would undoubtedly have brought about a transfer of Allied resources from the European theater in general and the Battle of the Atlantic in particular. The Allied invasion of North Africa in November might well have been postponed or even cancelled. At the same time, a more favorable turn of events for the Axis in Europe at the times and places described above would have put Germany in the position of indirectly influencing the Allies' war against Japan.

In fact, Hitler's determination to declare war on the United States has probably been criticized by historians as much as his decision to invade Russia. It's been characterized as an action lying, at best, somewhere between impetuosity and insanity. Clearly it was a mistake, but it was not made without forethought.

Hitler had long recognized the United States posed a threat to his imperial ambitions. But because he perceived America as a society fatally riven by exces-





High Nazi Morale Amid the Rubble. Anton Hackenbroich (1939).

sive materialism and racial discord, he was convinced it was a threat that could eventually be dealt with. His prejudice in that regard was further strengthened by his acceptance of the "stab in the back" (by Jews and leftists) explanation of Germany's World War I defeat. A corollary of it was, naturally, that America's entry into the First World War was irrelevant to its outcome.

There appears to have been no detailed planning on the part of Hitler or his staff on how a war with the US was to be conducted prior to December 1941. Nor is there much insight concerning his precise military objectives in the New World; he doesn't appear to have expressed any overriding territorial ambitions in North or South America. Of course, for the first years of the war Hitler was aware he lacked any real means to wage an effective campaign against America. For example, though German aircraft engineers had been at work for some time on a long-range heavy bomber designated the Me-264 (or the "Amerika Bomber"), the project never got beyond the prototype stage before being overtaken by events. To strike the USA with existing aircraft, for example the He-177, Hitler needed bases in the Atlantic he couldn't get unless Franco's Spain came into the war as an Axis ally.

As far as their navy went, the Germans had, before the war, launched a construction program (the "Z-Plan") aimed at eventually giving Hitler a blue water fleet capable of fighting both the Royal and US Navies. But the scheme was not scheduled for completion until the mid-1940s, and once the war began it had to compete with other programs for ever scarcer resources. Still, from the war's outset in 1939, the German admiralty implored Hitler to authorize unrestricted U-boat operations against US shipping as a necessary part of tightening the blockade against

Britain. But Hitler kept putting off that request until he had more weapons at his disposal.

Casting around for them, it wasn't long before he came to see the Japanese Imperial Fleet as a temporary surrogate for a world-class Kriegsmarine. Tokyo's interests clearly coincided with Berlin's in respect to the naval situation, so Hitler never hesitated in urging Japan to make war on Britain and America. As an incentive, he promised to immediately declare war on the US as soon as Japan became a belligerent — a promise he kept on 11 December 1941. And it should be noted none of Germany's military or political leaders raised the slightest protest with him at the time.

The inevitable follow on question is: what if the Japanese had been as eager as Hitler to help their ally and had therefore reciprocally joined his war on the Soviet Union? A Japanese invasion of the Soviet far east in 1941, rather than their historic push south and east, would have left American neutrality intact and could have drawn off enough communist strength to decisively alter the course of the fighting in European Russia. Further, there were sufficient oil and mineral resources in Siberia to meet Japanese needs, though they would've undoubtedly taken more time and money to exploit than those from the tropical colonies of the European nations to the south. Still, a victory requiring more time and money to exploit would have been preferable to launching what amounted to a national suicide attack against the world's greatest industrial power.

Conclusion

It's always easy to "Monday Morning Quarterback" a great historical event, particularly one as huge and complex as a world war. Not all the Axis errors have been discussed here, and it should also be remembered both sides made mistakes to go with their successes. There were also "what ifs" that, had they taken place, could have resulted in an Axis defeat prior to 1945. The point remains, though, the Allies didn't win World War II because of the workings of some preordained destiny. The Allies were given the opportunity to bring their greater numbers and resources to bear to win the war because, early in its course, Axis leaders made faulty decisions based on prejudice and wishful thinking rather than sound strategic analysis. History shows good does not always win against evil, but we were fortunate it did in 1945. ☛

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I Remember . . .

MY FIVE YEARS IN THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION

BY DAVID MASON

In May 1988 I travelled to France with the intention of joining the Foreign Legion. I was looking for something that offered more of a challenge than the career in law for which I'd studied. As a schoolboy I'd read Gen. Negrier's words spoken to his men in 1894: "Legionnaires, you are made for dying. I will send you where you can die." They seemed both a challenge and an invitation. I was one of many who believed the Legion's legend. I thought it would be hard to join and that only the best would be accepted. It seemed the kind of army I wanted to belong to. But in five years of service I learned what the Legion claims it does and what it really accomplishes are very different things.

To join, all you have to do is get to France and buttonhole the first person you see wearing any kind of uniform. Most official Frenchmen will be happy to take you into their office and dial up the Legion for you. After all, it's the kind of story they enjoy telling their wives: "I helped an Anglais join la Legion today."

On that spring day in Paris I strolled up the short slope to the Legion recruiting point, Fort de Nogent, and read the sign greeting me there: "Legion Etrangere: Recrutement." I thumped my fist against the large, embossed, wooden doors until a smaller side door opened. A man wearing the traditional kepi blanc demanded, "Oui?"

I responded: "Foreign Legion recruiting?"

He nodded, extended his hand and demanded: "Passeport!" I casually turned over my most valued possession. He then opened the door just far enough to let me enter. From the darkness of the covered way I could see brilliantly whitewashed facades and a square dominated by a green, grassy mound through which had been cut a carriageway. Once inside, the Legionnaire, in skintight greens and buckled boots, gestured to my left. A doorway there led into a small, windowless room. Four chairs were lined along one of the walls. On another wall hung a poster of a severe-faced Legionnaire. The floor was bare and polished concrete. The air smelled of old cigarette smoke and the staleness from a door closed too long. The walls were gray-green and had seen many coats of paint. I waited in the room, contemplating my future. After about 15 minutes a plump fellow with a set of wings pinned to his chest and two ribbons

The day of the Remise Kepi Blanc. The author is backrow, fifth from the left. (All photos are courtesy of the author.)

over his heart bustled in and declared: "Australian? Good! Allonsy! Come! Yes, come with me!"

I picked up my bag, threw it over my shoulder and followed him out into the carriageway and the bright spring sunshine. We passed to the left of the green mound and climbed the stairs into one of the white buildings. I was waved into another room, its sole occupant the sad looking desk of a middle-rank public servant. My guide gestured for me to empty my bag onto it. He began to rummage through my kit, and as he did so a corporal walked in and said: "I hear you're an Aussie."

At last, I thought, an English speaker. "That's right," I said, "what's he doing?"

The English speaker put his hands on his hips and smiled: "Just checking your kit for knives. No Worries."

During this conversation the *caporal-chef* had been making serious inroads into my belongings. The pockets of my jeans and shirts were closely scrutinized. Various items were placed at the end of the table, including my camera, Swiss Army knife, a pewter flask full of Glennfiddich, my address book, wallet with 850 francs, and a large envelope containing my personal documents.

The English corporal began to make an inventory of my bag's contents. At the bottom of his list he drew a line, then entered those objects that had been separated. "The stuff we've got here we keep in a safe. The rest of your kit, including the gear you've got on, apart from your shaving kit and two pairs of socks, put back in the bag. Drink the stuff in the flask, because if you don't some other guy sure as hell will." I drank it.

When the corporal departed with my bag over his shoulder he said: "You'll be all right. We'll look after this 'til you need it."

I was led by the *caporal-chef* to yet another room where he told me to strip. He then made a cursory medical examination: weight, height, eyes, teeth, ears, back, balls and feet. Those results he inscribed on another sheet of paper. In my underwear I followed

him out of the room. When he yelled: "Guesdon, viens la!" a very dark fellow in an ill-fitting dark green track suit shot out from somewhere and came to attention in front of us. My guide addressed himself to the man in green, saying something about "tenue de sport."

With shaving kit and spare underwear in hand, I followed the green-clad Frenchman to draw my first Legion uniform: a dirty green tracksuit and dirty white tennis shoes. I was learning French quickly; this was the "tenue de sport."

Next I was taken to the dormitory, where two other guys in dirty green introduced themselves. The smaller of the two, Matt, was, according to his tattoo, an ex-Royal Marine from Sheffield. Bjarke said he was from Denmark. He had a huge golden beard, and said I should call him Hagar.

At noon there was a shrill whistle blast and the cry of "Soupe!" Matt said: "Lunch." So we moved out the door and down the steps. Formed up in two columns, we were counted by the English corporal who reported the result to the *caporal-chef*. Writing that on a piece of paper, the chef declared: "C'est bon. Allonsy les engage gammelle!"

Later I asked someone what he meant. It seems that according to the *caporal-chef* we'd joined the Legion simply to be fed. Looking about me at some of the other hopefuls, it seemed he might be right.

Lunch was served on large, communal, steel platters, each holding enough for six people: greasy chicken and greasy beans along with plenty of bread. If you didn't like the main dish, you could fill up on bread. Matt already had a view to offer as to our fellow aspiring Legionnaires: "Pigs! I can't believe these guys! You'd think they hadn't eaten for days!"

Most of the others wearing tracksuits were Frenchmen, along with a few "Brits" (a term used for anyone from anywhere in the British Isles or Commonwealth), West Germans, Yugoslavs and sundry others. There was even one guy from the Ivory Coast.

All recruits are sent to Aubagne, the Legion's headquarters in the south of France near Marseilles. If leaving from Paris, they travel from the Gare de Lyon, the main railway station serving the south. Unfortunately Monday was a public holiday, so we ended up waiting an extra week. My time that week was spent in a smoke-filled room watching television with 20 others. The time was highlighted by two events. The first was my presentation before a colonel who talked to me in French and had me sign and countersign a number of documents. "Tous ca c'est normal," he said to me.

Normal? Hardly. I found out later what I'd signed was my "contrat d'engagement" (enlistment papers). The "contrat," once signed, can only be broken by the authorities in Aubagne. It was for five years.

The second interesting thing was a visit to the hospital for tests that included blood pressure, knee jerks and a rectal examination that brought tears to my eyes. Another English corporal said to me: "Listen, mate, my advice to you is to get promoted fast. Otherwise you'll go mad."

The guy from the Ivory Coast, a Yugo and couple of rat-eyed Frenchmen retrieved their gear and were escorted to the front gate never to be seen again. They'd failed the medical.

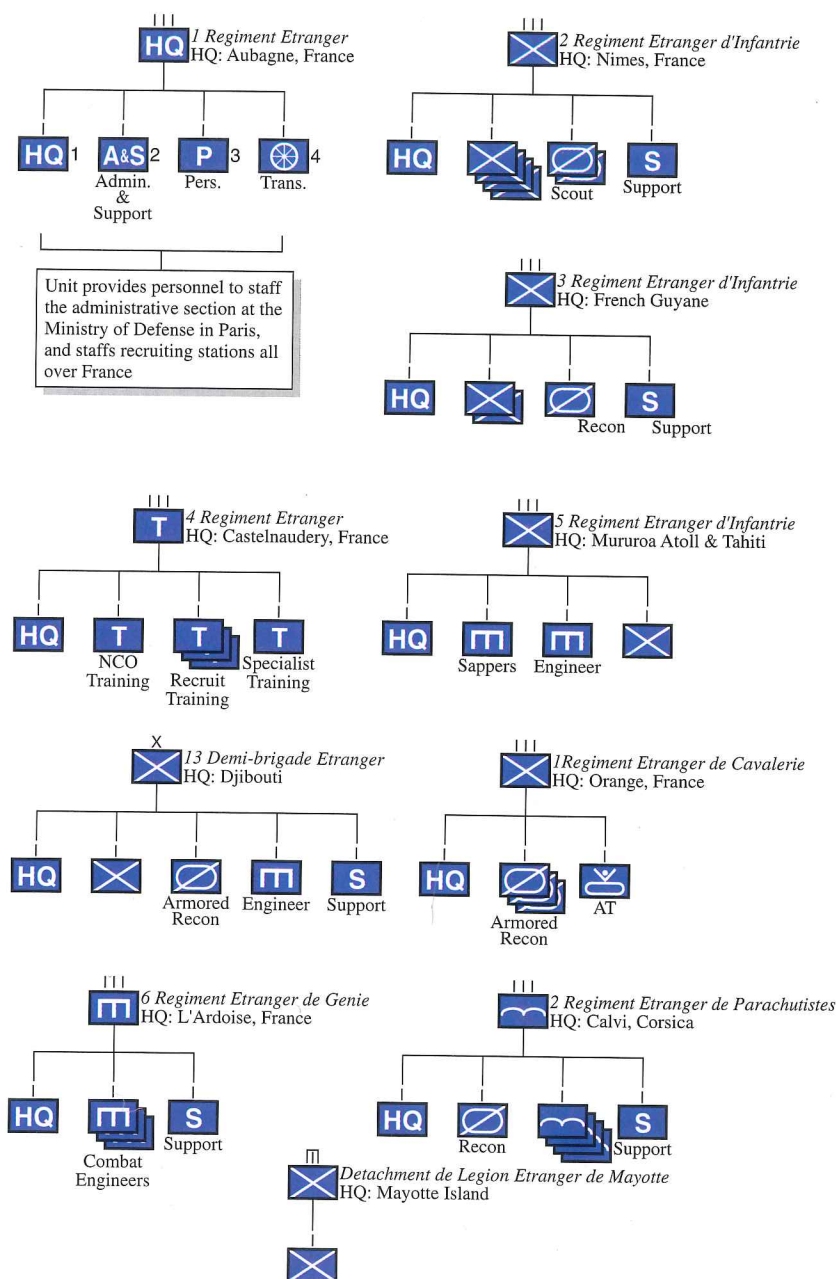
The next day we travelled to Aubagne. In preparation for the big day we were issued French army greens, boots with buckles, and enormous berets. Imagine the largest beret you've ever seen, color it green and sit it on your head. It didn't look the least bit military to me, but that wasn't the point. Those in any way inclined to desert at that stage had to

think again, as it would be impossible to look inconspicuous dressed that way. But who would desert? All our money and identification had been taken from us and we were on our way to be processed.

We caught what I thought was the mail train going to the Gare St. Charles in Marseilles. Shepherded through the station in two long columns, the response of the civilians who saw us was truly educational. Not one person looked directly at us. Instead there were oblique glances, the shaking of heads and muttered: "Voila, la Legion!" (There is the Legion!) One mother actually ran to her child and picked him up when she saw us approaching. The scene reminded me of the movie "Papillon," when Steve McQueen walks down the cobbled, narrow streets to the ship that will take him to Devil's Island.

We soon found ourselves in economy class on hard, narrow, bench seats. I realized that unless I

The French Foreign Legion Today





The Mediterranean red Place d'Armes at Quartier Danjou, Castelnaudary.

secured a corner seat my chances of sleep would be zero. I got myself one with Hagar opposite. Before settling in I went to the toilet. When I returned, I found a Frenchman named Verbecke had taken my place. I woke everyone with my shouting to Verbecke to "Get out of my seat!" He did, and I subsequently got more sleep than most of the others.

We arrived in Marseilles just after first light. We were all on edge. A large green bus had been sent to take us the rest of the way to Aubagne. On it we finally reached Quartier Vienot, the headquarters of the Legion. The guard, wearing dress uniforms, presented arms. About 250 meters to our front was a monument, the "Monument aux Morts," or "Monument to the Dead," brought to France from Sidi Bel Abbes in Algeria in 1962. We passed a two-storied white building, the "Foyer du Legionnaire," then went through another gate into the "Section Engages Volontaires." We took our bags and in single file moved inside. A voice of authority, unseen, barked: "Deshabillez vous!" (Clothes off!)

At the end of another search we were left with nothing but the underwear in which we stood, a pair of socks, a towel and shaving kit. We were issued other green tracksuits and tennis shoes and led off to our "chambres." They were rooms, each with eight beds and tiled floors. Hagar, Matt and I secured adjoining bunks. Most of the time we simply didn't understand what was going on. Since all instructions were given in French, it was becoming clear to survive you needed two things: a disposition that didn't take to heart every little humiliation and a couple mates on whom you could rely.

At 0630 the next day we were escorted to the regimental infirmary, where we spent the morning and had no breakfast. Ordered to strip, we sat about waiting the call of our names. In alphabetical order we were taken in for a blood test. Those called in first came back looking none too well. "I just don't believe this!" said Matt.

"Crap, man!" said Hagar. Then it was my turn.

I never enjoyed steel pointy things being stuck into me, so to distract myself from the inevitable I said "Hello" to the medic and nodded to the corporal who'd escorted us from the holding center. I lay down on the white, plastic-covered bench and extended my right arm. I became interested in the equipment being used. The medic had on a bloody white gown and wore no gloves. He was holding a large-caliber needle that was attached to a semi-flaccid tube. After tying a tourniquet, he held the test tube in one hand and with his other slipped the needle into my vein. My blood flowed down the plastic tube into the

test tube. The medic had to be dexterous to be sure he caught enough of the vital fluid. It gradually flowed up the sides of the test tube. I looked down at the floor, which was greasy with blood. I remember thinking it seemed as if I'd somehow slipped back into the 19th century.

In the afternoon I was examined by a dentist. He indicated I should open my mouth before I'd even walked through the door into his office. He said, "OK, ca va," and called for the next man while waving me away with a swish of his hand.

The last activity for us was a visit in front of a panel of three medical personnel. In English they asked if I'd ever been in hospital, had any physical problems or currently took any medications. I answered as best I could, telling them I was allergic to penicillin.

The next day we took intelligence tests. A *caporal-chef* went out of his way to impress upon us the importance of doing well. According to him, if we performed well there would be much opportunity to do the things we might like to do in the Legion. So I decided to try my best. Anyway, it couldn't be too difficult, I thought. Unfortunately, the English used in the test was of a kind I'd never read before. I later found out a Hungarian was given a test in Romanian because there were no remaining copies in his own language.

After a morning of exams the afternoon was spent at the military hospital in Marseilles, where we had our chests x-rayed. Given the dirt, cigarette smoke, general staff apathy and dilapidated state of the facility, I hoped I'd never end up there for real. Even the corporal who accompanied us shuddered at the suggestion one might be forced to spend time between those walls.

A few days later I went before the "Gestapo," or BSLE (Bureau de Securite de la Legion Etrangere), the Legion's internal security arm. I was totally unprepared for the reception awaiting me there.

A man with pale eyes, a pale freckled face and close cropped ginger hair waved me into an office. A jacket hung on the wall to the left of his desk. Above his left breast pocket was a red and blue ribbon, below it a metallic brevet which immediately struck me as looking similar to the ones you saw worn on the tunics of German soldiers in World War II movies. In letters around its circumference it read: "Commando Guyane." On his desk sat a small name plate: "Ostrowski." He announced: "I'm the guy charged with finding out if you're a liar or not. Have a seat."

He opened an envelope that I saw contained my passport and other papers. After reading among them for a couple minutes, he stopped, took a deep breath and said: "I don't believe this! What are you doing here? You should be at home being a lawyer! Get out of my office now! Go and pick up your kit — if there is anything left — and go home! You're wasting my time!"

He shook his head and went back to reading my papers. I was sure this treatment was merely part of the screening process; he was testing my resolve. But then he looked up from the papers again and demanded: "Well, what are you waiting for?"

I thought my reply was bland but appropriate: "I've come a long way to join the Legion and that is what I intend to do."

"Very commendable. Listen, you idiot, I was at university myself in England. Then at the Sorbonne. I'm telling you there is no place for you here. Have you looked around at the garbage around here? I'm telling you that neither you nor I would spit on 90 percent

of them if they were on fire. And you know I'm right."

After a short pause and a sigh he tried a different tack: "Let me tell you something. I see your life as a Rolls Royce parked in the driveway. All you have to do is open the door, start it up and drive away. What do you say to that?"

I looked square into his pale blue eyes and tried to explain I was searching for something. "Oh, dear," he said, "a thinker in search of himself. Most people in this world, including me, would call you a bloody idiot. But I'll do the best I can for you. How well did you do in your exams here?"

