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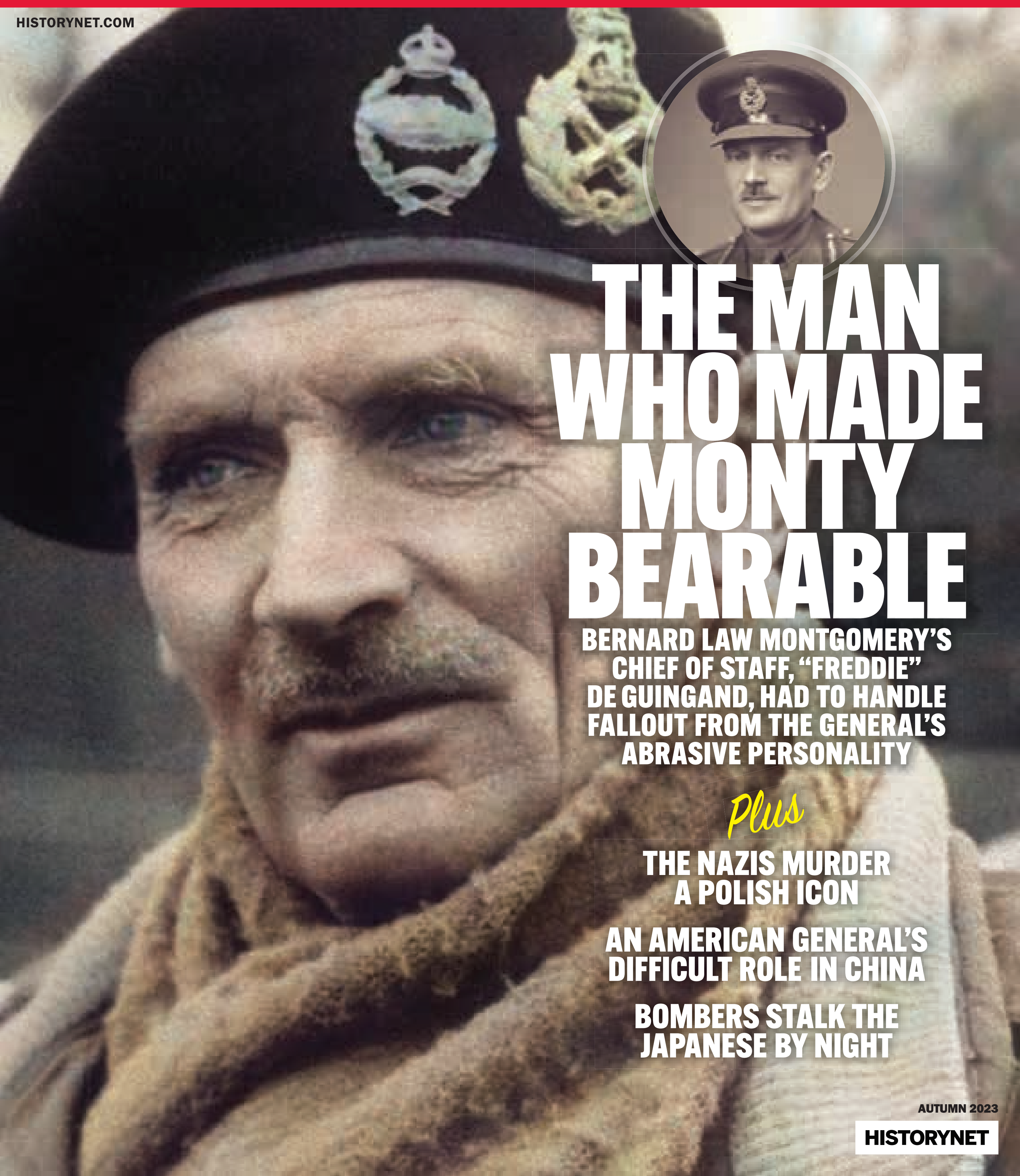

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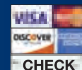

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In a photo by American G.I. Tony Vaccaro, a prisoner celebrates the liberation of his concentration camp.

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WORLD WAR II

AUTUMN 2023

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General Joseph Stilwell (right) enjoys a lighter moment with Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang-kai Shek and Madame Chiang. Inwardly, he was probably seething.

FRONT LINES

BOATS IN THE CURRENT

Tom Huntington

SOME HISTORIANS see history as driven by impersonal forces that sweep individuals along like debris caught in a flood, helpless to do anything except get carried by the current. According to this view, the hidden hands of economics, sociology, and other factors shape history, and we can do little but watch.

Perhaps that's one reason why people continue to find war such a compelling subject. Forces beyond most individuals' control may create the global situations that lead to war, but a single person can make an impact once the fighting begins. That person may be a president, prime minister, or führer, or it might be the pilots of Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bombers that get through the Japanese defenses, sink four carriers at the Battle of Midway, and change the course of the war in the Pacific. There's a reason for the popularity of the time-travel scenario where someone goes into the past to kill Hitler. That would change history for the better, correct?

Here at *World War II* magazine, we don't tell stories about impersonal forces. We like to tell stories about people—people in combat, people on the home front, people at headquarters making command decisions. Perhaps these people are being swept along by the currents of history, but they have fascinating stories to tell from the floodwaters. They might even alter the current's flow.

Things become even more interesting when strong personalities bump up against each other and create friction. For instance, in this issue we have a story about American general Albert Wedemeyer, who was thrust into a difficult situation in China because of a clash between two individuals, General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell and Chiang Kai-shek, the head of China's Nationalist government. Stilwell, who served as Chiang's chief of staff, had such a contentious relationship with the Chinese leader that he was abruptly and quietly relieved; so quickly, in fact, that the usual change-of-command procedures did not take place. "As a result, Stilwell's relief unfolded under a veil of secrecy that mandated a rapid, anonymous exit from China," writes John C. McManus in *To the End of the Earth*, the book from which we adapted our article. "The courtly Wedemeyer viewed Stilwell's omissions as an appalling, inexcusable discourtesy and he developed a lifelong grudge against him. 'There was nothing whatsoever, no message wishing me good luck, or go to hell, or anything else,' Wedemeyer later groused." Talk about friction!