I shook my head and told him I had no idea. He then told me to wait where I was. He was gone for almost five minutes, and during that time I watched the other recruits through the window looking out into the compound. I wondered what brought most of them there. I figured most came because it was their last or only chance to do something with their lives. They were for the most part failures, and the Legion was for most of them the failure's choice. Ostrowski returned and caught me dreaming. "The first thing we can do is change your name."

I didn't want to do that. "Believe me," he said, "it's the done thing. But if you'd rather not, that's fine too. We offer to do this to protect you from the outside world."

The principle of anonymity may indeed protect Legionnaires from wives, police, bankers and governments. But the fact is, there is more to the idea. Once his name is changed, a man is prohibited from contacting anyone on the outside. In many ways he becomes a voluntary prisoner. I've always wondered how many realize what they're really doing when they agree to change their name. I kept mine.

"OK, not a problem. I have here your exam results. Not bad, so I'm going to recommend that if your recruit results are reasonable you pass on to the rapid promotion stream and get yourself quickly promoted to corporal. Remember, though, you're the one who'll have to work for it. Nothing comes easy in the Legion except wine and beer.

"Now to administrative matters. Your passport you won't see for five years, nor your driver's licence nor anything else. In a way you become a non-person. I don't believe you can yet understand what that means, so let me tell you. You will be treated like a moron, as if nothing you say is important. French officers are very different from what you are used to. There is no level upon which you can communicate with people like them."

I noticed he'd begun to perspire slightly. Then he said: "I know I'm not wasting my breath, so watch out; I don't want to see you here squealing to go home after your recruit course.

"Right now I can tell you, you're in. The guys in charge of this place are not going to reject someone like you. But it's too late for you to go to the recruit training center at Castelnaudary this Saturday. So it will be in a week. Enjoy your time scrubbing pots and pans."

A few days later we were trucked into Marseilles and taken to the "Centre Permission de la Legion Etrangere Malmousque," the CPLEM, or more simply, Malmousque. This "holiday camp" isn't far from the Grande Corniche of Marseilles. It sits perched above a five meter drop to the Mediterranean. From its rooms you can watch small fishing boats entering and leaving the harbor.

Entering the main building I again came across the twin Legion fragrances of beer and cigarettes. We

were taken in hand by a corporal, formed up in binomes (a French speaker matched with a non-francophone like me), and issued rakes and small shovels. We spent the day weeding, collecting rubbish, watching, and trying to speak to "les anciens," Legionnaires who came there on leave.

I did manage to speak to one, an American. What he had to say worried me: "Listen, you only have to look around you to see what the Legion is really like. Jesus, where else would you find beer vending machines except among a bunch of alcoholics and social cripples? I'll have done my five years in two weeks, and believe me I'm going to be one happy camper when I walk out of those gates at Aubagne. The only people who do more than five years are those with no chance as a civilian. And you know what that means; the guys who stay in are generally garbage. Of course, some are OK, especially the non-francophones, but the French are hopeless. Just look out and never trust a Frenchman. Have a nice day."

"Joe" was from Virginia and wasn't at all pleased with Frenchmen.

Next morning I asked one of the English-speaking caporal-chefs if I could have my camera and Swiss Army knife from the bag of personal belongings that had been taken from me. The request caused a great deal of consternation. I was taken to a small office that held three caporal-chefs and a sergent-chef. When I entered, one of the caporal-chefs immediately began to harangue me in French. A dark fellow, his face grew even more swarthy as his monologue lengthened. I'd no idea what he was talking about, but didn't much like the tone of his voice. Listening to him, I thought I must indeed be guilty of some heinous crime. But at last the sergent-chef, in broken English, told me that once the Legion had one's gear it was not acceptable to ask for any of it back. On the face of it that meant my stuff was lost to the predations of the caporal-chefs.

I don't know why, but against the protestations of the others in the room the sergent-chef went on to state he was inclined to agree with my request. In the company of a fuming *caporal-chef*, I was taken to the basement where the bags were kept. Evidently someone had already helped themselves. My leather jacket and Swiss Army knife were gone, but for some rea-



The farmhouse Bel Air.



The author at the Monument aux Morts.

son my camera remained. The *caporal-chef* just shrugged.

That afternoon those like me who'd been accepted into the Legion were issued old army greens, large, green, floppy berets, boots and a small band of red material that we slid over our left shoulder epaulettes. We had gone "rouge" and were on our way to Castelnaudary. In recognition of that new status we were given haircuts, "le boule."

The next day those chosen for recruit training at Castelnaudary were measured for proper uniforms. So along with Matt, Hagar and some 25 others, I was escorted to the "habillement." Despite much measuring and noting of numbers, it became clear that for some of us getting a well-fitted uniform was going to be impossible.

We lined up in alphabetical order and were told to strip. Singly we approached a bench from which our clothing was dispensed. Three pairs of "tenue de combat," vest and pants. Despite our having been fitted, no two items were the same size, especially if one found oneself toward the end of the alphabet. Other items included a woolen jumper (too small), and a greatcoat (second-hand) more suited to a pygmy than a six-footer like me. My colleagues shook their heads, and I thought it didn't auger well for the Legion.

We packed everything away in brand new "sacs marine" (duffel bags), except for the one pair of new greens that fitted us, boots, socks and the beret with the Legion insigne. Dressed in our new uniforms, we were escorted straight to the Legion museum.

The Legion museum is not an ordinary one; it's a shrine to a legend, a legend built upon the death of Legionnaires. Frankly, it was marvelous. It's divided into three parts. Outside are cannon, along with carved stones that had marked the sites of Legion camps in Algeria and Indochina, a tank and an amphibious vehicle of the Indochinese War. Inside the building is built in two parts and on two floors.

There are two entrances to the museum. The main door faces the Monument aux Morts, about 20 meters away. We recruits were escorted through a side door and handed over to an adjutant-chef. With our brand new berets in our hands we followed him up the stairs to the first floor display area. There were the relics and souvenirs of Legion campaigns from Mex-

ico, where the legend of Camerone was born, to Lebanon and Chad in the 1980s.

As we passed glass cases containing decorations, uniforms and rifles from past Legion campaigns, the idea of the Legion as a force that fought and died all around the world was clearly brought home to us. It was a force that, despite the diverse natures of its men, fought as one against a common foe. No doubt it was at least partly for that reason we were there.

Descending some steps, we turned left into the "Salle d'Honneur." The room was some seven by 15 meters and was dominated by a large table in its center. On its wall were paintings of the major heroes and historical figures of the Legion. As interesting as that room was, our attention was inexorably pulled toward its one end, where a few more steps descended into a crypt.

No remains lie in that crypt. But looking at the illuminated cross, the dome that allows in only subdued natural light, the various flags, the names of officers killed on campaign listed by location and year, and the wooden left hand of Capt. Danjou in its own glass case, I became acutely aware we were in a special place. There was no need to be told that. We spoke in subdued tones. The soul of the Legion reposed there.

Having taken us on the tour to show us our past, the adjutant-chef formed us again in the Salle d'Honneur. He put his hands on his hips and looked at each one of us in turn. His shot out his right arm, pointing at us with an index finger: "vous etes l'avenir." We were the future of the Legion. We had much to live up to, and I couldn't help thinking that for the majority of those around me it was going to be hard work.

When I think back on my time in the museum, three things come to mind. First, if I were trying to plan something to win over people to my cause, I doubt I could think of a better way of doing it. The place was filled with notions of honor, glory and sacrifice for others. Second, there was not one mention of France; there was reference only to the Legion. Third, the adjutant-chef should have been a used car salesman.

The night before we left for Castelnaudary we went on guard for the first time. I did it with Stefan, a bilingual Frenchman who explained to me what was going on, as all our orders were given in his language.

The Recruit Course

The next day we took the train to Castelnaudary, passing through Montpellier, Beziers, Narbonne and Carcassone, arriving about 1100 at the railway station inside the small town. In a bus we were driven to Quartier Capitaine Danjou, named after the man who led the defense of Camerone in Mexico.

The camp of the *4eme Regiment Etranger* was new and spacious. We entered it under a red and white boom raised by the Legionnaire on duty. The guard-house was to the left and administration buildings on the right. To the direct front was a large, red tarmac parade ground. On the right were the recruit barracks. Ordered to descend from the bus, we formed up on the road with our sacks. Names were read out, dividing us into two groups. Someone had neatly split our detachment in two on the basis of nationality. The upshot was I found myself separated from Hagar and Matt.

At lunch all the recruits of *1st Company*, to which I belonged, were formed up outside the barracks in sections and presented to the Sergent de Semaine (the senior NCO). He counted how many we were, then noted that information in a small book. We

marched toward the mess, a long column of green. The sergeant demanded we sing. Someone within the ranks began, so the chant could be kept to his marching cadence. Then the sergeant came in with "Trois, quart," so the verses would begin properly on the left foot. I suppose such singing is supposed to lift the spirits within the ranks, but as I glanced about me I saw no one appeared exhilarated or happy.

Lunch was cold cuts of sausage followed by crumbed, composite beef, boiled beans, potatoes and plenty of bread. It was terminated by a cry from Wagner, our corporal: "Troisieme Section dehors!" ("Third section outside!") At that we rushed to take our platters to benches where other Legionnaires were already cleaning some, then quickly filed outside, forming up again as a section. Once we were formed, Wagner began to play games. He would walk some 20 meters away, and at his call we'd all have to sprint to him to form again. Then he'd move 50 meters away, and so on. It was very tedious. I supposed it was his way of hinting we ought not to eat too much at any one meal.

The afternoon we spent cleaning everything again and then going before the lieutenant. Presenting oneself to a lieutenant, or even to a corporal, was a formal affair. Before entering the office we were briefed by Wagner on how to move and what to say.

On entering the room you must stop two paces in front of the officer's desk. There was no British-style pounding of the boot on the halt, but rather a neat shuffle. You salute with the right hand, moving it the "longest way up and the longest way down," with palm open, to a count of three-four, the descent concluding with a loud thwack on the thigh. Then the left hand removed the beret from the head, holding it close to the left thigh. Then, while at attention (or "garde a vous"), you say: "Legionnaire Mason. Un mois de service Premiere Compagnie, Section de Lieutenant Hildebert, a vous ordres mon Lieutenant."

Reporting, I remained at attention until the lieutenant, after an appropriately pregnant pause, declared: "Tu peux te mettre au repos." ("You can go to a position of at-ease.")

He continued to speak in French, most of which was lost on me. But I took the gist of it to mean that as a Legionnaire I had entered a brotherhood, and it was up to me to be true to it. At the conclusion of his speech the lieutenant sat up straight and dismissed me. The lieutenant, with blonde hair and pale blue eyes, was also very, very plump. He was not at all my idea of what a Foreign Legion officer should look like.

That night at 2130, having cleaned our rooms, the latrines and offices, we were formed up in the corridor in a long line. Then we did push ups for half an hour until appel.

At 2155 there was a whistle blast from the Bureau de Semaine and the cry of "en place pour l'appel," which again brought us into line at attention to be counted. As the count moved from left to right along the single rank, we each had to shout our number. That was a little tricky for those who were non-francophones. Every time an error was made, the individual at fault received a thump of encouragement on the chest and the entire count was restarted.

When at last the sergeant arrived to receive the presentation from Wagner as to our number, he also thumped some chests while repeating the count. It was evident they were traumatized by the possibility one of us might desert. Finally, with Wagner's "billet d'appel" (account of numbers) sheet accepted and in his fist, the sergeant bid us a good night. "Bonne

nuit mes enfants" ("Good night my children"), he said, and as one we shouted back: "Bonne nuit, Sergeant!"

From the count we moved to our chambers and another inspection. Wagner appeared again and began a meticulous search through our lockers. Rooting around behind one man's socks and jocks, he found a pair of soiled underpants and was thus inspired to deliver a long lecture on the importance of hygiene. He then forced the recruit, named Lombard, to eat the underwear.

Wagner was almost beside himself with zeal. And I think it was that zeal, so clearly beaming through his eyes, that set me off. I began to chuckle, which quickly broke out into a full laugh. Wagner was outraged. He came over to me, along with Koncz, another corporal, looked away for a moment in order to distract my own gaze, then struck me with a fist in the belly. I was winded and helpless and crumpled to the floor. He put his boot to my head and ground it to the floor, saying nothing.

A few days later we were marched out to "Bel Air," our company "farm," about 15 kilometers away. The farm was a splendid spot, surrounded by countryside, predominantly fields. We went past farmyards with dogs barking, and the air was full of farm and kitchen smells. Each of the training companies ("Compagnies d'Instruction") had its own farm. There they brought their newest recruits to be made into full Legionnaires by the section staff. There was Lt. Hildebert, Sergeant-Chef Mahmah, Sergeants Roberts and Ryzowski, and the three Caporals: Wagner, Koncz and Ortega. They locked us in our rooms every





The barbed-wire barrier and the embankment. Operation Godaria in the Republic of Djibouti.

night, as the staff remained certain someone would try to desert. Though we were all getting the odd kick and thump, I didn't see any reason to run away.

One morning we were loaded into trucks and taken to fire the FAMAS, the Legion's standard rifle, at a range on the outskirts of Castelnaudary. There was much shouting and screaming before we fired. Inspection by the lieutenant was followed by our forming up in front of the targets. We placed our weapons on the ground and stood behind them. We were each given three rounds and ordered to fire them. During the firing I could hear the lieutenant screaming at someone: "Cretin! Idiot!"

It was not an environment conducive for concentrating on marksmanship. When I finished I stood up and looked around for someone to hand me more rounds, but there were none. Three rounds was all we each were to fire. All the while the lieutenant kept his right hand perched atop the holster of his 9mm pistol. I wondered if there really had to be so much concern one of us would go berserk with three bullets. We picked up our brass, then surrendered the casings to Koncz, who verified the count of three for each man.



Weapons, Operation Godaria.

We still hadn't learned how to tear down the weapons. Only later in the afternoon, back at Bel Air, did we finally get to cleaning them. Those who didn't already know how to strip a weapon were seated next to those who did.

The next day we marched 27 miles. Along the way we lost a couple Legionnaires who collapsed by the side of the road. One of them was Lopo, a former member of the Spanish Foreign Legion. Two of us carried his pack and rifle, which enabled him to manage the last few miles.

With the initial range fire and long march done, we were awarded our white caps. For that ceremony we were formed into three ranks, holding our new hats by the brims in our right hands. At the command of "garde a vous" we donned the new headgear. Then we were addressed by the much bemedalled company commander, Capt. Raoul. He dwelled at length on the fact we were now all members of "la grande famille" that is the Legion. But after only those few weeks, and among only those few comrades, I didn't feel part of any great family, nor did anyone else. As far as right-of-passage ceremonies go, it was a poor performance.

Having got our kepis, we each had a bottle of beer around a fire and sang Legion songs. It reminded me of a documentary I'd seen in school about the Hitler Youth. None of our corporals came to congratulate us; instead, they went off on their own.

Toward the end of the 14 week recruit course, we took a number of tests. They were exams for the "Certificate Technique Elementaire" (the "C.T.E."), which included the French language, running, mines and first aid. I finished first on the course and was therefore selected to remain at Castelnaudary, promoted to corporal to instruct recruits.

I stayed there until October 1989. During those 18 months I came to realize the true goal of the training. The Quartier Danjou was not really interested into forming men into full Legionnaires. The overriding concern was to break men, to actively dissuade them from ever thinking for themselves, to make them willing to surrender themselves entirely to the Legion. It was all done in such a way the one thing fully instilled in everyone who passed through the course was an eternal distrust of their officers.

In short, I did not like Castelnaudary, finding it a cold and joyless place. At the end of my tour there I volunteered for a two-year posting to the 13 Demi Brigade de la Legion Etrangere (13DBLE), in the Republic of Djibouti. I believed it was there I would find the true Foreign Legion, the Legion of legend.

Djibouti

The detachment of which I was part arrived in Djibouti on a hot and humid evening in November 1989. The airport tarmac was patrolled by rifle-toting French air force ground staff, and the terminal was guarded by local Djiboutian police. Wearing green uniforms, they carried their pistols slung low on their hips. The whites of their eyes were red, and they spat a green mess to the ground as we passed by.

I hoped my time in Djibouti would expose me to the real life of the Legion: the desert and real men living hard and honest. I volunteered for the Combat Company, and took the commando, sniper and medic's courses. Finally, during 10 days in May and June of 1992, I saw the real Legion at work.

The Ethiopian army had been defeated after some 30 years of fighting combined Tigre and Eritrean forces. An Ethiopian armored division of about 16,000 men, knowing they couldn't remain in their own coun-

try, sought refuge in Djibouti. They brought with them their families and those civilians who were fearful of the new regime but couldn't pay to fly out of Addis Ababa. The officers of the division contacted the French and United Nations authorities in Djibouti. They offered to surrender to French forces, hoping to be allowed to shelter in UN sponsored camps.

Today's Republic of Djibouti was formerly the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas, having been grown out of Paris' colonial ambitions. It is made up of two different peoples: the Danakil and Somalis, or more specifically, that portion of the Danakil known as the Afars, and those Somali known as the Issa. The Afars lived mostly in the desert, along the border they shared with their cousins in Ethiopia. The Issa lived mostly in the capital city of Djibouti, and were more numerous than the Afars.

Hassan Gouled Aptidon, president since 1977, when the French gave Djibouti its independence, is an Issa. His portrait is everywhere, in the bars, brothels and market and on all the buses. He kept himself in power by manipulating elections, and did so with the tacit approval of the French. The French military there amounted to some 2,500 personnel, including 13DBLE. When the Ethiopians asked to come to Djibouti to escape death at the hands of their enemies' victorious army, Aptidon called on the French to help protect the integrity of his country.

We were therefore deployed to halt the fleeing Ethiopians seeking refuge in Djibouti. At first we were told they were going to attack us. But it took only one look at their 12 mile long column, stretched along the single road from Addis, to see those people weren't going to attack anyone. They wore tatters, and they were crammed into and onto tanks, buses, trucks and cars. They were fleeing from the prospect of death to what they hoped was UN sanctioned security. In return, they had agreed to hand over their weapons.

We began handing out food and water. The food, ironically, consisted entirely of dates donated by Saudi Arabia, a nation much reviled across the Horn of Africa during the Gulf War. Then we led them off in a convoy to Ali Sabieh, a town on the border to the south. From there they never actually got to UN camps. Instead they were handed off to the Djiboutian army to eventually be forced back across the border into Ethiopia.

The weapons they turned over to us included T54-55 tanks, anti-aircraft guns and all kinds of small arms. The personal weapons of the Ethiopians included AK47s, AKMs and FLNs, and I liked many of them better than ours. They were all in good condition. They had been at war for 30 years. Though their clothes were rags, they understood what was important in war. As they handed over their weapons, they only looked long and hard at the road and their own feet.

As the convoy passed through, it became my task to organize the distribution of the water and food. The days were hot, up to 122°F. When you get that hot the liquid around your brain and in your eyeballs starts to expand and wants to erupt, to run down your face. We got sunburned and had liquid running down our faces all the time. Our roadblock was a flimsy affair, really, just crossed pieces of wood with some barbed wire wrapped around. But it didn't have to be anything more; the Ethiopians had no food of their own, no water, and nowhere else to go.

The first night was a shambles. I remember our colonel, our regimental commander, argued and



Aerial view of the "road to freedom."