But I guess it does beg the question: did Wedemeyer redirect history's flow after taking over from Stilwell? Or did the currents rush along much as they had before?

We have another strong personality in this issue in the person of Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery. We look at him through the lens of his chief of staff, Francis de Guingand. "Freddie," as everyone called him, often had to run interference for Monty, who had a talent for rubbing people the wrong way. De Guingand even smoothed things over at the end of 1944 when General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower was prepared to relieve the troublesome Montgomery from his role as commander of the 21st Army Group. Did de Guingand's intercession change things? Would a general other than Montgomery have altered the course of history as we know it? If you ask me, the definitive answer is: maybe. ★

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LEATHER LOVER

I loved the Spring 2023 issue's article on bomber jackets (always wanted a real fleece-lined one when I was younger) but I noticed a picture of Alfred E. Neuman on one. I always believed that *Mad* magazine came out in the 1950s. Is this a typo or was he a character somewhere else before *Mad*?

Chad Gish
South Bend, Indiana

In fact, the character that Mad *named Alfred E. Neuman predated the magazine by years. From what we can determine, the character first appeared in ads for dentistry in the 1800s. An artist for* Mad *spotted the character on a postcard and the rest, as they say, is history.*

BALANCED

Kudos to the author and editorial staff for, via "Balancing Act" on Turkey's neutrality [Summer 2023], reaching beyond the blood and guts of World War II and into the intricacies of concurrent diplomacy, trade, and logistics. The article was thoroughly researched and organized and refreshingly conveyed.

Charlie Weymouth
Wilmington, Delaware

MORE FIGHTING

Too many of the articles in the Spring 2023 issue featured topics only tangentially related to the *fighting* of World War II. An article about home-front crime in London on the cover—and as your lead article—is about as far from what most readers expect as you can get. The K-9 article meandered from the Nisei training role to the history of the training program, with only summary examples of how they were employed, concluding with an improbable story about a stray on the battlefield. An article about the effort to safeguard Norway's gold? How about an article about the actual battle for Norway? Bottom line: If I want to read about true crime, dog training, or government finance, I will subscribe to a magazine that covers those topics. You can do better, *World War II*, and articles like "Task Force Shoestring" should make up the majority of each issue!

Colonel (USMCR, Retired)
Ray Ruhlmann III
Rochester, New York

WHO DESERVES CREDIT?

In "Codebreakers in Peril" [Summer 2023], Joseph Connor asserts that cryptanalysts determined on March 16, 1942, that "AF" was the coded designation the Japanese used for the island Midway and duly passed this discovery on to Station HYPO at Pearl Harbor. This is fanciful—and just plain wrong. It is well documented that "AF" was determined to be Midway by a simple and clever ruse created by HYPO Commander Joseph J. Rochefort whereby Midway was instructed to report that its water distillation plant had broken down and that a water barge needed to be sent to the island. As expected, Japanese radio monitors on Wake Island picked up the report from Midway and passed on the information that "AF" was short of water. That is how "AF" was confirmed as Midway.

John A. Cleveland
Littleton, Colorado

JOSEPH CONNOR REPLIES: My source for the claim that Station Cast discovered the Japanese designation for Midway is an article written by Duane L. Whitlock, one of the Station Cast codebreakers. His article—"The Silent War against the Japanese Navy"—can be found in the Autumn 1995 issue of the highly respected Naval War College Review. I see no reason to doubt Whitlock's account.

Per Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton, intelligence chief for the Pacific Fleet, Joseph J. Rochefort's ruse was designed to confirm, not discover, the target of the upcoming Japanese operation. Corroboration was needed because

John Slemp

there was disagreement in naval intelligence circles as to whether Midway was where the enemy planned to strike. I see no reason to doubt Layton's account.

PERSONAL PERIL

Regarding "Codebreakers in Peril": a mere 19 years later I was one of a dozen or so codebreakers stationed in South Korea as part of the now-defunct U.S. Army Security Agency. Service members with intel assignments are known as "special personnel." We were about 30 miles from the DMZ. Our colonel's prime responsibility was to get us out of there by any means possible if North Korea came over the DMZ. To that end, we did evacuation drills. We had materials to destroy paper and metal just feet from our desks. Reading of the codebreakers' rescue by submarine made the hair on my neck stand up.

Virgil Jose
Apple Valley, California

DISNEY *WELT*

Thank you for your excellent article "Disney's War" [Summer 2023]. It reminded me that Mickey Mouse was also popular in Germany. In fact, famous German ace and recipient of the Knight's Cross with Diamonds Adolf Galland typically flew an Me-109 with Mickey Mouse painted on it. When he was asked why he put Mickey Mouse on his planes he reportedly said, "I like Mickey Mouse, I always have."

Carl Pereira
North Las Vegas, Nevada

NO BRAKES!

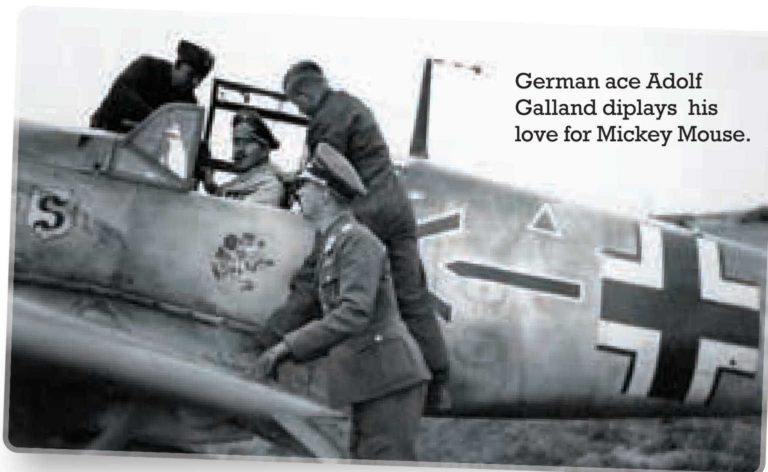
I'm a longtime subscriber and I really enjoy reading your magazine, but I want to point out a small error in "Weapons Manual" [Summer 2023]. The painting of the Flak 36 has a muzzle brake on the end of the barrel. To my knowledge, the Flak 36 never had a muzzle brake installed and I believe the muzzle brake shown is actually the one from the 8.8 cm KwK 36 L/56 installed on the Tiger I.