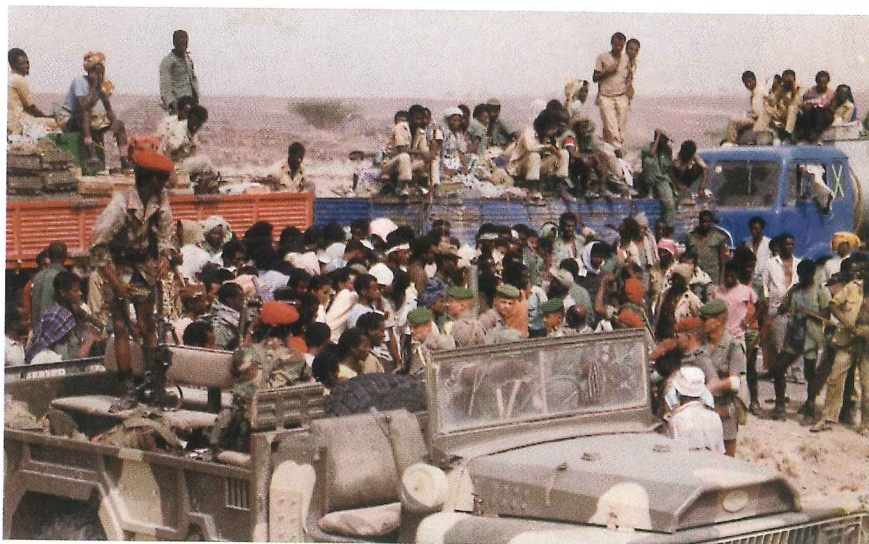
pushed a high ranking Ethiopian army officer. That man had been trying to secure more water for distribution, but our colonel's response made it clear: there was no more to be had than what we were prepared to give.

That night we camped on the eastern side of a wall extending on three sides around a nearby cemetery. The western side was open to the setting sun and the winds that swept in from Ethiopia.

Late the next day the sergeant called me over. It was our turn to stand guard at the roadblock. As we moved down the road to the wire I looked over my shoulder. I could see the earthen mounds of the graves thrown into relief like miniature dunes. There were no trees to break the line of the horizon or provide shade for the living, the dying or the dead.

Then the sight of our rapidly moving captain drew my attention. With the red and green Legion pendant flying, and his gold beret insignia and ribbons on his chest reflecting the sunlight, he was off to Dikhil in his jeep. As he left, his aide handed him a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label. Soon after, the captain's jeep was followed by others driven by cheerful lieutenants. The word was there was a party set up with the UN people.

Our post was reached by crossing a small bridge over a wadi. Beyond it stretched the road to Addis and the single line of vehicles crammed with people. There were few off to the side of the road, as that



Djiboutian troops (foreground), Legionnaires (middle ground), Ethiopians (background).



Lonely post in the Republic of Djibouti.

area was all fractured, brutal rock. We stayed that night in the wadi, again sheltered from the wind and with sand for our bed. The night guard was to stand before the wire and let none pass, nor give any water. We each had 20 rounds in our magazines, with one magazine always loaded into each rifle. We would each do two hours on and four off. I drew the midnight to sunrise shift.

Roused at midnight, I climbed the bank up to the road. The Legionnaire I was relieving told me all was quiet. It didn't look as though anyone was getting ready to rush us, though some women had come close to the wire. Walking forward, I saw two still forms at the base of the wire. In the starlight I knelt to discover two tiny, lifeless bodies wrapped in rags. The other sentry said the sergeant had ordered him not to touch anything, to leave everything until morning.

A figure suddenly broke from among the women and approached. We looked at each other for a time, until she squatted down on her haunches, revealing she held another little bundle to her breast. She



Searching trucks, Operation Godaria.

rocked slowly and murmured a few words. When she stopped, she brought the bundle to her cheek and then, gently, with her palms to the sky, placed it between the two others already on the ground. She stood, looked at me another moment, then glided silently away to rejoin the others farther back along the road.

Just before sunrise I woke the sergeant and the others. In the half light of dawn we took the dead, burying them in the sand on which we'd been sleeping. Then we turned over our post to the group who came to relieve us for the day.

Later that morning I was near the captain's tent. The tricolor had been raised and Ethiopian vehicles were again moving slowly along the road. But the captain didn't stir. About 0900 he stuck his very white face out the tent and called me over. He was unwell, he said, and needed some water. The whiskey must have been bad, he explained, and gave a sickly smile. Later I was back beyond the point where the vehicles were searched for weapons, back at the distribution point for food and water. When each vehicle arrived there, they would halt and their passengers would disembark to get their share.

There came a day I was very tired, though I know that's no excuse for what happened. One of those who'd got down from a truck to get water was slow in climbing back on. Maybe he was weak or sick; his grip failed. He slipped beneath the truck as it began to move forward again, and the wheels rolled over his head. The noise of his head exploding sounded just as if I'd dropped a wide and heavy block onto a watermelon. I should have been more observant before signaling the truck to move.

I went to the body and saw the face was still intact, suspended over the cavity that had been the man's skull, and now looked like a novelty shop mask. I searched the body for identification, found none, and ordered the truck to go on. I radioed for the adjutant, and after a brief inspection he called for a bulldozer to scrape a hole. Into that shallow depression we placed the remains of the man. After quickly covering the body, the bulldozer driver drove his machine twice over the mound, then returned to his previous job of preparing larger holes for weapons destruction.

It was suddenly as if the man had never existed. The truck that had been carrying him was gone. The others who'd witnessed his death had cried out only briefly, and the moisture his blood and brains had drained onto the road quickly dried. I never found out his name.

Another day a man and his family came up to my post in a new four-wheel-drive vehicle. A plump Djiboutian police captain stepped forward and waved him off to the side of the road. The captain then offered to buy the vehicle for the equivalent of 200 US dollars. The driver said no, shaking his head. The captain took the pistol from his belt, put the muzzle to the temple of the driver, and told everyone to get out and take their other belongings with them. The man and his family complied, sitting glumly by the side of the road. The captain forced some money into his hand, then drove off in the commandeered vehicle toward Dikhil. He soon returned driving a police car and resumed his post off the road as if nothing had happened.

I reported all this to a Legion captain who then interviewed the man who'd lost his car, followed by the Djiboutian policeman. After about five minutes, the Legion officer threw up his arms, declaring it was all too much for him to sort out. The man who'd lost

his car was beside himself with anger and frustration. The Djiboutian policeman simply smiled from behind his dark sunglasses.

Within 10 days of being called out on the mission, we'd disarmed thousands of men and given them and those with them some food and water. We assured them they were headed for UN camps and, in fact, all along the road there appeared plenty of brand new four-wheel-drive Ranger Rovers bearing that organization's flag. But there were no camps and no security for those people. It was all a sham. I was a party to it; the French government organized it, and the UN sanctioned it. After we'd disarmed them, we handed them over to the Djiboutian army, who in turn forced them back into Ethiopia. There they were shot by the new regime.

Out

After Djibouti I volunteered for the Legion's parachute regiment, the *2nd Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes (2REP)*, at Camp Raffalli, outside Calvi on the island of Corsica. I there completed my five year contract with the Legion. Just before release I was sent back to Aubagne, six days short of my five years. For our final parade, the 10 of us leaving the Legion that day waited on the parade ground 10 meters in front of and facing the Monument aux Morts.

There we waited almost two hours for the General de la Legion Etrangere, Gen. Colcombe, to descend from his office. When he came it was an anti-climax. His kepi was awry on his head. Maybe he thought he wore it at a jaunty angle. His right-top button wasn't done up, and his shirt wasn't properly tucked into his trousers. He passed in front of each of us and asked a few questions. Each of the *caporal-chefs*

standing with me had done at least 15 years and therefore had their pensions.

Colcombe soon arrived before me, and for the last time I recited: "Caporal Mason. Cinqu ans de service. Quatre ans quatre mois de grade. A l'instant fin de contrat. A vos ordres, mon General."

He asked if I'd enjoyed myself. No. Did I regret having joined? No. He paused and asked his aide de camp to see my service record. After looking through it he said, "Mais t'abien servi!" ("But you have served well!") Then he looked at me another moment, finally concluding: "Bonne chance." ("Good luck.")

When he was through, the general stood before the group and said: "France is grateful to you. Never forget you are Legionnaires."

With button still undone, kepi awry, and shirt not quite right, he gave us a flaccid, weak salute. What did he care? We were already lost to him. As we turned left to march off the parade ground, I noticed the shadow cast by the offices of the general commanding the French Foreign Legion had put the Monument aux Morts in darkness. *

[Ed's Note. The author served in the French Foreign Legion from May 1988 to May 1993, in the 4th Regiment, 13 DBLE, in the Republic of Djibouti, and 2REP, the Legion's parachute regiment. Earlier he also served in the Australian Army Reserve from 1982 until 1988. After leaving the Legion, he rejoined the reserve where he now holds the rank of lieutenant. He has a Masters Degree in Defense Studies from the Australian Defense Force Academy, and currently works as a lawyer in Canberra. He's written a book about his experiences and is currently looking for a publisher.]



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Command Looks at Cavalry, Part II

The Rise & Fall of Pistol Cavalry 1540-1685

by William J. McPeak



The beginning of the use of pistols on the battlefield followed closely their invention in the early 16th century. By then the potential of handheld firearms had already been proven. Making firearms more versatile and agile were the possibilities presented by the pistol.

By 1500, longarms had already revolutionized the traditional medieval battlefield on which mounted, well-armored knights had the advantage over largely unarmored infantry. Medieval infantry's most effective weapon had been the arrow as fired by crossbows and longbows. But once carrying firearms, infantrymen could fell even fully armored cavalry from 70 yards, and that effective range steadily lengthened as the new century wore on.

Galloping across an open field, lance in hand, against a large formation of determined, firearmed infantry who had armor-piercing capability, and were often protected by a perimeter hedge of 14 to 17 foot long pikes, was usually suicidal. That was proved all too true, especially for the stubbornly conservative French chivalry, first in 1503 at Cerignola, then at other places such as Bicocca (1522) and Pavia (1525). Heavy cavalry was clearly no longer invincible. Indeed, firearms in the hands of experienced commoners completely neutralized the proud and noble horsemen. Thus it was ironic the development of pistols helped regenerate the effectiveness of armored horsemen.

Firearm Mechanisms

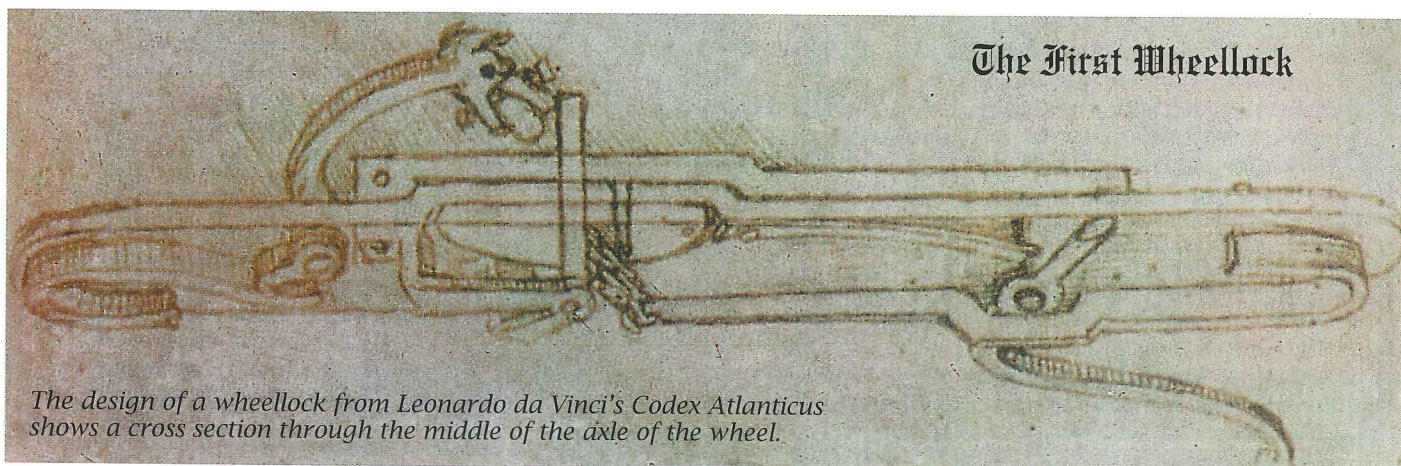
A crude trigger pivoted on a simple stock had been the initial impetus to the development of the gun-

The carbineer of the early 17th century (wearing three-quarter armor) — more agile than the early 16th century horse arquebusier, but still using both hands and usually stopping to fire. (From an early 17th century engraving — author's collection.)

lock. A smoldering matchcord attached at the other end to the trigger was lowered into a touchhole to discharge the weapon. From that approach came the first efficient, handheld, shouldered firearm, the arquebus, around the middle of the 15th century. But technical evolution didn't stop there, and it took its next revolutionary turn inspired by a clever mechanism designed to light tinder.

Tinder lighters appeared in southern Germany and northern Italy at the end of the 1400s. It was a device centered on a serrated wheel and positioned against a flint that was spun on a spindle by a thin piece of rope or small linked chain to spark tinder to ignition. The idea caught on and ideas for its use expanded until a more sophisticated version with a trigger became the wheellock mechanism for firearms.

That mechanism was the first semi-automatic device that began to appear on gunlock plates around 1525. At first wheellock longarms were just alternative weapons to crossbows, warhammers and battle-axes. But then better designs began showing up on a smaller firearm — the carbine — around 1535. They weren't cheap, because wheellocks still remained relatively complicated and delicate to make. But gone was the telltale, smoldering match of the arquebus; the wheellock had introduced the "dead fire" mechanism — it could make its own spark with friction.



The First Wheellock

The design of a wheellock from Leonardo da Vinci's Codex Atlanticus shows a cross section through the middle of the axle of the wheel.

The wheel of the lock was mounted on a spindle and wound, watch-like, by a small wrench or key into the cocked position. Then a clamp holding a piece of pyrite was brought down over the wheel, which perforated the bottom of the gun priming pan. Pulling the trigger released the wheel to spin against the pyrite, sparking the priming powder to ignite the main charge through the touchhole, firing the gun. Unlike the slow matchlock, trigger pull and ignition on the new pieces were nearly simultaneous and reliability was also higher. Only the wrench/key was an Achilles heel, since losing it meant a soldier was effectively disarmed. Tying it to the gunstock or wrist then largely solved that problem.

Birth of the Pistol

The wheellock literally sparked the genesis of a new firearm type. Whereas the matchlock had been a two-handed weapon, since the match cord had to be held at one end, the wheellock needed no such assistance. Thus by about 1540, carbines had been shortened enough in barrel and stock to the point they were true one-hand weapons — the pistol had been born. The Italo-French term “pistolet” rapidly entered military nomenclature along with ever greater numbers of the new weapons themselves.

When raiding Turks attacked an Austrian border fort in Hungary in 1543, they first encountered wheellock pistols in use. The next year in Italy, where the Austrian Hapsburgs and French Valois fought for hegemony for half a century, the latter's heavy cavalry were surprised at Ceresole by a detachment of German infantry pistoleers who fired upon them from behind a pike hedge.

The growing number of firearm proponents were not long content to remain in the infantry. By the 1520s accounts of skirmishes in the Italian wars told of mounted arquebusiers who rode into position, then dismounted to fire. By 1547, at the Battle of Mühlberg, fought during the Schmalkaldic War between Protestant German nobles and Catholic Emperor Charles V, fully armored pistoleer companies engaged one another.

Logically, there must have been experiments to transform early pistols from personal, secondary weapons into arms of primary tactical importance for cavalymen. Highly transportable — indeed, its easy concealability made pistols a sudden, new factor in political assassinations — the wheellock pistol's flaw lay in the fact it was still a short range weapon. Average range was only about 20 yards, with maximums out to about 80.

Whether light or heavy cavalry (unarmored or armored), pistoleers usually carried at least two pistols holstered to the saddle horn, often with another two holstered on their backs or on a belt. It was an obvious advantage to get off as many shots as possible before having to reload, and the need to overcome misfires was another consideration for carrying several weapons.

Test of Battle

From the Germanies the proving grounds for pistol tactics moved west during the French Wars of Religion (1562-1590). Those struggles were essentially a series of dynastic civil wars, nine in all. They pitted Catholic Royalists, predominantly fielding expert Swiss and Spanish mercenary infantry armies supported by a staid but numerous noble cavalry, against usually outnumbered Protestant mercenary infantry and a bolder Huguenot/Puritan cavalry. The battles of those wars showed a definite reemergence of cavalry, since the fighting always tended to center on mounted combat.

The wars began in earnest at St. Denis, north of Paris, in November 1567. The Huguenot cavalry commander there was the resourceful but rash Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Conde. On that occasion he had only about 400 horsemen, most equipped only as lancers, starting at both ends of a line of hidden arquebusiers. Surprising a Royalist cavalry formation that outnumbered them five to one, Louis attempted a pincer movement that almost succeeded. But then the Royalist reserve, made up of German pistoleer companies, knifed into the melee to determine victory.



Detail of an anonymous contemporary painting celebrating the victorious conclusion of the siege of Vienna on 12 September, 1683. Wheellock armed Polish cavalymen can be seen firing into the masses of conventionally armed Turks.

The timely intervention of some 2,000 German pistoleers at the next major clash, at Jarnac in March of 1569, again proved decisive. There the Huguenot defeat was further blackened when Louis, who'd suffered a broken leg, tried to surrender, only to be shot, execution-style, in the back of the head. The traditional code of chivalry, a light still flickering in the century's early years, was finally being blown out by

a more modern reprisal mentality that became common in all armies.

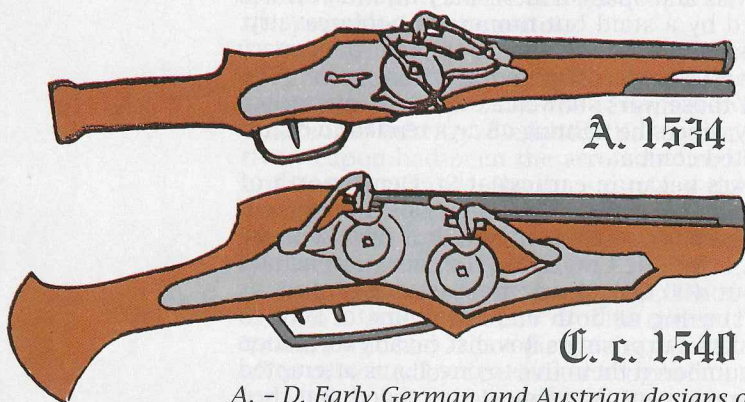
After Jarnac the seemingly undeniable value of pistoleers as tactical steamrollers became clear to both sides. But then a counter-trend also became apparent at Moncontour in October of 1569. There, though pistoleers were important in the flank operations of both armies, in the center — where a Roy-

Wheellock Design

To produce more successful combat weapons, early wheellock designers concentrated on improving the stock contour for ease of handling, and on improving accuracy through longer barrels. Again the German gunsmiths, especially those in the vicinity of Nuremberg and Augsburg, took the lead. Their "ballbutt" design abandoned the earlier straight styling, substituting an angled stock much like those of modern pistols. They also added a large doweled ball at the butt to make for a firmer grip and to counter-balance the weight of the lock and barrel. (This wasn't done to provide a last-resort club as some historians have wrongly claimed.)

Other German gunsmiths tested the limits of one-armed strength with all-metal designs, such as the Nuremberg "Fastrohr" (fistpipe), about 26 inches overall. But Italian and French makers tended to favor the cut-down carbine look right to the end of the century.

Since the powder of the time, called "serpentine," lacked the power of today's product, early pistol calibers as large as .70 were not uncommon. But the degree of over-charging with powder that such large size allowed could also cause aim-ruining kick. So by the late 16th century, size and caliber stabilized at .50 to .55, which remained the norms into the next century.

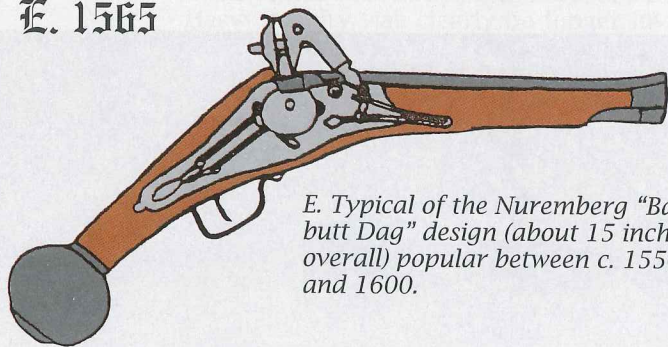


A - D. Early German and Austrian designs of wheellock pistols. Model C is a double-barrel/double lock design anticipating a one-lock failure by German gunsmith Peter Pech and made for the Emperor Charles V - who was himself an amateur gunsmith.

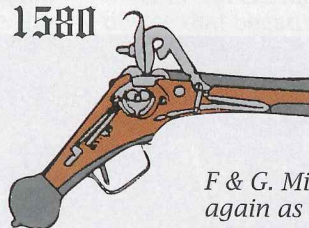
E. 1565

F. 1580

G. 1570



E. Typical of the Nuremberg "Ballbutt Dag" design (about 15 inches overall) popular between c. 1550 and 1600.

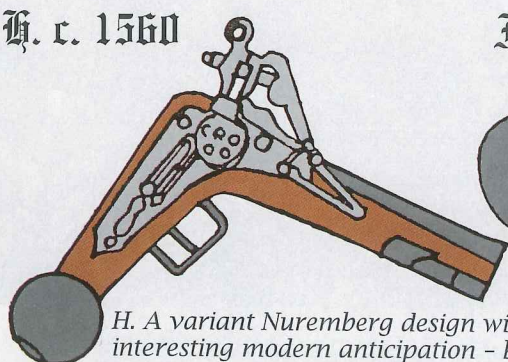


F & G. Miniature Ballbutts - G. is about half again as big as a 19th century derringer.

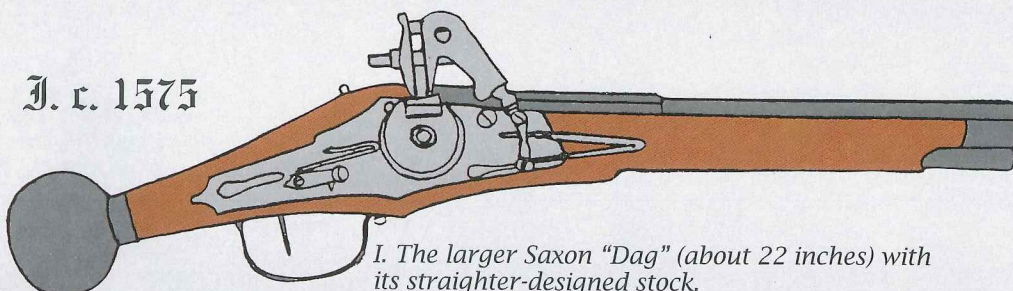


H. c. 1560

I. c. 1575



H. A variant Nuremberg design with a severe right angle stock - interesting modern anticipation - but probably inefficient.



I. The larger Saxon "Dag" (about 22 inches) with its straighter-designed stock.

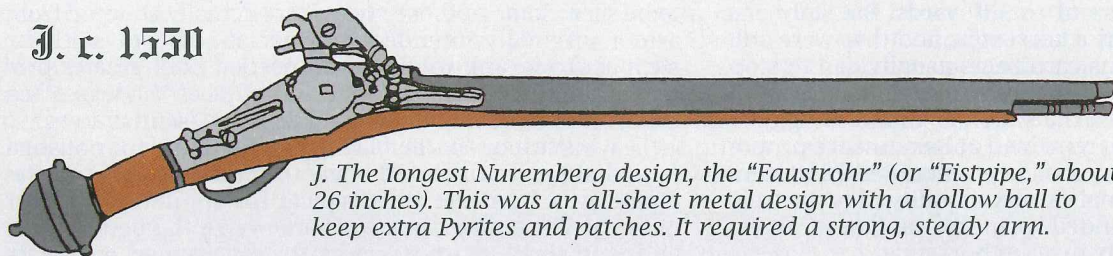
alist contingent of veteran Swiss pikemen and arquebusiers made a stand — the attacking Huguenot horsemen could not break through their effective, rolling fire, which handily defeated the horsemen's attempted caracole maneuver.

By the final stages of the Wars of Religion, when the Spanish under the brilliant Duke of Parma invaded France, the Huguenots had come to use pistoleers

primarily as a shock force in raids and in defensive holding actions. During that same period the Dutch Protestants and Catholic Flemish became confirmed pistoleers during their war for independence against the Spanish.

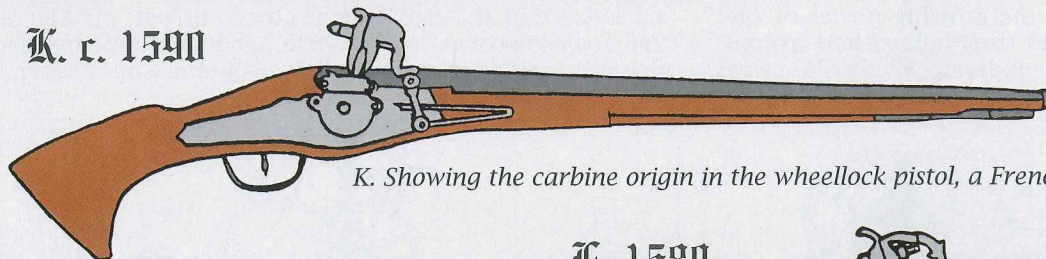
The finest hour for pistoleer cavalry occurred at Tournhout, in the Netherlands, in 1597. There three intensively trained Anglo-Dutch squadrons broke five

J. c. 1550



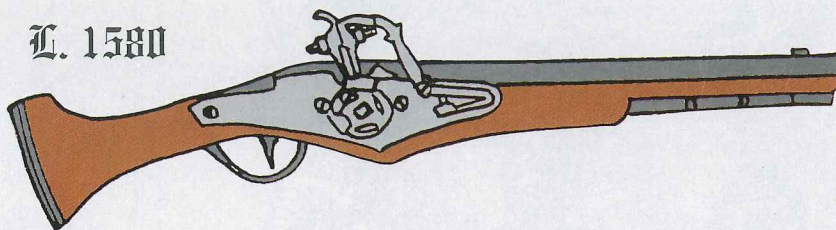
J. The longest Nuremberg design, the "Faustrohr" (or "Fistpipe," about 26 inches). This was an all-sheet metal design with a hollow ball to keep extra Pyrites and patches. It required a strong, steady arm.

K. c. 1590



K. Showing the carbine origin in the wheellock pistol, a French design.

L. 1580



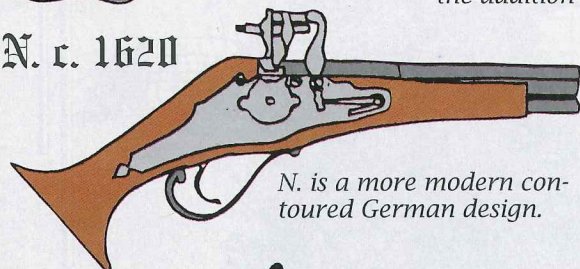
L. Italian wheellock of the "Brescian" style — another longarm-influenced design. Brescia was a famous arms manufacturing center in northern Italy.

M. c. 1600



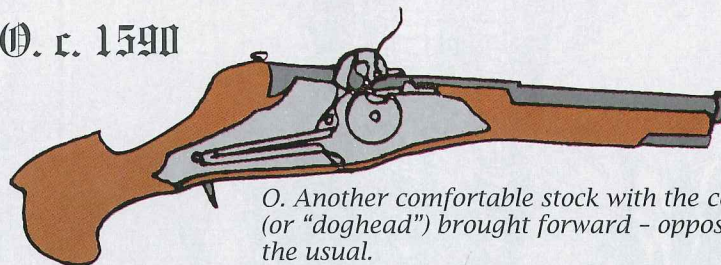
M. German "Pearbutt" wheellock pistol, lighter and of a more contoured design than the ballbutt. This was the cavalry weapon of choice between 1580 and — with the addition of a pistol grip after 1600 — through the end of the Thirty Years War.

N. c. 1620



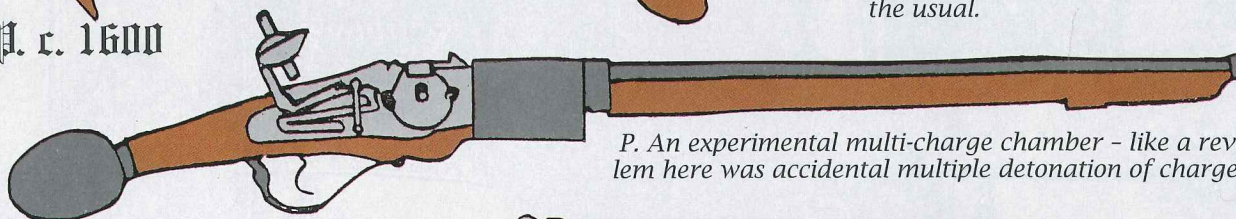
N. is a more modern contoured German design.

O. c. 1590



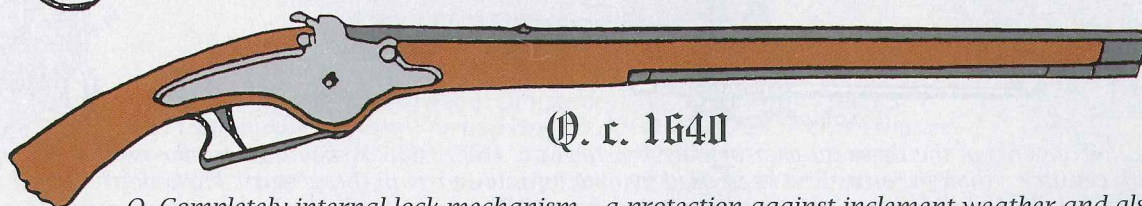
O. Another comfortable stock with the cock (or "doghead") brought forward — opposite to the usual.

P. c. 1600



P. An experimental multi-charge chamber — like a revolver. The problem here was accidental multiple detonation of charge chambers.

Q. c. 1640



Q. Completely internal lock mechanism — a protection against inclement weather and also a means of protecting the delicate wheellock mechanism.

Armor Evolves in Response

The heavy arquebus, first appearing about 1525, could pierce armor out to about 100 yards. Around 1545 the musket came into use, an awesome longarm, heavy enough, at about 20 lbs., to require a forked rest for aiming and firing its .80 to .90 caliber shot. Such weapons could defeat even the heaviest armor out to 125 yards.

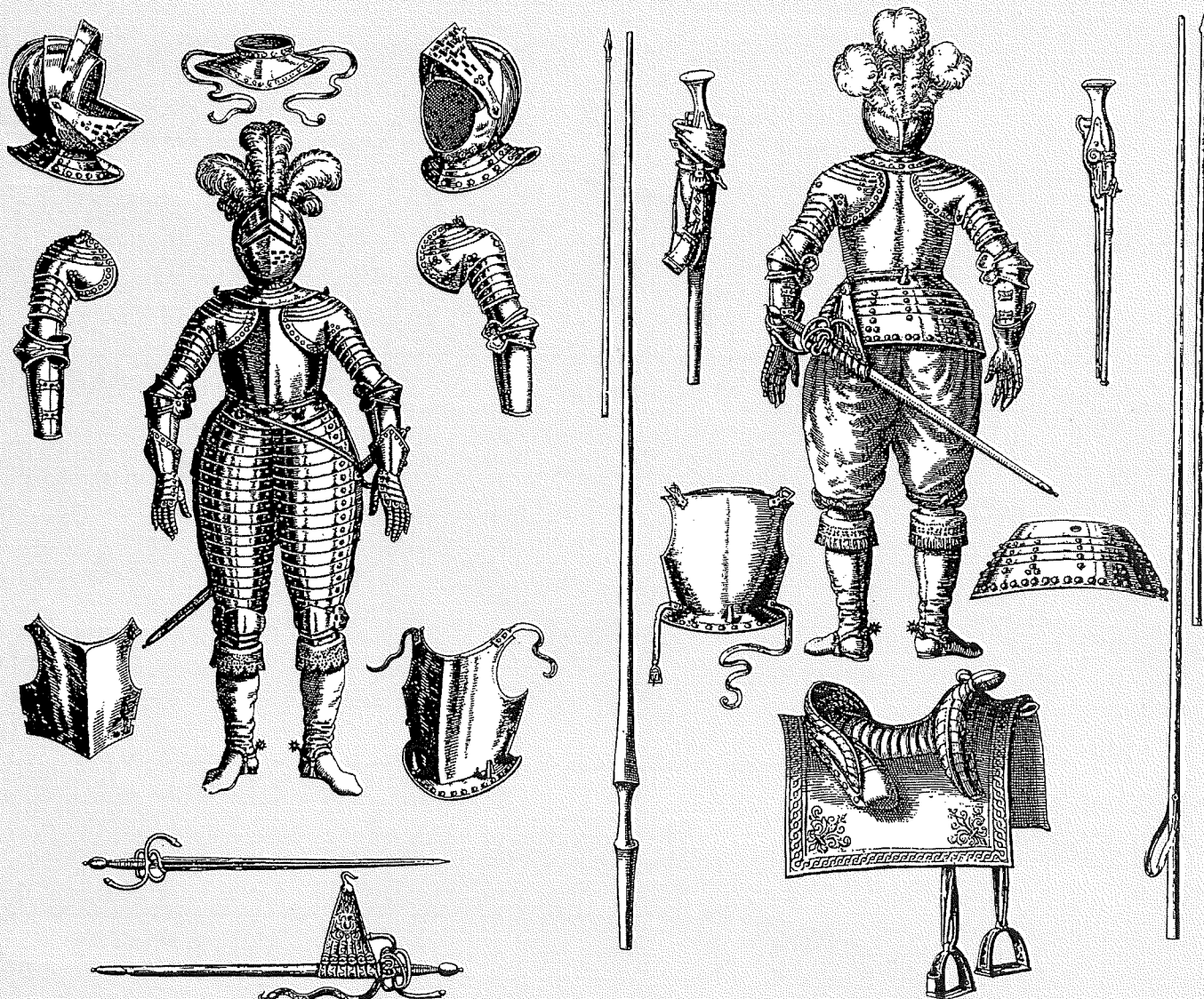
The initial hope of the cavalry was to counter the new infantry firearms with horse arquebusiers carrying wheel-lock carbines with ranges out to 120 yards. But only one carbine could be carried by a horseman, and they were still two-handed weapons. Thus carbineers usually had to stop to fire. Though later efforts were made to train to fire at the gallop, accurate shots from the shoulder while riding over uneven ground on a horse remained at best unsure propositions. In contrast, it was soon seen mounted pistoleers retained both the traditional cavalry mobility plus the freedom inherent in a one-handed weapon — and several pistols could be carried easily by each horseman.

In another effort to defeat the growing power of the infantry, heavy cavalymen had their helmet and frontal armor reinforced to withstand moderate weight shot. Given practical weight restrictions, that meant armor could be

“proofed” against pistol and small carbine shot at long and intermediate ranges. Such proofing on new armor was indicated by a small dent in the lower front, validating a carbine or pistol shot had been fired at it without puncturing.

Articulating armor — that is, replacing plate with riveted lames — then worked to provide the necessary flexibility to the heavier gear. Also to save weight, three-quarter armors (to the knees) and half-armors (to the thigh) began to be seen. Some of those styles were actually adapted from armor originally intended for specialized foot soldiers, such as front rank soldiers who needed both greater protection and mobility. The seat and back of the legs often came to be left completely open as non-essential areas.

Leaving armor “in the black” — forged but not polished — and stained or painted black to minimize rust maintenance, was from the start typical for common issue for infantry. But it also came to characterize the better made half- and three-quarter armors for cavalymen pistoleers and lancers of the mid-16th century. Indeed, pistoleers came to be known as “Black Riders,” and their dark appearance provided an added psychological effect on inexperienced infantry.



Accoutrements of the three-quarter armored pistoleer c. 1600-1648. Articulated armor for cavalry appeared around mid 16th century — though forms had been used by elite infantry early in the century. Particularly useful to the cavalryman, it traded rigid for flexible plate armor, augmenting his mobility and speed. The leather pistol holsters were put on either side of the saddle horn. (From Johann Jacobi von Wallhausen's Art Militaire an Cheval, The Art of Mounted Warfare 1616.)

times their number of Spanish lancers, put their Catholic counterparts to flight, then smashed the main enemy pike and musket formations — and accomplished it all using well-disciplined caracoles. Dutch fame as the world's preeminent caracole pistoleers grew after that battle. One green English trooper who also rode with them to victory would later become famous in American colonial history, Capt. John Smith.

In his career as an adventurer after the Dutch Wars, but before going to Virginia, he did a stint as a mercenary in the Austrian imperial cavalry fighting the Turks. In those border combats, pistoleer and carbine cavalry proved extremely effective against the massive but undisciplined Turkish formations. On 15 October 1601, Smith took part in the Battle of Tschar-pa Pass, where advancing regiments of Austrian pis-

toleer/carbine cavalry shot their way through a larger Turkish cavalry force by using volley fire.

Evolving Tactics

During the 17th century, then, the tactics of cavalry combat changed from a clash of sword on sword and lance on lance to pistoleers riding at one another to fire as close as possible. The best disciplined even attempted to ride past their opponent, then turn and fire on his vulnerable back. It also became common to shoot at the horses themselves.

The era's various tactical manuals differed in the degree to which they accepted firearms. For example, some stodgy English texts printed late in the 16th century still favored the crossbow and longbow as the primary infantry weapon. But even the most conservative authorities came to concede lancers should

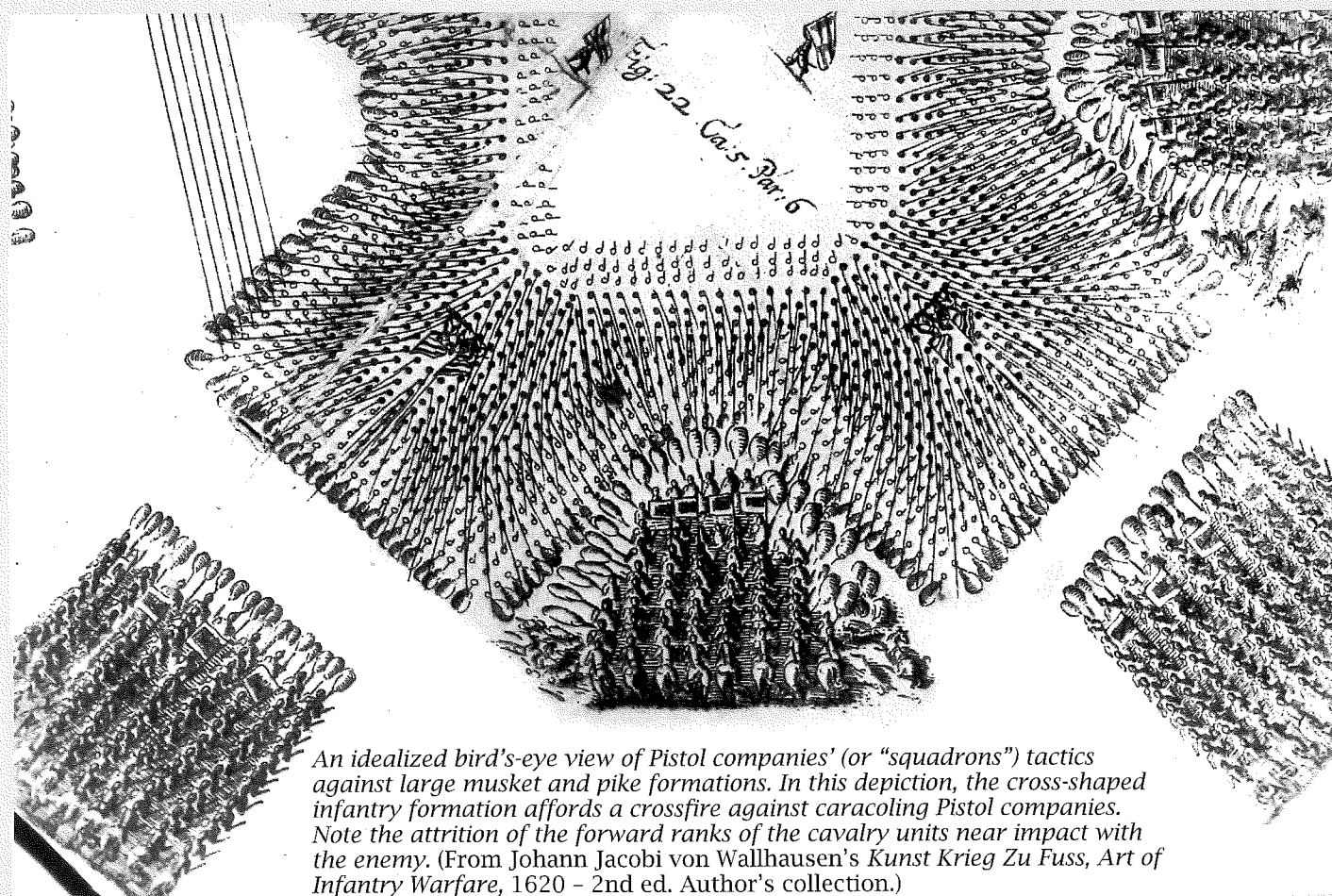
The Caracole

The caracole was the primary pistol cavalry maneuver developed to break pike/musket infantry squares (though it was sometimes also used against defending cavalry). In Italian the term means "to turn," and its successful employment required a combination of speed, dexterity and precision.