John Sharpe
Dublin, Ohio

ON LOCATION

Thanks for spotlighting the classic film *They Were Expendable* ["Battle Films," Summer 2023]. Much of that movie, especially the open-water boat scenes and the Philippines base, was filmed on Biscayne Bay near Miami, Florida. In the 1930s my late father and his two brothers purchased a small boatyard on the Miami River and built up Miami Shipbuilding Corporation. During World War II, Miami Ship built the first two PT boats and over 300 air-sea rescue boats ("crash boats") for the U.S. Navy and several Allied navies. A number of those boats were used in the movie, and personnel at Miami Ship served as consultants in their operation. The filming on the bay would have barely been noticed as my father (as chief naval architect at Miami Ship) and others regularly ran their boats on sea trials in the bay and offshore. The base in the movie was filmed in what was then Pines Canal on Key Biscayne (then the harbor for a large coconut plantation, now the venue for multi-million-dollar homes). Miami Shipbuilding was then, and for some years later, the largest private employer in Dade County. The shipyard closed in the 1960s but my family and I still maintain many relics of that history, including pictures of the boats used in *They Were Expendable.*

Phillip A. Buhler
Jacksonville, Florida



German ace Adolf Galland diplays his love for Mickey Mouse.

HISTORYNET ARCHIVES

PC?

Dave Kindy's conversation with Bruce Henderson regarding the latter's book *Bridge to the Sun* [Spring 2023] was a pleasant, informative read except for the author's repeated accusations regarding my country's "prevalent" anti-immigrant sentiments. The author's claim that "America still prejudges based on race, ethnicity, country of origin" is simply untrue and grates upon my patriotism. I do not deny our nation has had a speckled past in regards to racism. Nor do I deny the horrible treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The author accurately addresses this in his book, mingling it with the remarkable patriotism of the Nisei and the Kibei during the war. However, no nation is without its faults, and America has done far more good for humanity than evil. To paint America as a racist nation is patently false and ludicrous. If indeed America is such an incorrigibly racist nation, why do so many "immigrants" insist on coming here, legally or otherwise, often at peril of their lives? Such an absurd charge reflects more poorly upon Mr. Henderson than upon America. His injections of PC comments do more to burn bridges than build them.

Gil Hansen
Portland, Oregon

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WWII TODAY

REPORTED AND WRITTEN BY PAUL WISEMAN

A HOMECOMING STORY

GRAFTON, WISCONSIN, was ready when Roy Coulson Harms finally came home. The townspeople had never forgotten him, not even after 80 years. He was an all-American boy who worked in his family's general store and got around town on his '27 Harley and his horse, Bonnie. They'd put his name on the local American Legion Post.

As a first lieutenant in the Army Air Forces, Harms was the first Grafton native to die in World War II, lost at 26 when his B-24 Liberator went down during a massive raid on Romania's Ploesti oil fields on August 1, 1943. He finally got back to Grafton in May, his remains returned after Pentagon researchers identified them. His hometown welcomed him back: some waited until 11 p.m. on April 28 to see his casket arrive at Mueller Funeral Home from the Milwaukee airport, where it had been flown in from Omaha, Nebraska, near the Defense Department DNA labs at Offutt Air Force Base.

Just over a week later, on May 6, they gathered by the hun-

The townspeople of Grafton, Wisconsin, line the route of Roy Harms' funeral procession as it made its way through town on May 6, 2023.

COURTESY WILLIAM COULSON (BOTH)

After 80 years, the remains of First Lieutenant Roy Harms, who died when his B-24 crashed in 1943, were laid to rest in Grafton's Woodlawn Cemetery.

dreds, in chilly, misty weather, to escort him just over half a mile to Woodlawn Cemetery for burial. "You could have heard a pin drop in that town. Not one person said anything the entire route of the parade," said Allen Buchholz, vice president of the Ozaukee County Historical Society, who helped organize the homecoming. "The only thing you could hear was the bagpiper and the motors from the cars."

Harms enlisted in the army in 1938, four years after graduating from high school. He intended to join the cavalry, but standing over six feet, he was too tall for tanks. He enrolled in aviation school instead and wound up a bomber pilot.

His flight to the European theater in 1943 took him and his B-24 close to Grafton, about 25 miles north of Milwaukee. So, Harms decided to give his hometown a flyover. "This B-24 comes rolling over, and they see something thrown out of the plane and into a farmer's field," said Roy's nephew, William Coulson. "They go take a look, and it's a bullet wrapped in a cloth with a letter signed by all crewmembers. That was his way of saying hi to his hometown." Or goodbye. Harms never saw Grafton again. The bullet, the note, and the cloth are on display at the Grafton American Legion Post.

Harms and the crew of their B-24—dubbed *Hell's Angel*—flew six missions over the Italian coast out of Benghazi, Libya. Their seventh was part of Operation Tidal Wave, a low-altitude raid on the Ploesti oil fields involving nearly 180 bombers and more than 1,700 airmen. *Hell's Angel* flew into deadly anti-aircraft fire and was hit. Knowing the B-24 was doomed, Harms tried to gain altitude and told crewmembers to jump. "It looks rough, fellas," he said, "but here we go."