Caracoles usually involved a pistoleer company, or even a full regiment, charging in tight rank and file formation directly at an enemy pike/musket square. Once in range, the cavalry's front rank would fire two or three shots, then divide in half, turning away to the left and right to return to the rear of the formation to reload, then advance again in sequence to repeat the entire process. If all went well, the rapid and rolling fire generated by a caracole could dis-

rupt an infantry formation enough to allow the attackers to penetrate into its ranks.

Of course, failure was a common outcome for so complicated a tactic. There are numerous accounts of horsemen trying to improve the odds of their own survival by firing their pistols before reaching effective range, then quickly veering off to avoid the inevitable storm of longarm return fire. Even after turning away, the chance of colliding with other friendly units, or being attacked while still wheeling about and reloading, remained common hazards. Still further, good infantry soon learned shooting down an advancing caracole's front rank of horsemen as quickly as possible, before their attack could gain much momentum, often easily overturned the entire caracole.



An idealized bird's-eye view of Pistol companies' (or "squadrons") tactics against large musket and pike formations. In this depiction, the cross-shaped infantry formation affords a crossfire against caracoling Pistol companies. Note the attrition of the forward ranks of the cavalry units near impact with the enemy. (From Johann Jacobi von Wallhausen's *Kunst Krieg Zu Fuss*, Art of Infantry Warfare, 1620 - 2nd ed. Author's collection.)

always carry at least one pistol as back up. Traditional chivalry was first distorted, then overturned, by the more assured result of a well aimed pistol shot over that of a sword slash.

By the time of the outbreak of the Thirty Years War (1618), pistoleers had become mainstays on the battlefields of Europe. They continued to thrive, in both heavy and light units, throughout the rest of that century. Thereafter, as the simpler and cheaper flintlock mechanism became common on both pistols and longarms, further increasing those weapons' potency, cavalry again refocused on mobility. But the wheellock had served as a great impetus to gunpowder technology, generating a new tactical relevance for cavalry during the bridge period between med-

ieval and modern warfare in the 16th and 17th centuries. ★

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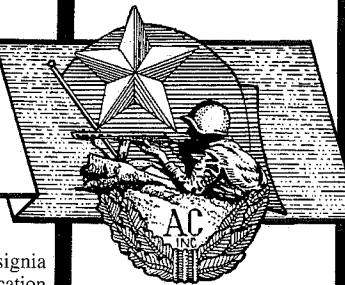
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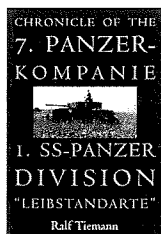


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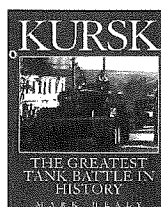


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The Pueblo Revolt Indian Uprising on the Rio Grande

by Kelly Bell



Two 17-year-old Pueblo tribesmen, Catua and Omtua, pelted from their New Mexican village of Dry Spot at daybreak on 9 August 1680. Their mission was to spread news of the commencement of a major revolt against their people's Spanish rulers. They first skirted the community of Bead Water (which the Spaniards called Santa Fe), then sprinted the 18 miles southeast to San Cristobal, where they got an unexpected reception.

They carried lengths of knotted cords whose meaning would be understood only to those versed in that ancient means of communication, which the tribes had been careful to keep secret from the Europeans. The positioning of the knots conveyed the date of the impending uprising, and each chief who received it was to send aloft a prearranged smoke signal to acknowledge he was beginning preparations. But when the boys showed the cords to the Spanish-appointed governor (called the "tuyo" by the natives) of San Cristobal, he kindled no signal fire. Instead he leaped on the horse the colonial authorities allowed him to own, and pounded off toward the settlements of Rising Leaf Lake and Turquoise Town to give the alarm to the armor-clad white men in those places whom the natives called the "Metal People."

Before long the turncoat tuyo's warning had reached the Spanish Gov. Antonio de Otermin in Santa Fe. Acting swiftly, the occupying whites mobilized and galloped off to all points of their domain to caution the colonists that the people they'd long oppressed were going to rise. Catua and Omtua were soon hunted down and hanged, but their deaths weren't in vain. Only loyal chiefs knew the cords contained a code within a code, and neither did the Spaniards learn of it from their two prisoners. The young men accepted martyrdom rather than divulge the crucial secret. They had good reason, for the coming revolt had a long and bitter build up.

For thousands of years the Pueblos and other tribes had found a good living along the banks of the Rio Grande. They hunted, raised corn, squash and beans, and worshipped spirit beings they called Kachinas. It was never an idyllic existence — Navaho and Apache raiders sometimes swept down from the highlands to steal crops. Yet those freebooters were nev-

Coronado leading his men through the southwest in search of the legendary Cibola.

er a great enough menace to drive the Pueblos from their vast, fertile valley, or even compel them to unite into a centrally controlled entity for mutual defense. The occasional pillagers had been more of a nuisance. As centuries passed, the agricultural tribesmen spread farther afield until the Rio Grande valley was peppered with their settlements and cultivated fields. But in 1539 an utterly new factor entered their domain.

A band of bizarre looking aliens passed through the region headed generally west. Wearing outlandish garb that rendered them immune to arrows, and carrying heavy sticks that spurted smoke and fire to kill from a distance, they were led by an ambitious man named Coronado. Searching for what they called the "Seven Cities of Gold," the strangers were bitterly disappointed by what they didn't find in the area later named New Mexico. So they continued to travel northwest in their quest for the soft, yellow metal they told the Pueblos they'd found in great abundance to the south.

Though Coronado and his expedition weren't interested in the Pueblos' land, they carried back reports to their headquarters in Mexico City. Some of the newcomers there were intent on things other than gold. The warm climate and fertile soil of the Rio Grande region began to attract Europeans. They had ideas of private property that were foreign to the red men's concept of free passage and common-held land. They enslaved the tribesmen, took their women as concubines, and introduced terrible sicknesses. Smallpox, tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, scarlet fever, measles and syphilis decimated the once-hale natives. They were then further enfeebled by malnutrition when their new masters took crops and livestock as taxes for the privilege of allowing them to remain living on their own land.

Most galling was the Spaniards' attempt to eradicate the Kachina religion. The natives were deeply committed to their idols, and the brutal effort of the Catholic clerics and civil authorities to suppress the old beliefs succeeded only in compelling greater discretion among adherents. Floggings and hangings

imposed for public pagan ceremonies forced the observances underground, but didn't, as the priests assumed, eliminate them.

Sporadic uprisings broke out in 1630, 1645, 1650 and 1664, but none were large enough to shake off colonial control. Rebels not killed in battle were whipped and hanged, or sold into slavery. The natives had yet to find a charismatic leader capable of bringing them together into a united front to oppose the conquerors, but one would soon arrive.

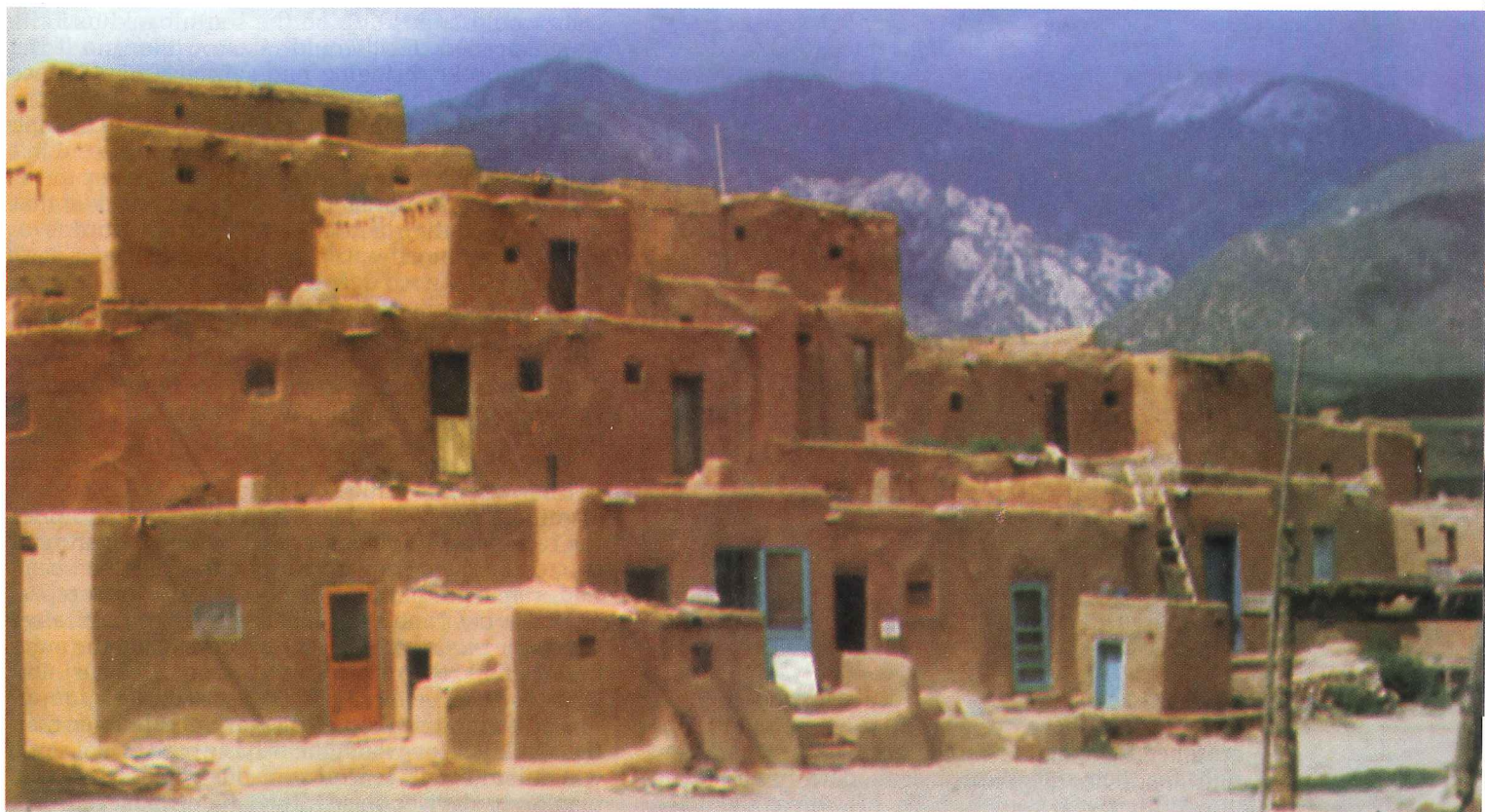
The year 1670 brought a crippling drought that reduced both Pueblos and Europeans to boiling and eating ox harnesses to hold off starvation. The following year an anthrax epidemic killed most of the livestock that had survived the famine. There were no longer any reserves left to exploit. The Rio Grande valley's population was forced into total dependence on the triennial supply shipment from Mexico City. By 1680 the Indians had yet another reason to track those wagon trains' progress.

In 1675 the Franciscans had 47 Kachina medicine men arrested and tried for witchcraft. Surprisingly, only four were hanged — the rest were publicly flogged (nearly to death) and imprisoned. But a mass demonstration by *Christian* natives then convinced the authorities to release them. In the meantime, though, one of the battered shamans, ironically called "Pope," had conceived a brilliant plan for revolution while in the Spanish dungeon.

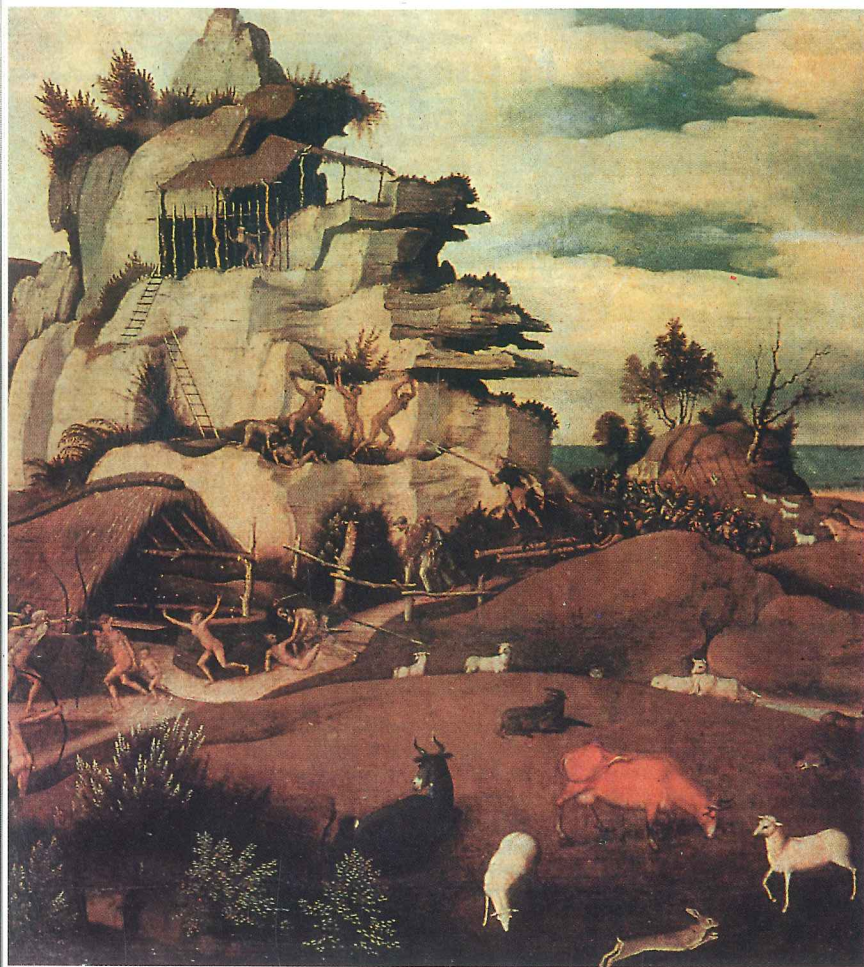
After being released, he made his way on foot back to his home town of Grinding Stone, where he began to preach a creed that had never before occurred to his compatriots. He told them their only hope of throwing off the colonial yoke was to unite against the Spaniards, who — collectively — they still greatly outnumbered.



Because it was feared the women couldn't be trusted to keep quiet, they weren't told of the new cabal. But Pope became worried his daughter may have overheard some of the clandestine planning. The young woman's husband was named Bua, and he'd been appointed tuyo of Grinding Stone. Bua's ties to



The Taos Pueblo in present-day New Mexico is similar to the Indian settlements originally found there by the Spaniards early in the 16th century.



The Battle of Pueblo Oa-Oiuma, painted in 1545 by Jan Mostaert, is a fanciful depiction of Indians attempting to defend their strange, cliff-top dwellings from Coronado's advance.

the colonial powers made Pope worry even more, so he summoned his son-in-law to his home and killed him.

Despite that precaution the Spaniards began to hear disturbing rumors. When New Mexico's Secretary of War, Francisco Xavier, a mortal foe of the indigenous religion, became suspicious and threatened Pope's life if the Indian didn't stop agitating, the medicine man fled to the village of Red Willow. There he found further support for his plan and the revolution gained momentum.

The greatest priorities were obtaining horses and firearms, since their masters had been careful to deny them both guns and mounts. That not only made it difficult for the Pueblos to organize armed resistance, but for decades had left them virtually defenseless against marauding Apaches. That made Pope's next suggestion initially incomprehensible to his people.

Though the Apaches had always traded more or less peacefully with the Spaniards, the whites had lately taken to abducting their children and selling them into slavery. Relations between the Pueblos' enemies had therefore worsened to the point Pope reasoned it might be possible to enlist the Apaches to fight for their side. With their modern firearms and powerful, swift ponies, both of which had been acquired in quantity through trade while they were still on better terms with the whites, the Apache warriors would indeed be a priceless asset in the com-

ing fight. As he put it: "We will be better off with the Apaches at our side than with them at our back."

Pope and his lieutenants, Catiti, Saca, Flat Nose, Tupatu and Little Pot, began final planning for the mass uprising's first stage, during which they would seize as many guns and horses as possible before launching the pivotal attack on Santa Fe. If they could cut contact between that capital and the outlying European settlements, the scattered colonials would be confused and leaderless.

The natives also started spreading false rumors upriver, telling that the Rio Grande valley was already under rebel control, while agents downstream circulated the tale the capital had fallen to insurgents. An ingenious plan to keep the Spanish bewildered and uncoordinated was thus meticulously implemented. Finally the only major issue still to be decided was exactly when to strike.

Every third spring a huge supply convoy from Mexico City replenished food stocks, armories and horse herds. The time to attack was therefore just before the wagon train's arrival, when the Spaniards' stores of gunpowder, shot, operable guns and armor would be at their lowest. The colonists had also suffered from the blistering drought and were weak and hungry. That was the time to cut into the enemy and send him reeling completely out of tribal land. Then the weather contributed further to the rebel cause.

Word had filtered down from the north that the winter of 1679-80 had brought record snowfalls in the mountains from which flowed the Rio Grande. Spring had come late and cool, and little of the distant snowpack had melted. When July brought a sudden, stifling heat, the tons of melting snow uncorked a cascade, sending the river into the highest flood in memory. The usual fords became deep, freezing cold rapids, and the revolutionaries realized the supply train would be held up on the south bank until the water receded. That would take a while, and if the drought broke, bringing mid-summer rains before the snow melt had run out of the valley, the river would stay impassable still longer. It seemed to Pope and his commanders the enemy's supplies couldn't possibly arrive before the end of August. They therefore planned the uprising for the second week of that month. Then they had only to spread the word.

Runners fanned out to the region's villages. Each man carried tanned deer hides that he would tell any suspicious Spaniards were for trade. Each hide was emblazoned with decorative paintings that actually conveyed encoded information of the revolt. Before long, loyal tribesmen throughout the homeland they called "Aztlán" knew the time to strike was imminent.

Pope intended his forces kill every last European in the vicinity of Santa Fe. That would make the rest frightened enough to leave Aztlán voluntarily. Since the rebels had no calendar, they sent out their most trusted messengers with cords into which had been tied a specific number of knots. Each knot represented a day, and when the number of days after which the cords had been received matched the number of knots, the revolt would supposedly start. But it was a ruse.

The communication cords gave a date later than the actual one on which the tribes would strike. Pope was still intensely fearful someone would betray the plan, so he devised this stratagem to expose any traitors. If warriors noticed the armored soldiers in their area suddenly become agitated and busy, it would be certain indication the plan had been revealed. Any

Pueblo who'd been seen approaching the whites immediately before they became alarmed would thus be identified as a turncoat. Also, since the defector would have given the enemy a date later than the actual one, the Spanish still wouldn't have time to complete their preparations before the blow fell.

The message Catua and Omtua had taken to the treasonous tuyo indicated the uprising would start at dawn on 13 August 1680. When the collaborator rode off to deliver the information, he not only exposed his own treachery but set up the Metal People to be assailed three days earlier than they expected. When the traitor spilled the news and the two teenagers were caught and hanged, rebel agents hurried word of the developments to Pope. He immediately sent a second group of runners with news the revolt was to start at almost once, at dawn on 10 August.

At daybreak on the 10th, then, painted and howling warriors fought their way into ranch houses, military outposts and convents. In the village of Red Willow the local magistrate managed to send two riders toward Santa Fe, in hope of informing the governor of the insurrection and summoning reinforcements. Those couriers turned out to be the only Spaniards from Red Willow to survive the morning's carnage.

Throughout the region the Pueblos unleashed the pent-up rage of decades, as they killed every Spaniard and half-Spaniard they found, regardless of age or sex. They sacked, desecrated, then burned every Catholic church and abbey. They seized cattle, horses and weapons from their erstwhile rulers. By afternoon on the first day most braves were mounted and armed with arquebuses and swords. The insurgents swept through town after town, destroying all vestiges of the people and religion from across the sea. The warriors took back the goods they and their families had been forced to make or grow for the occupiers, in the process killing all but a few isolated pockets of Spaniards.

The rebels were careful to stage an impressive show of force before closing in on well-defended Santa Fe. Beside the demoralizing effect of their devastating sweep across Aztlan, they also succeeded in isolating the capital, making it impossible for the governor to summon aid. Further, since Santa Fe had been reserved as the last target, Pope was able to concentrate all his forces there before attacking.

Among the refugees streaming into the city were a number of Pueblos pretending to be collaborators, but who were actually spies sent to gather information for the advancing rebels. Those agents also spread a false rumor claiming the stoutly defended Spanish outpost of Kick Flint had fallen. Gov. Otermin was shaken to be told that vital place had been neutralized. (The stronghold was in fact still secure, but the messengers dispatched from there to inform him of that fact had been intercepted and killed by Pope's warriors.)

The actual situation in and around Kick Flint hadn't gone the way Pope had intended. Because of some miscommunication among the far-flung assault groups, not all the first day's attacks had begun promptly at daybreak. Thus a number of Spaniards were able to flee into Kick Flint to barricade themselves inside the thick walls of its church, monastery and few other robust buildings. In addition, the whites also took in with them all the food the previously peaceful natives of the town had in their homes. Therefore when Pope's messengers arrived with explanation of the revolt's psychological strategy, the

locals were glad to cooperate. Soon the crucial lie all the Metal People to the north were dead, including Otermin and his troops, had been spread throughout Kick Flint. Thus, with those in each of the two most significant surviving Spanish strongholds believing the others had been wiped out, there was no effort to establish communications or coordinate operations between them.

Around noon the first day couriers reached the villages of the 5,000 strong Hemiss tribe who lived farther to the west, and the able-bodied men there rallied to Pope's cause. About the same time, Hopi,



Santiago (St. James), the patron saint of the conquistadores, depicted in a 16th century painting by an unknown artist. The soldier-saint is shown with upraised sword, crushing his enemies beneath his steed. The Spanish battle-cry "Santiago!" rang out across much of North America as those invaders fought their way to empire over the bodies of the Indians.



A fanciful period-depiction of Spanish friars being slain by rebelling Pueblos.

Apache and Zuni warriors also began coming in to swell the revolutionaries' ranks. By evening on 10 August, then, a still-growing throng of resolute braves was approaching Santa Fe. Back in their villages, their women were performing the long-proscribed war dance, whirling and praying for the men's success and safety.

On the morning of the 13th, two massive rebel columns moved in toward the capital from north and south. Pope was with the first-arriving southern group, and immediately sent a message into the defenders carried by a tribesman named Juan, who until just days before had been one of Otermin's slaves. Juan held two crosses, one red and one white, and told the seething governor if he accepted the white he and all who wanted to accompany him would be allowed to leave Aztlan unmolested. But if Otermin preferred to fight the revolutionary army he was to take the red cross. The governor indignantly refused both options, simply sending back Juan with his demand the Indians abort their rebellion. Pope gave Otermin a second chance to depart in peace, and again it was refused. From that moment the insurgents resolved to storm the city and wipe out the European enclave as soon as the northern group was in position.

On the evening of the 14th the second force appeared on the heights north of town and, using captured firearms, began shooting down into the panicked crowd who by then filled Santa Fe's courtyards and streets. At the same time, the situation developing in Kick Flint was almost as grave for the Spaniards.

The commandant there had managed to send out scouts to reconnoiter the area around his post, and was amazed by the reports they brought back of the totality of the natives' blazing sweep across the region. Calling together his officers, all soon agreed

the best course was to abandon Kick Flint to withdraw south toward Mexico City. Though general orders strictly forbade any Spanish soldier from retreating without his superior's order, those in Kick Flint believed Otermin was dead. They therefore hastily moved out, heading south.

While that was going on, to the north the Indian pincers were closing on the miserably overcrowded capital. The rebels had dammed the canal that carried water into Santa Fe, so the defenders, noncombatants and their livestock were soon being tortured by thirst as well as psychological terror. Their defensive outposts began falling to the screeching warriors. Then dysentery broke out among the Europeans, worsening the tormenting dehydration. Within the walled central compound, the sick and wounded could hear the steadily nearing cacophony of warw hoops.

The attackers tried to burn their way through the doors of the chapel that formed part of the central plaza and its surrounding palisade, but the massive wooden doors withstood the flames. From outside the stockade the besiegers began to chant in Spanish: "God, the father of the Spaniards, is dead! Santa Maria, mother of the Spaniards, is dead! Our gods have never died!"

The colonists' callous attempt to force Christian salvation on their subjects thus bore tragic fruit.

By that time Otermin had suffered two arrow wounds to his face and also had an arquebus ball embedded in his chest. Every one of his soldiers who hadn't yet been killed had at least sustained one wound. But he retained his wits despite the apparent hopelessness of the situation. With little to lose, he decided to open the main gates and send a headlong cavalry charge into the hostile mass. Mounting all his still able-bodied cavalymen, he had the priests celebrate a quick mass. Then, bolstered by a squad of bow and arrow-armed native auxiliaries, they flung open the gates and went pounding straight into the surprised rebels. Towing a pair of cannon, and croaking Hail Marys with chapped lips, the desperate whites thundered into the crowd, trampling many to death beneath their horses' hooves.

Galloping through town, they set fire to the buildings the natives had fortified. About 300 insurgents died in those fires, while another 47 were captured and herded back into the central plaza. The raiders also managed to return with some casks of water, temporarily relieving the trapped garrison's maddening thirst. When interrogated by the bloody faced Otermin, the prisoners were quick to tell him (this time truthfully) his command was the sole remaining Spanish enclave in all Aztlan; the others had been annihilated or deserted. After having all the prisoners shot, Otermin and his subordinates began devising an escape plan.

A larger repeat of the charge out of the stockade seemed the most promising tactic. But burdened with wounded, sick and noncombatants, such a procession would be unable to move with anything approaching the speed of the earlier flying wedge. Nevertheless, no other options remained to the despairing Metal People.

The 1,000 or so soon-to-be refugees had just 400 exhausted oxen to pull their wagons. Most of the evacuees would therefore have to walk, carrying on their backs their small children and whatever possessions they could also heft. Among their number were some Christian Pueblos unwilling to separate from those who'd converted (and in many cases owned) them; so they accompanied the whites on the

morning of 21 August as the charred gates swung open and the silent, fearful parade set out through the mass of the incredulous besiegers.

The surrounding warriors showed little inclination to attack the vulnerable formation — they merely followed to make certain their former masters didn't deviate from a southward heading. As long as the defeated colonists continued toward Mexico City, the rebels saw no need to shed another drop of blood on either side. Their hated foes were leaving Aztlan; the vision of Pope was coming to pass before their eyes and their land was again their own.

The supply train was still stuck on the south bank of the swollen Rio Grande, unable to come to the aid of the bedraggled mob from Santa Fe. Pope's hope for heavy summer rains had also been fulfilled, and the big river was still an impenetrable barrier. About 1,500 refugees from Kick Flint also moved toward the river ford where El Paso would later be built. About a week behind them came those fleeing from the capital, heading toward the same crossing. Eventually both groups merged, and sometime later were finally able to cross the river. Shortly thereafter they halted to found the settlement that would eventually grow into the city of Juarez, Mexico.

Back in the liberated villages the Pueblos celebrated their new freedom. They danced and feasted, then mourned and buried the warriors who'd died in the fighting. They made homes of Santa Fe's government buildings, performed victory jigs in the plaza where the Spaniards had flogged and hanged them, and — most significantly — converted all remaining Catholic chapels into Kachina shrines. Natives who'd been baptized (in many cases forcibly) waded into the Rio Grande, scrubbing themselves with soap made from the roots of the yucca plant. Such anti-baptisms were considered sufficient to reverse and negate the most hated feature of European rule: Christianity. The Pueblos and their land were completely Pueblo again.

The revolution thus triumphed, but afterward the Pueblo made a serious error. Pope continued to preach tirelessly about the need for continued unity to dissuade the colonists from ever trying to return. He understood the Spaniards well enough to know they wouldn't easily relinquish a region as desirable as Aztlan, and in time would return in force. But to most in the newly freed tribes the Metal People seemed to have been chastened in a way that would last forever. They soon seemed far away and no longer directly threatening to the people who'd humbled them. So despite Pope's dire warnings, the villages began to drift back into isolation, discarding the federation that had made them successful. To his dying day in 1688, Pope kept pleading for unity and vigilance. But too few listened, and by the time of his passing the combined front he'd created was completely disintegrated.

Soon the diverse factions fell into quarreling among themselves. The Spaniards realized they could stop biding their time. They mounted a powerful counterattack in 1692, with their mass of armor-plated soldiers teeming and bristling with weapons. The disunited Indians were swiftly reconquered, but the Metal People had learned something of prudence.

The convents, monasteries and churches were rebuilt, and the red men again attended mass. But now the Europeans refrained from interfering when their subjects donned traditional ceremonial masks, performed dances to honor the Kachina, and went on pilgrimages to commune with the pagan gods. The



The Spaniards' passion for gold first bewildered, then embittered the Indians of Aztlan. In this period-depiction, rebelling Pueblos are shown pouring some of the molten mettle down the throat of a captured white man. Supposedly they yelled: "Eat gold, eat gold, insatiable Christian!"

men from across the sea had learned a hard lesson about trying to suppress old faiths — they knew better than to try coercion again.

It was 1821 before Aztlan, which had meanwhile become part of the area called Mexico, won permanent independence from Spain. Then an ambitious young general named Santa Anna would lead his countrymen to victory. By that time, however, few inhabitants were red or white; the population had by then mostly fused into a new and mixed ethnicity loosely called "Hispanic." To this day the people of the Rio Grande valley recall the Pueblo Revolt as the only native effort that completely succeeded, at least for a time, in pushing out the Europeans from an entire colony. ☼

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COMMENTARY

America's Militia Heritage

by Allen P. Bristow

In the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, the term "militia member" has become an epithet. The follow up reporting on that tragedy surprised and shocked most Americans, who learned from it for the first time that organized, uniformed, private, domestic military groups exist inside this country. But, in fact, militias in America actually predate our national experience, were an important factor in establishing our independence, and have been a source of controversy ever since.

Early English settlers first brought with them the tradition of the Elizabethan militia, which included the idea

of compulsory service by all male adults. Since the Crown provided little real support to the emerging colonies, the militia soon became institutionalized as the only dependably available defense against Indian and other European attackers. Later, when European wars spilled over into the colonies, British troops were sent to shield against French encroachment, and our militias were deployed in their support. The training given those early citizen-soldiers by British professionals also served to provide the first cadre of officers for the Continental Army.

During the Revolutionary War each state's militia members were general-

ly required to provide their own arms and uniforms. They were our sole military force at the battles of Concord, Lexington and Bunker Hill. As the war progressed, Congress authorized establishment of the Continental Army, and the role of the militia in the fighting became secondary except along the frontier. In every major battle fought, however, local militia supported the Continentals in both victory and defeat. The renowned "Minute Men" were actually militia members designated for rapid mobilization.

After the Revolutionary War our new nation faced a dilemma. Unable to afford a large standing army, and opposed by various states in its attempts to create even a small professional one, Congress embraced the militia system. In doing so, they gambled our geographic isolation would provide the time needed to mobilize the state militias to repel attack.

Thus, in 1792, Congress passed the Uniform Militia Act, which required each state to organize a militia, provided guidelines, and gave the President the authority to call them to active duty for three months. Service was universal for males between the ages of 18 and 45 years. But the bill also set up the system as what would today be called an "unfunded mandate," meaning each state had to come up with its own money to support its militia.

State militia officers were appointed by their governor or elected by their troops, and it wasn't uncommon for socially prominent — rather than militarily capable — men to hold those positions. Such officers often financed their units with their own funds. In urban and unthreatened rural areas, militia duty wasn't taken seriously, with drills either poorly attended or run simply as social events. Along the frontier, though, where Indian attacks and outlawry remained constant threats, militia duty stayed an important element of good citizenship.

Definitions

MILITIA

A voluntary association of extra-governmental troops acting under their own authority. (Benjamin Franklin)

Part-time military or para-military formations that are organized and trained to serve in defense of a nation in time of emergency. (Dictionary of Military Terms)

An authorized military force other than the full-time professional military establishment...especially an army of citizens trained for war or emergencies...an authorized, unorganized military force consisting of able-bodied men of 18-45 years...any citizens army...any nonprofessional armed force organized or summoned to duty in an emergency. (World Book Dictionary)

A group, public or private, whose mission is defense or protection of a defined jurisdiction. It is organized as a military hierarchy, members are uniformed, have rank, authority and responsibility. (the Author)

TERRORIST CELL

A group of dissidents whose mission is to achieve by force or terror what they cannot change by democratic process. Members are usually political, social or environmental activists. (Joseph Grau, industrial security educator)

CULT

A system of religious group worship or devoted attachment to a person or principle. (Webster's New World Dictionary)

RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

Persons bonded together in opposition to authority, usually governmental. Often identified with anti-tax, anti-nuclear, anti-draft, anti-war and eminent domain matters. (the Author)

In 1794, when Gen. Anthony Wayne was sent with his understrength "legion" to pacify the tribes in the Old Northwest, the Kentucky militia was called on for assistance. Mounted militia helped assure victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. That same year another significant militia involvement took place during the "Whiskey Rebellion" in western Pennsylvania. To quell that disorder, President Washington called up the militias of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

After 1800 the militia began to suffer great deterioration. Though all healthy adult males were still required to enroll, the lack of real military need made actual participation suffer. The only exception to the growing malaise continued to be on the frontier, where militia units remained the primary defense against Indian attack.

With the decline in enforcement of compulsory militia service came a phenomenon called the "volunteer" or "private" militia. Men who were highly motivated in their desire to join a fraternal military association began to form their own militia companies. Such units became known for their gaudy uniforms, precision drill exhibitions and formal social events. Many of them were ethnic (see sidebar) and were formed within Irish, Italian and German immigrant neighborhoods.

Early Political & Ethnic Militias

The specter of volunteer, private, uniformed militias representing a particular political or ethnic group first emerged in American cities prior to the Civil War. Boston presents a good example. There the "Rifle Rangers" were formed by Republicans; the "Winslow Blues" were solidly Democratic; the Irish had their "Montgomery Guard;" and the Scottish unit was called the "Highland Guard." While those early militia groups were primarily social in nature, they exerted strong influence in ward politics. The Montgomery Guards also provided an immediate and organized defense whenever their immigrant neighborhoods were threatened by mob action.

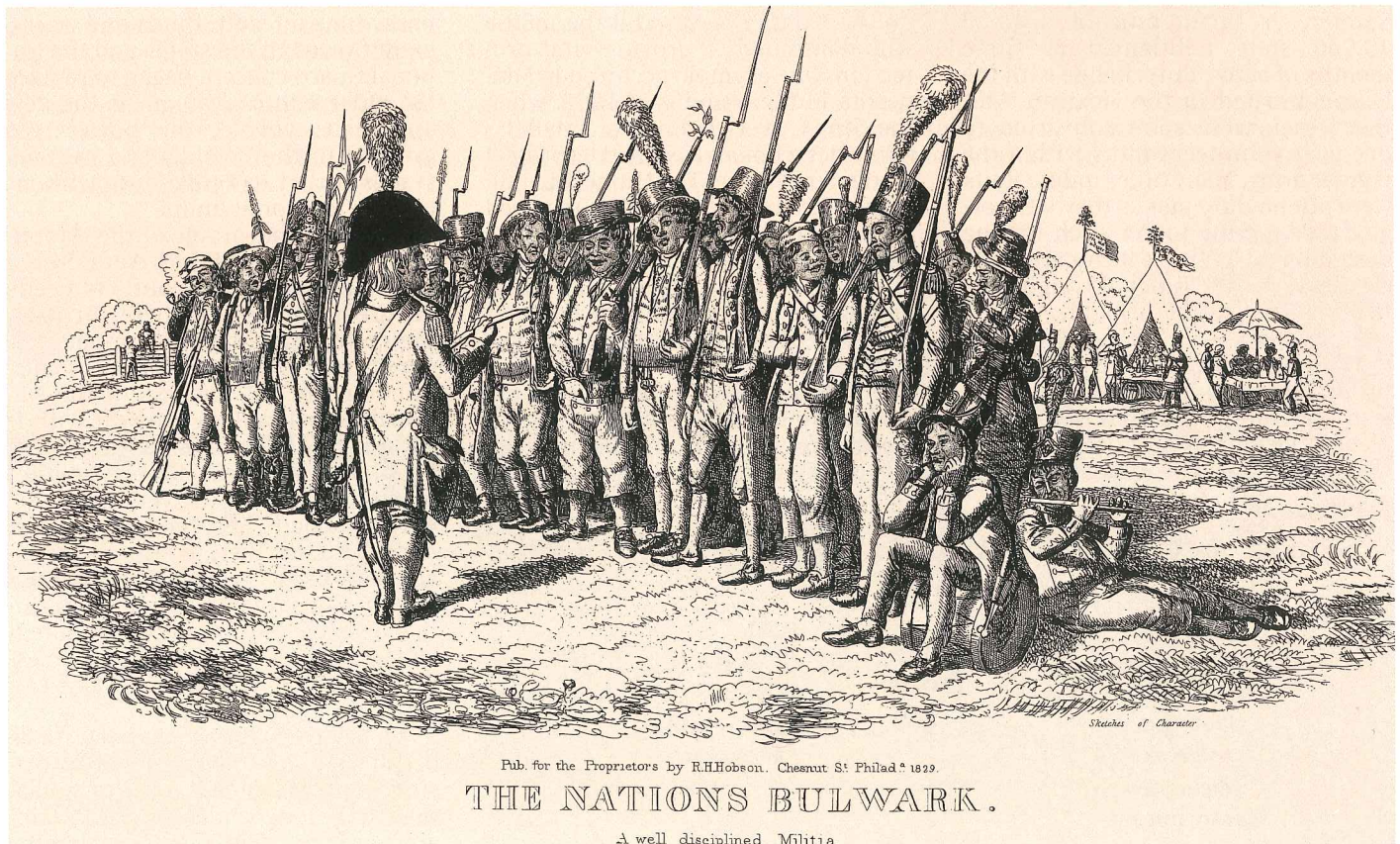
Italian immigrants in New York City, following the example of the Boston Irish, formed the "Garibaldi Guard." That colorfully uniformed militia company provided protection in Italian neighborhoods and stimulated ethnic pride. Indeed, some members had actually gained their first experience of war with Garibaldi in Italy.

German militias were often created as extensions of what began as target shooting clubs. Outfits such as the "Stueben Rifles" and the "Schwarze Jaegers" later distinguished themselves in the Civil War.