His last words were recorded by the only survivor: gunner Jack Reed, who bailed out and was taken prisoner by the Germans. Harms and the other eight airmen died in a fiery crash and the Romanians buried the unidentified American dead in the hero's section of Bolovan Cemetery in Ploesti. After the war, the American Graves Registration Command disinterred remains from the Romanian burial ground for identification. More than 80 remained unknown and were taken to Ardennes American Cemetery and Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Belgium. In 2017, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) began exhuming unidentified remains believed to belong to Operation Tidal Wave airmen. Researchers studied archival evidence—and DNA.

Roy Harms' youngest sister, Laura Harms Murphy, had provided a DNA sample before she died in 2020. But she had one condition: "If they ever find Roy, I want him coming home," William Coulson recalled. "I don't want him in Arlington. I want him home in Grafton."

Once the DPAA announced in December that Harms had finally been accounted for, the townspeople started preparing a grand reception for their lost airman. They arranged a flyover by Apache helicopters and got Wisconsin's governor to order flags flown at half-staff. And they got the word out that Roy Harms would be buried on May 6. Forty-seven relatives came from as far away as California and Arizona; 1,000 people from Grafton joined them.

"It was a community coming out and doing what they would have done 80 years ago," Buchholz said. "The town would have shut down. The people would have come out and paid their respects.... That was the vision—to make something like that happen. And it did. It really did."

FROM TOP: WDC PHOTOS/ALAMY; HISTORYNET ARCHIVES

WORD FOR WORD

"I should like to be able to offer the hope that the shadow over the world might swiftly pass. I cannot. The facts compel my stating, with candor, that darker periods may lie ahead."

—President Franklin D. Roosevelt, message to Congress, September 21, 1939.

DISPATCHES

The **last Nuremberg prosecutor—Ben Ferencz**—died April 7 at age 103. A Harvard Law School graduate, he participated in the Normandy invasion and later was assigned to investigate Nazi war crimes. He visited the Ohrdruf labor camp and the Buchenwald concentration camp, where he saw corpses "piled up like cordwood" and survivors who resembled "helpless skeletons." At 27, he was named prosecutor in a 1947 case charging 22 German former commanders with murdering more than a million Jews, Romani, and others. Ferencz relied almost entirely on official German documents to make the case and got all the defendants convicted.

An old U.S. Army barracks serves as a backdrop for Mannheim, Germany's BUGA garden show.

NEW LIFE FOR OLD BASES

THIS YEAR'S BUGA 23—short for *Bundesgartenschau*, Germany's preeminent biennial garden show—is as beautiful as any since the first one launched in 1951. What's unique about this exposition in Mannheim, expected to draw more than two million visitors to the southwest German city between April and October 2023, is that it occupies the site of a shuttered U.S. Army base, Spinelli Barracks. It's one of the many creative ways Germany is revitalizing former military bases that have been closed as part of the U.S. Army's drawdown in Europe. "Nothing new was built in this park," says Corrina Brod, BUGA's press secretary. "We left the halls exactly as they were, to remember this was a U.S. military base."

Constructed by the German Imperial Army in the late 19th century, the base served as a training ground for German troops during the world wars. The U.S. Army took control in 1945, naming it after a fallen World War II hero, Private Dominic V. Spinelli. "It was one of the most important [bases]," Michael Schmelbach, BUGA's managing director, told *World War II*. The barracks were closed in 2014, and the city of Mannheim bought the grounds.

Germany is converting other deactivated U.S. bases to local housing. In Heidelberg, for example, parts of the storied Campbell Barracks—headquarters of U.S. Army Europe from 1948 to 2013—and the adjoining Mark Twain Village (formerly used to house army families) are being transformed into residential housing and a public park. As at BUGA, historical artifacts have been integrated into the modern landscape as a reminder of the area's military past.

The German government additionally decided in 2015 to convert 62 disused military bases into wildlife refuges, comprising up to 76,600 acres of formerly no-go lands, including marshes, meadows, and forests. Since then, woodpeckers, eagles, and wolves have returned to their former habitats. After closing in October, BUGA will become part of the city's green corridor, with trails, recreation areas, and parks. It will also act as a climate zone with the goal of reducing heat in the city by 1.5°C (2.7°F) by 2030.

"This gift to the city of Mannheim is permanent," Schmelbach says. "It's the old and new coming together." *—Barbara Noe Kennedy*

A Republic P-47 heads for Saipan.

Q: The P-51 saw action in both the European and Pacific theaters. Why didn't some other planes like the Vought F4U Corsair or the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt see that crossover? —Kam Kuhl, Huron, Ohio

A: Why didn't the Corsair or the Thunderbolt see service in both the European and Pacific theaters of operations? In fact, they both did—but in limited roles.

The Corsair, designed as a naval fighter, experienced some growing pains during trials, especially with carrier landings. The U.S. Navy, in need of a carrier-based fighter in the Pacific, therefore turned its attention to the Grumman F6F Hellcat. The Corsair was assigned to the Marines, who flew the fighter to great effect from Pacific land bases. Both airplanes served their respective branches well.

TOP: BARBARA NOE KENNEDY; BOTTOM: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

ON THE HOME FRONT New Yorkers stop to read reports of the D-Day landings on the electronic news ticker running along the façade of the 25-story Times Tower on June 6, 1944. The *New York Times* constructed the building in 1904 for its offices in Longacre Square, which would soon be renamed as its more familiar moniker, Times Square. Though the *Times* had moved its offices by World War II, the newspaper still owned the Times Tower and took advantage of its central location on Broadway for the "Zipper" news ticker—one of the media industry's first forays into "breaking news."

By the time the Allies went on the offensive in the European theater, the British had worked out some of the Corsair's carrier-based issues. The Royal Navy received a total of 2,012 Corsairs and first deployed them in April 1944 from the carrier *Victorious* to escort attacks on the German battleship *Tirpitz* in Norway. Two more escort missions joined strikes against *Tirpitz* in July and August, but after that the Corsairs accompanied the British fleet to the Indian and Pacific Oceans. By then the Hellcat had become the U.S. Navy's carrier-based fighter of choice, and the Corsair saw little involvement with the Americans in Europe.

The P-47, which earned its fame in 1943-44 escorting bombing raids against the Germans and as a superb ground attack aircraft, also saw some crossover into the Pacific, primarily in New Guinea and the Philippines, as well as in the China-Burma-India theater for the Royal Air Force. Formidable though it was, the Thunderbolt had two problems: it was at its best at altitudes above 20,000 feet, where Japanese fighters normally didn't operate, and it could not match the range of the Lockheed P-38J or North American P-51D. By the time Republic developed a longer-ranging "Jug," the P-47N, the war was nearing its end.

By early 1945 varying quantities of American fighters had seen action over all fronts, but with so many versions available the predominant numbers of certain types in certain arenas reflected the ones that proved themselves best for the job. —Jon Guttman, Research Director, *World War II*

SEND QUERIES VIA EMAIL to ***Ask World War II*** at worldwar2@historynet.com

In April the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command announced the discovery of the wreck of the USS *Mannert L. Abele*, sunk in 1945 in waters near Okinawa, Japan.

U.S. DESTROYER FOUND OFF OKINAWA

The *Abele* stood little chance against a piloted Japanese suicide rocket called the *Ohka* (left). The 2,645-pound warhead makes up the nose of this example from Okinawa.

THE USS *MANNERT L. ABELE* was already reeling from a kamikaze attack on April 12, 1945, when a strange new threat, with a large fuselage and stubby wings, came skimming across the waters off Okinawa. The incoming craft was a piloted suicide rocket the Japanese called *Ohka,* or "cherry blossom." It slammed into the American destroyer at the waterline, causing a massive explosion that broke the *Abele* in two. Commander Alton E. Parker ordered his crew to abandon ship and the destroyer sank into the East China Sea, 75 miles off the coast of Okinawa. Altogether, 84 crew members perished.

When it sank, the *Abele* was part of a "picket line" of destroyers supporting the assault on Okinawa by spotting, reporting, and often engaging incoming Japanese ships and planes. For decades, the destroyer's exact location remained a mystery. But in April the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command confirmed that the ship had been found four months earlier. The discovery, 4,500 feet below the surface, was made by the Lost 52 Project, a private group that searches for wartime wrecks.

Each suicide rocket carried a 2,645-pound explosive and was usually brought near its target beneath a Mitsubishi G4M2 bomber. The *Ohka* would detach from the bomber and glide toward its intended victim before the pilot activated three solid-fuel rockets. *Ohka*s were hard to shoot down because they moved so fast—600 miles an hour or more in a dive. According to the Naval History Command, "The goal of *Okha* pilots was simply to smash into, destroy, and sink allied vessels." American sailors, appalled by the suicide missions, adopted a Japanese word to describe the weapons—*baka* or "fool."

FROM TOP: NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND; NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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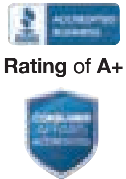

Rating of **A+**

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

Exquisite walking sticks not shown actual size.

BATTLE SCARS

These towers are all that remain of Germany's Ludendorff Bridge, better known to World War II aficionados and film buffs as the Bridge at Remagen.

The U.S. Army knew that Germany's Rhine River could prove a major obstacle as the final push toward Berlin began in early 1945. Wehrmacht personnel did all they could to destroy the bridges across the river and slow the Allied advance, but one span withstood their efforts—the 1,066-foot Ludendorff railway bridge that connected the towns of Remagen and Erpel. On March 7, 1945, after intense fighting, the 9th Armored Division took the damaged but functional bridge. The Ludendorff and nearby pontoon bridges allowed 125,000 Allied troops and heavy materiel of seven army divisions to cross the Rhine and continue the full-speed drive to Berlin, likely shortening the war by several weeks. Continued Luftwaffe bombing finally took its toll, however, and the bridge collapsed on March 17, with the loss of 28 U.S. Army engineers killed and 63 wounded. The story of the Ludendorff is told in the acclaimed 1969 film, *The Bridge at Remagen*, starring George Segal, Ben Gazzara, and Robert Vaughn.

After the war, local citizens decided it wasn't worth the cost and effort to re-build the bridge. The ruined stone towers on the Rhine's western shore at Remagen now house a peace museum, and those in Erpel on the eastern bank, along with the old railway tunnel, are currently operating as a performing and visual arts space.

In 2022, Remagen town planners announced that a new Ludendorff Bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists will be built across the Rhine in the years ahead. Planning and financing for the proposed span, which will serve double duty as a monument to war victims, are in the early stages, but progressing. —*Larry Porges*

DISPATCHES

The National WWII Museum in New Orleans is opening its seventh and final exhibition hall—the **three-story Liberation Pavilion**—on November 3, marking the end of a $400-million fundraising campaign. The first floor will explore the costs of the war, with exhibits on the Holocaust and Anne Frank, and will include a panoramic theater highlighting the stories of Holocaust survivors and the American troops who liberated them. The second floor will focus on the war's legacy, including the technologies and social movements it generated, war crimes trials, and the rise of the United States as a superpower. The third floor will house a theater.

TOP: ALEXANDER LUDWIG/ALAMY; BOTTOM: NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

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CONVERSATION WITH JOHN BRADLEY

BY DAVID SEARS

LOST OPPORTUNITY

SOON-TO-BE CENTENARIAN John G. ("Brad") Bradley Jr. grew up in Hartford, Connecticut, where his dad patented a welding technique for assembling Royal Typewriter Company portable typewriters. During World II, as John Sr. redirected his expertise to weld steel frames for U.S. Army troop transport gliders, Brad became a U.S. Navy aviator. On May 5, 1945, just three days shy of V-E day, Bradley was piloting his Grumman Avenger torpedo-bomber on a training mission off the coast of Rhode Island when he spotted—and promptly reported—a German U-boat. Brad is still haunted by what followed.

John Bradley will turn 100 in October 2023. He spotted *U-853* 78 years ago.

What was growing up in Hartford like? Were you an athlete?
As a freshman at Bulk High [Morgan Gardner Bulkeley High School], I broke the school record in the mile in my second meet. They nicknamed me "Legs Bradley."