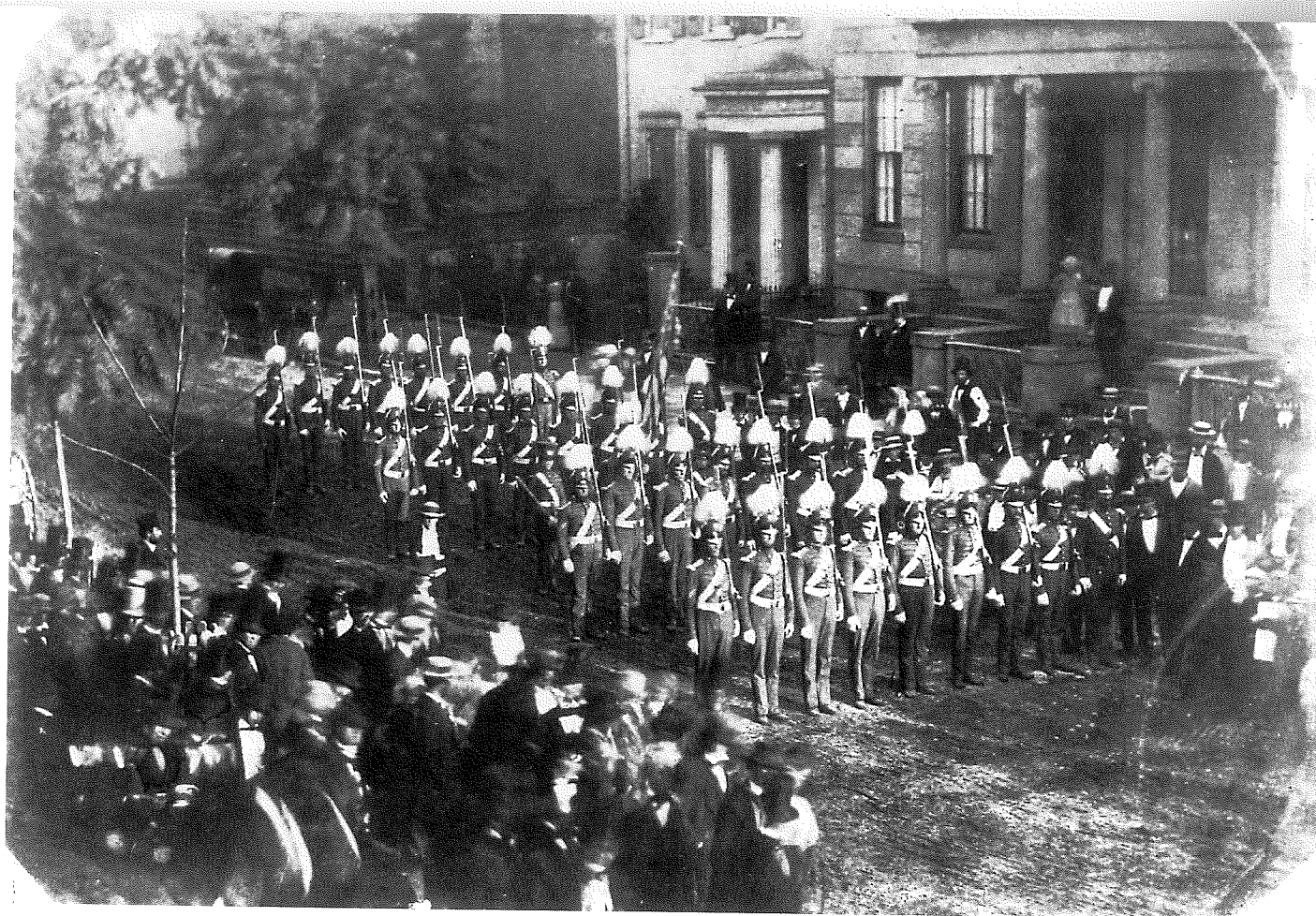
Following the War of 1812, Congress again debated the proper degree of support for the militia system. The leaders of our small regular army had by that time come to consider the militia a failure. But state governors praised their militias, lobbied for and secured retention of the system. Again, the argument that along the frontier militias were the only forces quickly and dependably available, while the response of the regular army remained uncertain, carried the day.

At the start of the Mexican-American War, President Polk ordered 1,390 militiamen to active duty for three months. When it became obvious such short term militia couldn't be effectively deployed outside the country, a procedure was created to enlist them into the regular army as volunteers. Members of both regular and private militias responded to the expanded call up, providing the rapidly grown regular army with a cadre of trained manpower.

Within a week of the attack on Fort



A political cartoon captures the feelings of many Americans toward the decline of the militia system in the 1820's.
(Library of Congress)



The Guthrie Greys on parade in front of the St. Nicholas Hotel in Cincinnati, Ohio. This private militia company was mustered into the Union Army during the Civil War. (Cincinnati Historical Society)

Sumter, President Lincoln ordered 75,000 state militiamen to three months of active duty. In line with the lesson learned in the Mexican War, those men were soon converted to one-year volunteer status within the regular army. Many other militia units were put on duty just as they were organized, serving under such unique designations as the "Cincinnati Guthrie Greys," the "Ringgold Light Artillery," and the "Garibaldi Guard" among others.

Of course, the great expansion of the regular army to fight the Civil War also had the effect of seriously depleting the manpower pool remaining available to the state militias. Even so,

on the frontier it was still the militia who continued to provide vital protection. One example occurred in Minnesota in the autumn of 1862, when the Sioux overwhelmed a small US Army detachment assigned to protect settlements there. The Minnesota militia was mobilized and soon restored the situation. During the incident, 23 counties were devastated and some 30,000 settlers had to flee their homes. In the main fight, the Battle of New Ulm, the militia suffered 25 percent casualties.

Following the Civil War, Congress decided to bring the state militias under greater Federal control, and a series of reorganization laws were soon

passed. As a result, funds and equipment flowed to the states and the National Guard concept began to replace the older militia system. As the new approach evolved, the power was granted to the President to call any state's Guard to active duty without time or territorial limits.

The well known role of the National Guard in both World Wars, Korea and numerous other conflicts needs no great elaboration here. In sum, they provided a major component of our armed forces and served with distinction. But the success of the National Guard system brought with it an unexpected problem in that it could take away a state's military manpower pool at the very times the governors had the potentially greatest need for it. Further, the Guard gradually became an "army reserve" organization rather than a militia. Its training became more combat oriented, with preparation to help meet domestic disaster and disorder missions getting low priority.

To head off that problem the states began to create small cadre, or "provisional," militia forces. Those organizations were independent of the National Guard, had no Federal obligations and were entirely state funded. In both World Wars and Korea, many states therefore fielded official militias. Cali-

States & Territories with Official Militias (1998)

Alabama
Alaska
California
Georgia
Indiana
Michigan
Massachusetts
Nevada
New Mexico
New York

North Carolina
Ohio
Oregon
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Virginia
Washington
Puerto Rico

ifornia, for example, had thousands of its "State Guard" on active duty during the months after Pearl Harbor.

Today almost half the states maintain an official militia system separate from the National Guard. The mission of those organizations is to replace the Guard if that step needs to be taken. Such state militias are also authorized by Federal law, and US Army regulations allow their members to wear its uniform along with distinctive state insignia.

The "private militias" so much in the news of late are historically most related to the earlier volunteer/private militias popular in the early 1800s. These modern incarnations are most accurately classified as religious, racial, survivalist and resistance militias.

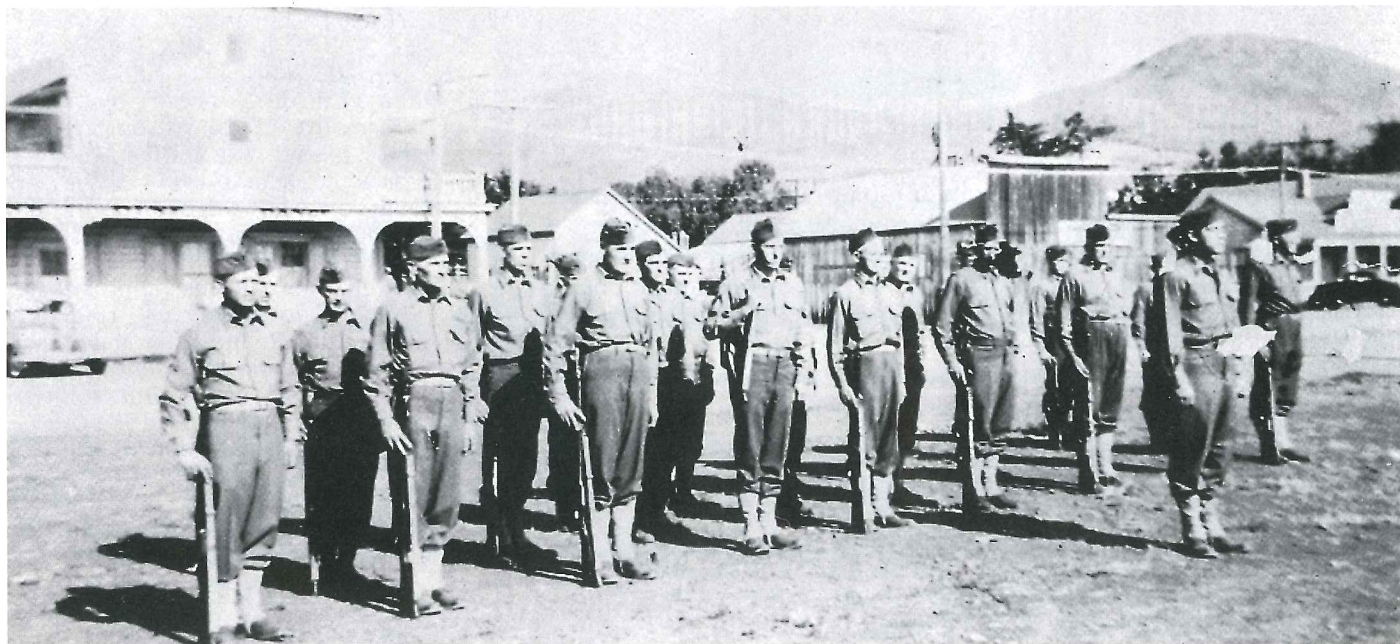
Religious militias have been formed by groups who fear they may need to defend their beliefs by force of arms. They may be cult-like in character, extremely fundamental, or merely devoted followers of a sect. Justification for their militia organization is based on past experience of religious intolerance and their general distrust of government.

Racial militias are based on color and ethnic divisions within our society, with their members seeking organized protection against the perceived threat of hostile incursions into their community. Examples include white separatist groups and the Black Liberation Army.

Survivalist militias originated in the nuclear threat era of the 1960s. Their members believe some kind of holocaust or Armageddon is imminent and



Elmer Ephraim Elsworth (above, right) and his company of Zouaves, patterned after the famous French units, thrilled the public with their elaborate drills. But when these warriors went into battle they learned their exotic uniforms were not suited to combat.



A company of California State Militia on a coastal protection training exercise during the early stages of the war against Japan. (Author's collection)

also distrust the government's ability or will to defend against foreign attack. These groups tend to meet mostly in rural areas, but their members are often from urban centers.

Resistance militias are those formed by groups whose members resent and fear government encroachment into their lives, with most centered in the Midwest and western states. Their declared intent is to preserve their independence of action in the face of growing Federal and state environmental, tax, and gun control laws and land seizures.

Though the above classification of private militias is comprehensive, it should also be noted most groups existing today are actually composite or crossover in nature. Thus one observer or another might classify a given militia as survivalist/racial or religious/resistance depending on his own political orientation. No matter the classification, however, common characteristics do exist. Militias are uniformed, have a military hierarchy, and members are identified by rank. Their mission statements center on defense or protection of some claimed jurisdiction from civil disorder, disaster or unlawful government encroachment.

Such private militias are probably not criminal, as long as there is no conspiracy within them to violate the

law, and care is taken to observe firearms regulations. In fact, within those constraints, many claim the US Constitution's free speech and association clauses protect the right to organize private militias. But if militia members commit statutory crimes during their activities they can certainly be held liable.

Though some argue private militias represent a growing threat to public order, at present that probably isn't true. And it will probably remain untrue unless our political institutions and governmental agencies become increasingly insensitive to traditional American liberties.

In the future there will certainly be more instances in which members of private militias commit crimes. In such cases their militia affiliation may, or might not, have bearing on the situation. Either way, though, the media can always be depended on to identify them as militia members. That same kind of media identification is also made when a crime is committed by a doctor, minister, police officer or school teacher — even if their offense isn't related to their career. That kind of media misidentification is thus another factor affecting the attitude of Americans toward those groups. For instance, it has become common to describe terrorists as "cult members" or "militia mem-

bers," to the detriment of the historic American militia tradition.

Militias, public and private, have been an important part of our history. Their continued existence should therefore be understood rather than feared. It would be better to examine our society to identify the perceived threats that cause some of our citizens to form such groups, and turn our efforts to directly solving those problems. ☼

[Ed's Note: The author is a former sergeant with the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department who completed graduate school at the University of Southern California. In his second career he served as Professor of Police Administration, Department of Criminal Justice, California State University at Los Angeles. He is also the author of over a dozen textbooks on law enforcement and a retired reserve officer.]

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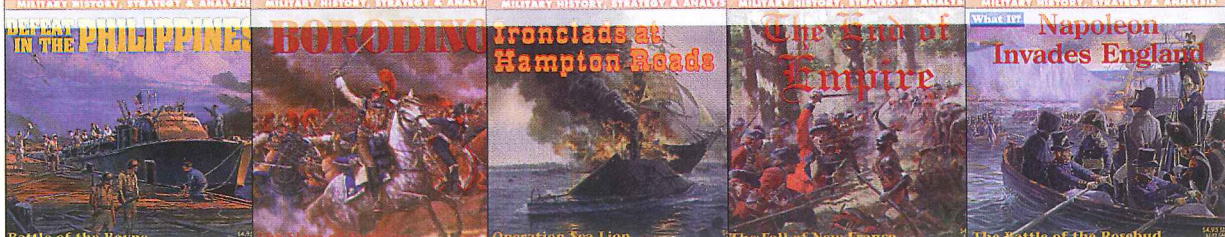
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ART of WAR

“Grace and Glory”

by Tom Freeman

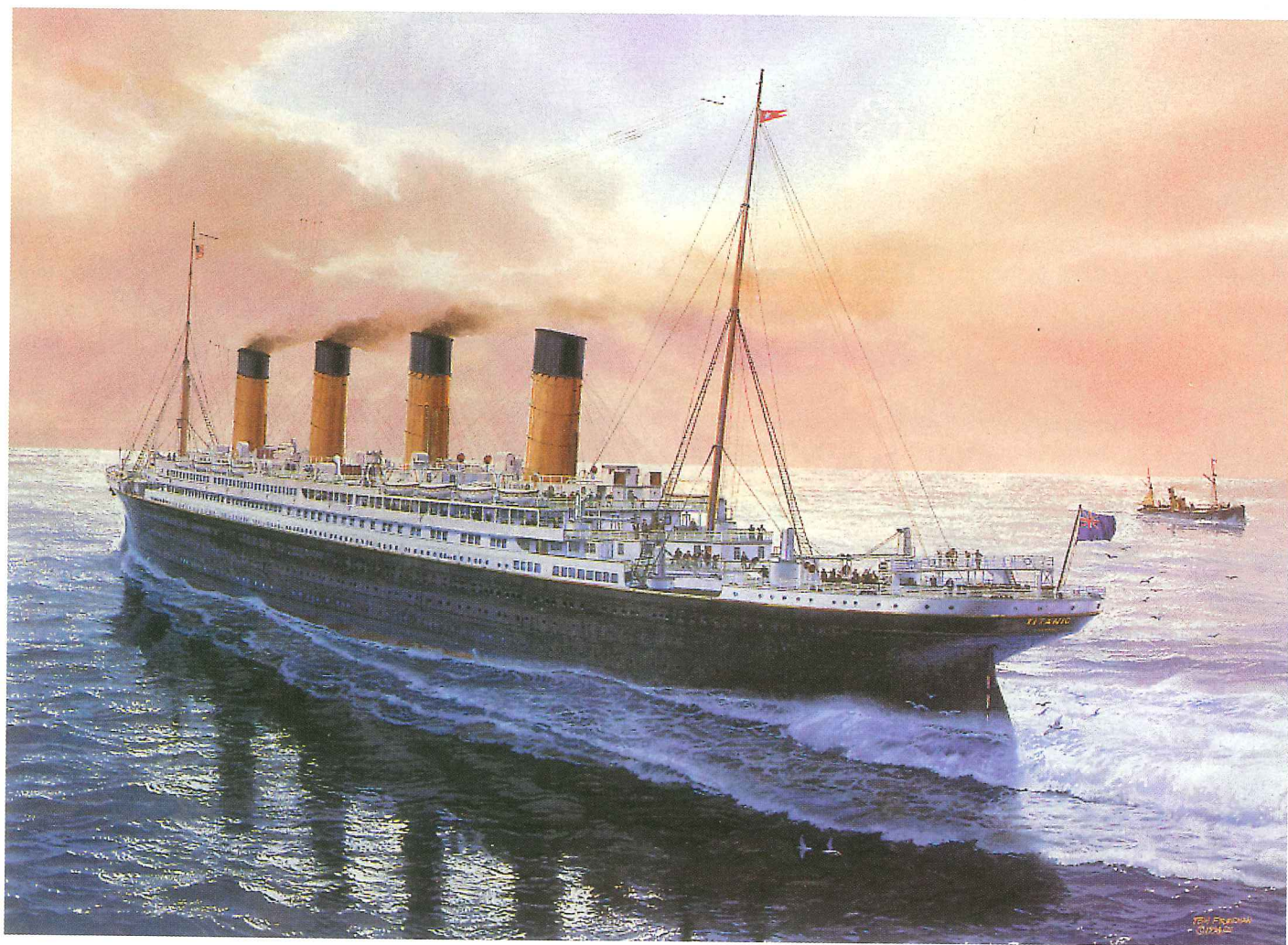
On a clear, bright May morning in 1911 more than 100,000 people converged on Harland and Wolff's ship-building facility. The attraction, the largest movable man-made object ever created to date, the *Titanic*. The occasion was her launching, even though there was little fanfare on the launching stand. No speeches were made or champagne bottles broken against her hull, thus was the launch of White Star's, *Titanic*.

An entire year would almost pass before her maiden voyage would begin. The date of departure on her maiden voyage would be April 10, 1912. Within that time she would be transformed into the most elegant ocean liner of her time. *Titanic* was built to the highest quality standards of the day with no expense spared. No other liner, including her sister ship *Olympic*, could compare.

The time for boarding arrived and

many of *Titanic*'s crew and staff were still trying to accustom themselves to the liner. With passengers arriving the excitement level must have been at a fevered pitch. There were three distinctive classes of people boarding *Titanic*, but all were amazed at the grandeur of this ship.

First class passengers were the royalty of society and *Titanic* was their floating palace. They were greeted by the richness of mahogany, carved oak,



Grace and Glory, by Tom Freeman.

inlaid mother-of-pearl, crystal and the finest in linens; the grand staircase, stained glass windows and the rich colors of the furnishings. The *Titanic* would offer for the first time ever a squash court and swimming to her first class guests. She was as fine as any first rate hotels of the era.

Second class also found beauty and bonuses that were uncommon. They too were treated to lounges, libraries and an electric elevator. They had their own grand staircase. There also were the carved woods of oak, sycamore and furnishings in Mahogany. It was agreed the second class passengers on *Titanic* were treated to the equivalent of first class on other liners of the time.

Third class was a gigantic step up from the norm of the times. The accommodations were simple, and white enamel was used in place of the rich natural wood of first and second class. The third class passengers found their surroundings clean and comfortable. The sleeping arrangements were better in most cases, though some may have found themselves sharing a room with ten other guests. Many were fortunate to have quarters containing as little as two to four other sleeping companions.

Titanic must have been a sight to behold. People who have never seen

this wonder in her heyday can only envision the ship as she is seen today on film. Many have told her story, but all must agree that before there was disaster there must have been excitement, adventure and the hope of new beginnings. Many indeed lost their lives and loved ones, but for a short time life on this ship must have been lived to its fullest.

I have had the rare opportunity to have been involved with *RMS Titanic*, Inc. since its infancy. In the early part of 1989 I went to France and was met by the late Robert Cappaz of Taurus International. I was able to visit the facilities where the artifacts from the 1987 dive were being restored and held in safe keeping. The items were treasures of a bygone time. I know of no one who could see these precious articles and not have a million questions come flooding into his/her head. I was amazed, intrigued and captivated by these wonders.

From that time on, I have wanted to portray the *Titanic* as she first was. I want to show people her magnificence. To show that this was more than an ocean liner who's service was not to be. She was a symbol of the people, a nation and all it stood for. With her departure she took with her the hopes and pride of a people.