When and how did you join the Navy?
In 1942. I was trying to become a V-5 Aviation Cadet. A sailor gave me the exam at the post office in Hartford. Those were pretty tough questions, but he said, "You passed everything fine." I waited, that was the summer of '42. And then I received orders to go to 120 Broadway, the Equitable Life Building in New York City. And sitting behind the desk was a naval officer. He was from a family we knew. And he said, "How's your mom and dad, your brother?" I about fell over. He told me, "We want you mentally and physically fit, but we have to have a good character as well. I don't have to ask you much about your character."

Is that when you were sworn in?
December 12, 1942. I learned later that future president George [H.W.] Bush was sworn in the 12th of December 1942 on Lower Broadway. There were only a dozen of us that day, so he must have been there. He and I were sworn in together, and I didn't realize it.

When did you first get a chance to fly?
After I went through pre-flight. In Texas I learned to fly the Taylorcraft, a little single-engine plane; instead of a stick to fly it, it was a wheel. Next I had to go to the naval air station north of Memphis. That's when I flew the biplane [the N3N, nicknamed the "Yellow Peril" because of its paint scheme and its use by student pilots]. Oh, I love that plane. Flying came easy to me. I got my wings in October '44. They sent me [next] to Pensacola to get checked out in the Texan, the SNJ.

Then you qualified to fly the Avenger torpedo-bomber in Fort Lauderdale.
A very forgiving airplane.

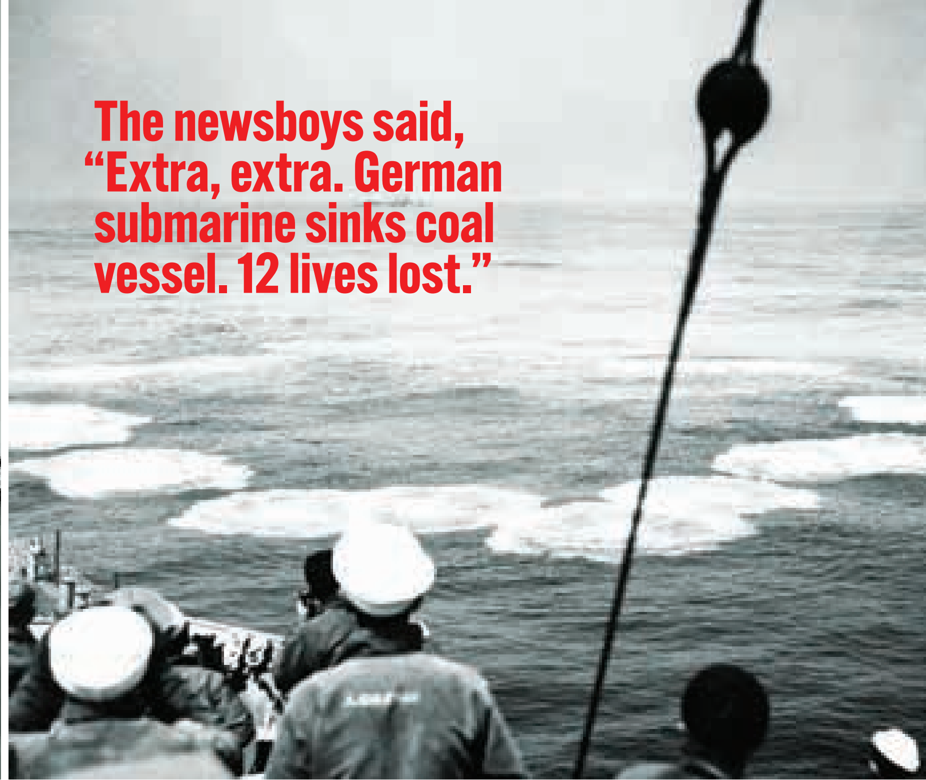
What was the next destination?
Norfolk, Virginia, assigned to a composite training squadron, VC-15. In May 1945, the Avenger component, maybe four or five TBFs, went up to the Naval Air Station in Quonset Point, Rhode Island.

Your plane had a regular crew.
Yeah, a radioman and a gunner. My radioman was from Philadelphia. The gunner was a boy from Atlanta. He was a nut, had tattoos on his chest. A tattoo over one nipple said "sour." And the other one had a tattoo saying "sweet."

But you didn't fly with either of them on May 5.
One night after reaching Quonset we went to Providence. One of the guys knew the night watchman at a brewery there. He said: "Listen, if we promise not to make noise, the watchman will let us have free ale." Clifford Brinson [another pilot's radioman] didn't drink, and I didn't drink. At 3:30 in the morning, we finally took a cab back to Quonset Point. And when it came time for assignments, we were the only two not hungover. So, Brinson wound up as my crewman. Just he and I took off from Quonset.

What was your mission?
We were going to be a "target" for submarines out of Groton, Connecticut. To train their lookouts to spot aircraft. But the weather was spotty. Scuddy, low clouds and patchy fog. So, our submarine blinkered: returning to port. We made a wide turn south of Westerly, Rhode Island, heading to Block Island. And Brinson said, "Mr. Bradley, I can't believe there's a submarine on the surface, just east of Montauk

COURTESY JOHN BRADLEY



The newsboys said, "Extra, extra. German submarine sinks coal vessel. 12 lives lost."

Point [Long Island]." It was about 10:15 a.m. when we spotted it. There was a navigation buoy southwest of Block Island. I estimated him doing about 10 knots heading for that buoy. But what were we gonna do? And I said, "Let's hope he doesn't see us. We don't have anything but fuel in our tank. Let's get back to Quonset."

Top left: Naval aviator John Bradley in a postwar photo. Top right: Crew of the Coast Guard's USS *Moberly* watch depth charge explosions in the hunt for *U-853*. Above: The U-boat on the ocean floor.

TOP LEFT: COURTESY JOHN BRADLEY; TOP RIGHT: NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND; BOTTOM: NOAA OCEAN EXPLORATION

What happened after you landed?
We went immediately to the base administration building. And there was a lieutenant commander who debriefed us in a separate room outside the base admiral's office. He must have asked us the same questions over and over for about three hours. He kept running back and forth, back and forth to the admiral's office. "You sure? You sure?" And we said, "We know what we saw from what they taught us in the recognition courses." Recognition of not just the enemy ships, but all foreign ships and planes.

It was foggy by the time they finished debriefing and we were excused. Since my hometown was Hartford, I drove back there and spent the night at my home.

Subsequent events indicate that the German U-boat you and Brinson spotted was *U-853.* About seven hours later, *U-853* torpedoed and sank *Black Point*, a coal freighter, north of Block Island—the last U.S. merchant vessel sunk by a German U-boat. When did you first learn of it?
That evening. I loved going dancing, so I went to the Knights of Columbus in downtown Hartford. And during intermission of the dance, I went outside. The *Hartford Times* newspaper building was right next door. And the newsboys were running out the front door with their newspapers. "Extra, extra, German submarine sinks coal vessel. 12 lives were lost." I remember standing there and I shook my head. At first I said to myself, "Oh my God, there goes my Air Medal." Then I realized, "This isn't funny. 12 lives were lost."

Hours after *Black Point* sank, *U-853* was cornered and sunk by U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships. The sighting you made could possibly have changed history. After you returned to Quonset from Hartford, was there any feedback or follow-up on what you'd reported?
No, I was a youngster, 21 years old. And you're always taking orders and you're not much in command of anything. My God, if I were more senior or more mature, I would've really gone on after that. ★

A typical image from a Japanese propaganda booklet shows cheering soldiers in Shanghai.

FROM THE FOOTLOCKER

SOUVENIR PHOTOS

Curators at The National World War II Museum solve readers' artifact mysteries

I'm writing concerning Lilland Hamilton, former PFC U.S. Army, affectionately referred to as "Puppy" by his family. My understanding is that Puppy served as a medic in the Pacific, ending his enlistment in occupied Japan. While digging through his old stuff I found this picture book printed in Japanese and English. What is this? —Jerry Loudermilk, Spencer, Oklahoma

A peculiar offshoot of war is the vast preponderance of souvenirs. While the idea of dismal and constant combat seems all-consuming, there was always plenty of downtime for soldiers and sailors. The collections at The National WWII Museum are filled with donated objects, such as a lavish booklet created for a walking tour of Rome, tiny photographs of Pacific islanders, and dozens of scalloped-edge postcards of the Eiffel Tower, each picked up by men and women visiting parts of the world they had never seen before.

This Japanese album is a similar memento of military service in a foreign land. However, it decidedly does not revel in the wonder of exploring new places. This propaganda piece, printed in Tokyo for Japanese civilians and victorious soldiers, commemorates the violent takeover of an ancient and vital port city in China.

In the years before the attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II, Japan and China were embroiled in battles that many historians argue mark the true beginning of the war. The military leadership of Japan had the commercial and financial center of Shanghai in its sights since 1932. In 1937, the Battle of Shanghai represented the first of what would become 22 major battles between China's National Revolutionary Army and the invading Imperial Japanese Army.

The brutal urban fighting, which took place from August to November, is illustrated for the victors in this 64-page booklet entitled, *Sino-Japanese Incident of 1937.* Wholly uninterested in the city or its people, the images in the album celebrate only Japanese militarism and triumph, highlighting generals, showcasing achievement after achievement, its captions depicting "gallant" Japanese soldiers "at work" as they burn, blast, and bludgeon their way through the crumbling metropolis. While accurate numbers are difficult to confirm, well over 200,000 people died in the fighting, along with tens of thousands more who were wounded before the Japanese army finally routed the Chinese defenders.

This Japanese photo tour of Shanghai is markedly different than any "tourist" publication kept by American servicemen. While the piece does feature photographs of the ruined city's battered temples, rail stations, government buildings, monuments, airfields, and neighborhoods, there is usually a cadre of victorious Japanese soldiers in the foreground—excitedly cheering for the camera. *—Cory Graff, Curator*

★ You can see more photos from the booklet at ***historynet.com/footlocker-autumn-2023***

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Not all battles, or the units that fought them, get the attention they deserve. The 103rd Infantry Division (patch at left) and the 11th Airborne Division are two units that get overlooked.

NEED TO KNOW

BY JAMES HOLLAND

THEY ALSO SERVED

SOME YEARS AGO, the notable American literary and cultural scholar Paul Fussell wrote an essay for the *New Yorker* called "My War," in which he outlined his experiences as a junior infantry officer fighting through the Northwest Europe campaign in late 1944 and into 1945. Like most men unfortunate enough to find themselves in the frontline infantry, his experiences were brutally tough and scarred him for life, both mentally and physically. Fussell was wounded on March 15, 1945, in woods near Ingwiller in Alsace, when German shells pummelled his F Company and shrapnel hit him in the legs and back. In his time at the front, he'd repeatedly risked his life, seen men shot and blown to pieces, and witnessed unspeakable levels of violence and slaughter, but at least he had known that he was helping to liberate Europe. Yet, despite the sacrifices made by his company and regiment, he later discovered that the attack in which he was wounded was not mentioned at all in Sir Basil Liddell Hart's magisterial *History of the Second World War,* nor was his 103rd Infantry Division named in any capacity at any point in the book.

Reading Fussell's essay made me think of the very skewed way in which we look at the war, viewing it mostly through the prism of the major ink spots that very rarely seem to meet on the blotting paper of history. We hear about Pearl Harbor, Midway, disjointed exploits of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, then D-Day, the Bulge, and perhaps Iwo Jima. Or, if you're a Brit like me, you might care to throw in Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain, and El Alamein. Of course, these events are decisive ones—the points at which the progress of the war lurched forward dramatically—and so, after all the fighting was over, people wrote books about these moments, then made movies, and because these proved so popular, more books were written about them, and more documentaries made, and then perhaps a TV series. A kind of vicious circle had been created. We all now know about the 101st Airborne Division thanks to *Band of Brothers,* but who has ever heard of the 11th Airborne Division? Do they deserve to be forgotten just because they operated—brilliantly and bravely—in the Philippines rather than in the hedgerows of Normandy? [Editor's note: One person who has not forgotten the 11th Airborne is James M. Fenelon: see page 70.]