Titanic, for a very brief time, was

placed on display for the world to marvel at. She was the queen of the sea and even though her reign was cut short, she was, is and always will be "Grace and Glory."

Marine artist Tom Freeman's career has been devoted to translating historical accounts into images that can only be otherwise viewed in the imagination. His desire is to transport the viewer into the depth of eras gone by. A versatile artist, his paintings span a wide variety of fields, including commercial, historical, educational, military and gallery fine art. Tom's work has been featured on countless books and magazines (including Command Issues #43 and #45). His paintings have been reproduced as limited edition prints, posters, on porcelain plaques and plates. His paintings have hung in galleries internationally. Tom was requested in 1986 to have his original paintings hung in the Presidential West Wing of the White House, "For the pleasure of the President." He produced a collection of 42 paintings to commemorate the attack on Pearl Harbor. The paintings are on permanent exhibit at the Arizona Memorial in Honolulu. Freeman's concern for authenticity and exacting detail has won him acclaim throughout the art and historical community.

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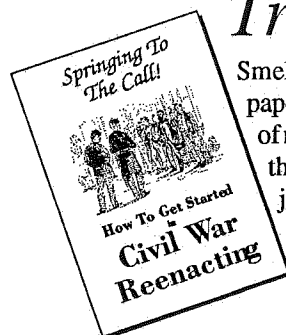
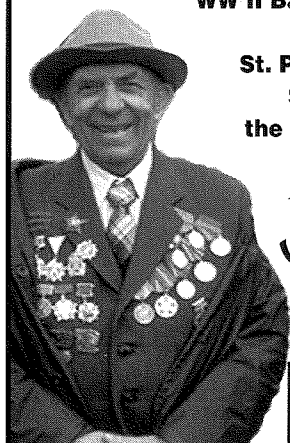
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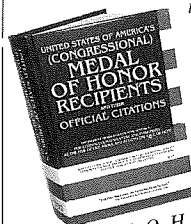
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BATTLEFIRE

Combat Stories from World War II
by Col. Arthur L. Kelly, 232 pages,
Clothbound, The University Press of
Kentucky, \$22.00

Oliver Wendell Holmes called war an "incommunicable experience." Col. Arthur Kelly wants to change that. By bringing together the oral narratives of twelve servicemen who fought in World War II, Kelly takes us to the front lines and listens as his subjects define war for themselves.

Kelly, a retired Army officer and himself a veteran of Vietnam, Korea, and World War II, brings together firsthand accounts of fighting from Pearl Harbor to the Battle of the Bulge in a new book, *BattleFire!: Combat Stories from World War II*. The stories follow twelve servicemen, representing all four branches of the American military, through nearly every major battle of the war.

"Putting together the veterans' stories in a book was a way of paying tribute to these guys. It's important for this and future generations to understand what these men did and to understand the human suffering they saw and experienced," Kelly says. Most of all, Kelly wants to convey what it is like to be in battle: both the fear of physical danger and the fear of succumbing to the intense psychological stress of combat situations. Each interviewee struggles with a range of emotions during times of extreme stress and physical hardship.

For the past 10 years, Kelly has conducted interviews with more than 125 veterans from World War II. He began the project while working on the military history of his home county. At the beginning of Operation Desert Shield, he began to form a book from "the stories best communicating the World War II experience."

Saying he began as a "novice" interviewer, Kelly learned how to get more and more information from the veterans as he went along. "Wisdom says let the guys talk and hit the highlights. But what I do is take them on the ship before the battle, as questions about what was happening at each moment." Kelly says he found this approach particularly successful because in these crucial moments of combat, "war is being defined for these guys."

In choosing 12 narratives from the scores of interviews he conducted, Kelly says he "looked for the drama in the stories." The men he follows saw action from the Pacific Theater of Operations to the European Theater. Among Kelly's interviewees, Lee Ebner witnessed the surprise strike on Pearl Harbor; Field Reed lived through the horrors of the Bataan Death March in the Philippines; Benjamin Butler helped capture Monte Pantano and Monte Cassino; Bernell Heaton survived the Stalag 17 prison camp; and brothers Paul and Joe Simms were among the first to land in the fight for Iwo Jima.

Kelly says that as the veterans age, they want to share their wartime experiences. However, he feels that the stories are most important for today's servicemen and women. "Cadets and novice officers need and want to know what it is like to be in battle. They can learn that from these veterans whose extraordinary experiences range over a broad spectrum of World War II."

CRUISERS FOR BREAKFAST:
War Patrols of the USS Darter and
USS Dace, by John G. Mansfield,
Jr., 300 pages, illus., Photos, Media
Center Publishing, \$25.00

On 23 October, 1944, World War II submarines, *Darter* and *Dace*, fired the first shots that started the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval engagement in history. Beginning with an introduction on the make-up of a

diesel "boat", the author takes you through the qualifications program that submariners endured to earn the right to wear their "dolphins," the four war patrols of the *USS Darter* (SS-227) and eight war patrols of the *USS Dace* (SS-247). The lengthy research bibliography that Mansfield includes, is evidenced throughout the work. The narrative stories of personal accounts and events that happened on and below the surface of the Pacific Ocean in wartime, are heart-warmingly woven throughout the factual materials presented.

Many human interest facets in *Cruisers For Breakfast* are presented that bring the reader into the hearts of the submarines and their crews. The wrenching disappointments of missed targets, the joyous triumphs in their successes, are accompanied by the intermingling of relationships that so often form during the heat of battle, find two U.S. Naval Academy classmates, each in command of their own submarine, taking on "Goliath" with their two little "Davids." Translated war diaries of Japanese ships provide a "bird's eye" view of what took place while being attacked by American submarines.

The author takes the reader on board the "boats" as tension mounts when men prepare for battle, what transpires and outcomes, in one of the more unusual stories of submarine warfare, as *Darter* is grounded on a reef while in pursuit of an enemy cruiser, her crew rescued by wolfpack sister ship *Dace*. Undaunted, *Darter's* crew places a new boat in commission to get back into the fray, *USS Menhaden* (SS-377).

FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE WAR
by Tom Infield, 256 pages, paper-
back, Camino Books, \$11.95

Historians have told us of the momentous importance of Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima, Hiroshima and of the many

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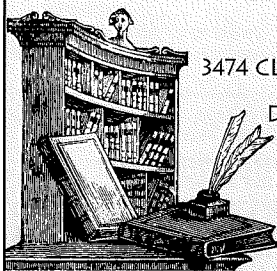
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other pivotal battles and happenings
of World War II. But now that the 50th
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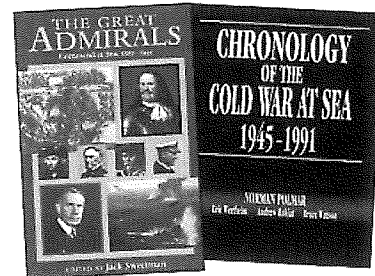
- Lemuel Custis remembers the
first time an African American, a
fellow Tuskegee Airman, had
shot down a German plane.
*When Charley Hall shot down
that plane, it was like we all did it.*
- Felix Syrkus recalls watching his
Jewish mother shuffle, exhaust-
ed, toward a train that would
take her from the Warsaw Ghet-
to to the Nazi extermination
camp at Treblinka. *She had a pil-
low on a string, and she pulled it
with her; so wherever she will go,
she will have a pillow to lay her
head on.*
- Ramona Music McCormick, an
Army nurse at Anzio, tells of the
plight of a soldier whose jaw had
been blown off. His tongue had
nothing to support it, and it was
lying on his open neck. *...This fel-
low, he wanted a cigarette so
bad. Some of the guys, they lit up
a cigarette and blew smoke in his
face. That was the best they could
do for him. He couldn't inhale. He
had nothing.*

Fifty Years After the War collects 35
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have commemorated and examined
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sary period. Compelled as much by a
desire to learn what "really happened
to a 19-year old kid who found him-
self in Normandy" as to understand
what it was like to live on the home
front during this terrifying time, In-
field traveled the country in search of
the answers. On a personal level, In-
field was driven to understand his fa-
ther's war experience, a man he never
really knew and a ball-turret gunner
on a B-17 bomber. He eventually met
men who served with and remem-
bered his father.

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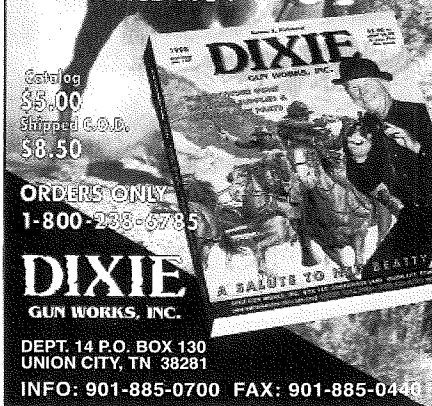
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Infield believes that 50 years after the war may have turned out to be the best time to ask questions. For decades, many of the veterans had kept their feelings bottled up. But now in the late 60's at the very youngest, the veterans of the war - and there are still an estimated 7.5 million of them living - have realized that they aren't going to live forever. Mahy, the veterans and those on the home front, simply wanted to share with him what the war was like in real life, not in Hollywood. "I have never met so many people interested in keeping peace as these folks," Infield says.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HON- OR RECIPIENTS and their OFFICIAL CITATIONS edited by R.J. Proft, 1136 pages, Highland House II, \$33.00

After countless generations of over-
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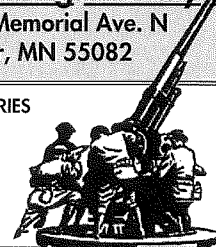
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direction of Douglas Aircraft Company. It would be classified "Secret" and given the title "PROJECT 19."

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by R. L. DiNardo, 175 pages,
Greenwood Press, \$55.00

No 20th century military organization has been as widely studied as the the German army of World War II. Nevertheless, there are almost no truly integrated studies of the panzer or armor branch, dealing with the organizational, economic, personnel, doctrinal, and tactical factors that affected the panzer arm's performance. DiNardo fills that gap in this detailed examination of the panzer arm from Weimar through the end of World War II.

Drawing upon German military documents as well as memoirs, battle reports, and other materials, DiNardo provides a new look at the rise and decline of one of the most important parts of Germany's military machine. Important insights can be gained by examining the nuts and bolts of the army's expansion and its absorption of two foreign armies. This complete analysis of the German panzer arm also provides a microcosmic view of Nazi Germany at war. As such the books is invaluable for all researchers involved with the study of World War II and Nazi Germany.

THE DEFEAT OF JAPAN

by David Rees, 232 pages, Praeger
Publishers, \$59.95

Following the Pearl Harbor attack Imperial Japanese contingents overran large areas of Southeast Asia and the Pacific until checked by U.S. forces at Midway and Guadalcanal. This book demonstrates how America and the British Commonwealth were able to evolve and apply a victorious strategy in very difficult military circumstances. The Pacific struggle is put in its full international context. Events in China, Anglo-American diplomatic efforts to bring Russia into the war against Japan, and the development and decision to use the atomic bomb are all described. The Japanese response to strategic reverses during 1944-45 is related, as is the way that Emperor Hirohito personally intervened with his militarist government in August 1945 to end the Pacific War. The result of all these converging events was the "Journey to the Missouri" made by the Japanese government and High Command on 2 September 1945 when the instrument of surrender was signed in Tokyo Bay. An epilogue describes how this uniquely bitter struggle had a successful sequel in the occupation of Japan.

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THE DARDANELLES CAMPAIGN, 1915

Historiography and Annotated
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Compiled by Fred van Hartesveldt,
168 pages, Greenwood Press,
\$69.50

The passage of time has not slowed the production of books and articles about World War I. This volume provides a guide to the historiography and bibliography of the Dardanelles Campaign, including the Gallipoli invasion. It focuses on military history but also provides information on political histories that give significant attention to the handling of the Dardanelles Campaign. The opening section of the book provides background information about the campaign, discusses the major sources of information, and lays out the major interpretative disputes. A comprehensive annotated bibliography follow.

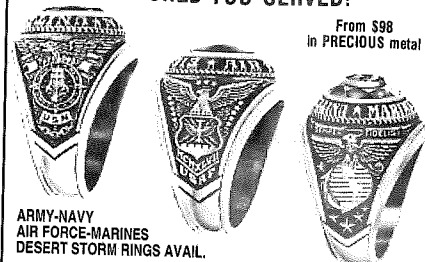
CIVIL WAR GENERALSHIP

The Art of Command, by W. J.
Wood, 288 pages, Praeger
Publishers, \$59.95

This is the first study of Civil War command since Douglas Southall Freeman's *Lee's Lieutenants* (1944) that has focused solely and directly with the problems and methods of operational command; in so doing, the author has dealt with the tactical and strategical problems that threatened to overwhelm untried Civil War generals at the very onset of hostilities. The failure of antebellum American military thought to come to grips with outdated linear tactics and inapplicable strategical principles resulted in commanders on both sides in the Civil War having to lead mass armies of untried civilian soldiers into a war for which neither the led nor the leader had been prepared to fight. Higher level commanders on both sides were forced to create and practice on campaign and on the battlefield. In so doing - however well or badly managed - the typical commanders under observation developed a pragmatic art that has left a legacy that still provides paradigms for military leaders in the late 20th century.

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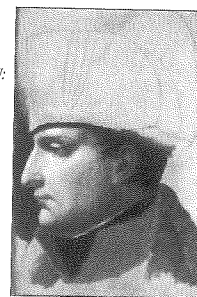
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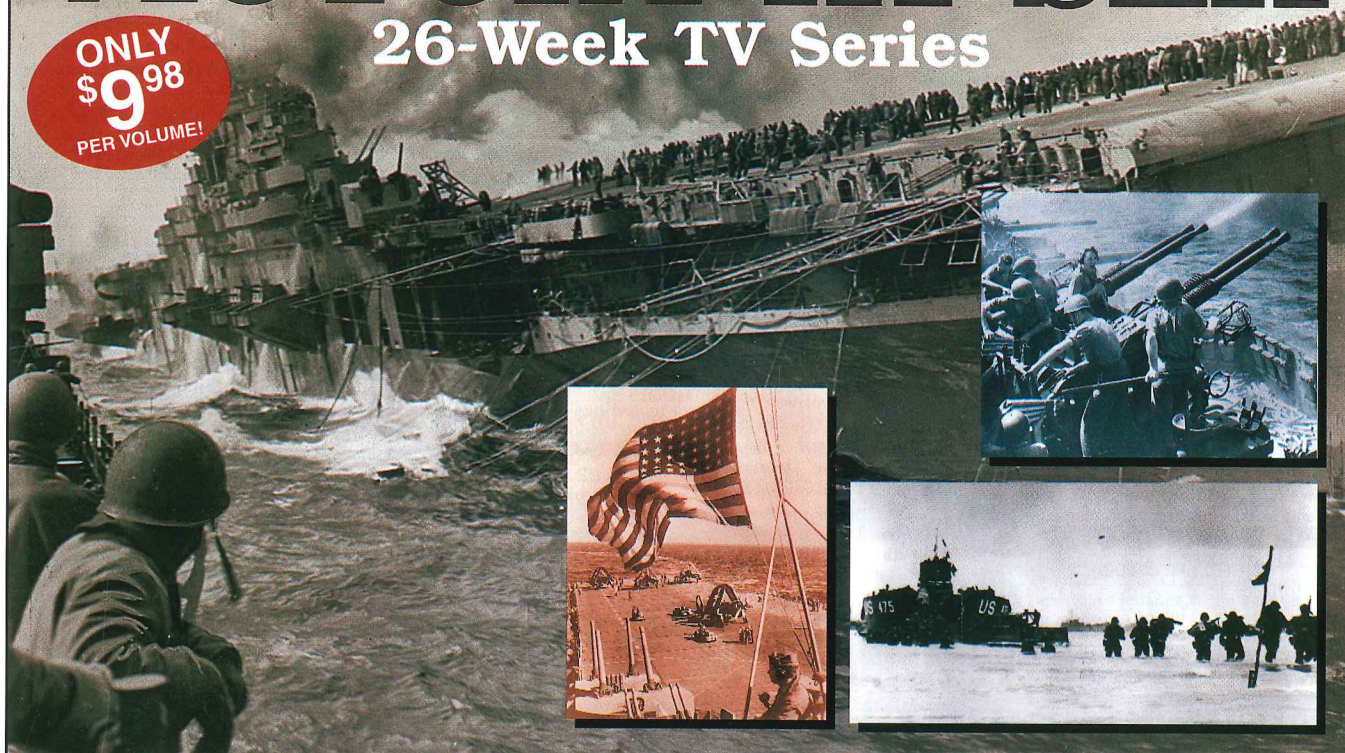
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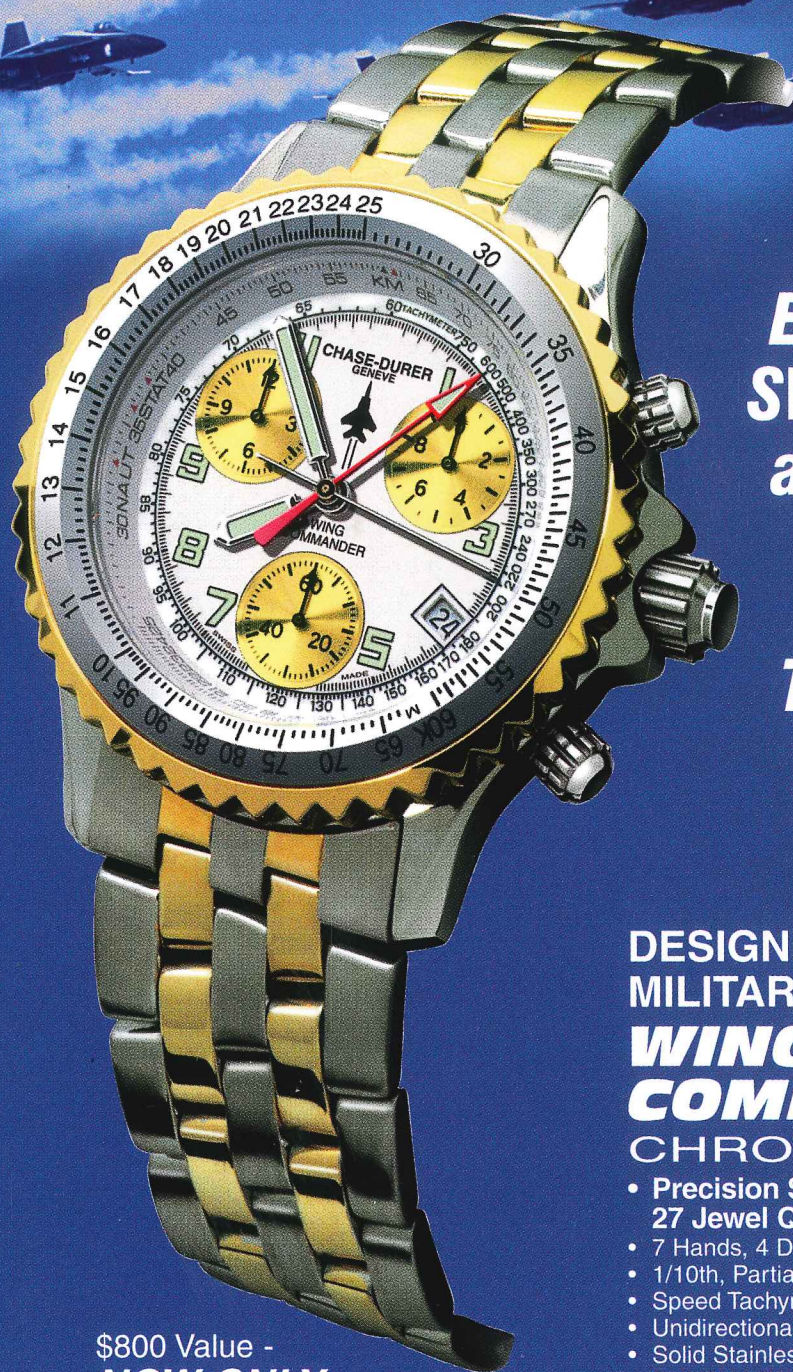
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