I'm guilty of this blinkered view as much as the next man. After all, I've written and made TV programs about D-Day and Normandy, as well as the Battle of Britain. Maybe, though, change is in the air. Perhaps historians have finally exhausted the narrative of D-Day or the Dam Busters raid after all this time, and it might just be that there's no longer anything especially fresh to say about the U.S. Marine Corps in the Pacific. I've been recording a World War II podcast for the past four years called *We Have Ways of Making You Talk,* and we've now amassed more than 600 episodes—certainly enough to take us well beyond the "Ds," as my co-presenter, Al Murray, calls Dunkirk and D-Day. We've discovered there really is an appetite to learn more, and it's been fascinating to record podcasts, write essays such as these, and now, start to write books too, about those more overlooked episodes of the war. For example, we'll be recording an episode soon on General Joseph Swing and the 11th Airborne (with James Fenelon as our guest), while I've recently finished a book about the Italian campaign in 1943. It covers Salerno, the Volturno, and San Pietro, but also Ortona, that terrible battle between the Canadians and the Germans on the other side of Italy, known as the "Stalingrad of the Adriatic." Whoever knew? I can tell you this: it's one of the most brutal episodes of the war I've ever written about. I've become quite obsessed about it.

I'm also determined to do my bit for the late, great Paul Fussell, too, because around the corner is a project I'm calling *Endgame,* about the war in Northwest Europe after Normandy, and I've vowed to make sure the exploits of the heroic 103rd Infantry get their deserved write-up. The time has come, 80 years on, for the forgotten heroes to get their voices heard. ★

HISTORYNET ARCHIVES

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The Catholic altar is one of the only tangible remnants of Camp Iron Mountain, part of the U.S. Army's Desert Training Center (DTC) established in 1942 to mimic conditions in North Africa.

TRAVEL THE DESERT SOUTHWEST

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JESSICA WAMBACH BROWN

MOJAVE MANEUVERS

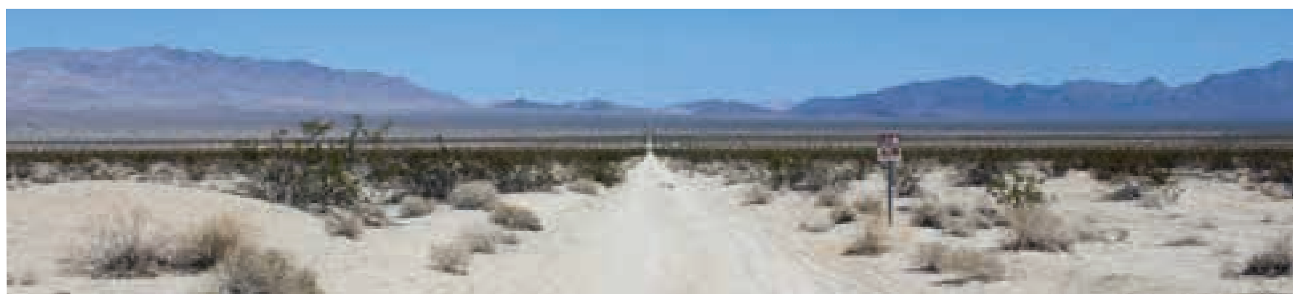
ON A CLEAR APRIL MORNING, I drive California State Route 62 west into the Mojave Desert searching for traces of what was once the world's largest military training ground. More than one million soldiers passed through the Desert Training Center (DTC) between April 1942 and April 1944. Most had already completed basic training and welcomed the call to California. When they disembarked at the long-gone depots of the Santa Fe Railroad spur that parallels this highway, any fantasies of Pacific beaches and Hollywood stars were vanquished by the reality of a bleak, arid expanse fenced by distant sawtooth mountains.

By the time the United States entered World War II, British troops had been battling German and Italian advances in Libya and Egypt for 15 months. While none of the belligerents in North Africa proved ready to fight effectively in the sand and extreme heat, the Germans adapted faster than the Allies. As the United States prepared to join the campaign, it recognized the need to modify armored strategies and tactics and prepare its soldiers and equipment for the harsh desert climate. Army Ground Forces assigned Major General George S. Patton Jr., then commanding the I Armored Corps, to scout a suitable training ground.

Patton wanted his men hardened for the realities of the theater. Having been born and raised in the Los Angeles suburbs, he knew just the place to do it. "The California desert can kill quicker than the enemy," he announced at a staff meeting. In March 1942, the army acquired more than 10 million acres of mostly public land in southeastern California, western Arizona, and southern Nevada. The DTC spanned parts of the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts but offered fresh water from the Colorado River and its aqueducts, as well as access to three railroads for moving troops and equipment.

Soldiers were billeted in 12 temporary division-size camps spread throughout the DTC, with a total capacity of nearly 200,000 people. Pulling to the side of the highway some 30 miles west of Vidal Junction and the last food and gas I'll see for hours, I peer to the northwest for signs of the best-preserved camp. Iron Mountain was laid out in a three-by-one-mile grid of dirt-floor pyramidical tents that could house well over 15,000 men, but its only remaining vertical structures are a pair of altars that served as outdoor chapels. From this distance, any vestiges of the camp are hidden in a thick carpet of sage brush and yellow-flowering creosote bushes.

After a helpful call to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which manages most of the former DTC area, I locate the single-lane road that runs from the highway to the southern end of the camp. Judging the sand too soft for my two-wheel-drive rental car, I lace up my hiking boots and grab a water bottle as the temperature climbs into the 80s. After a mile and a half, the monotony of the desert shrubbery is broken by the neat lines of rocks that DTC soldiers placed to landscape their camps and outline tents, field kitchens, latrines, and other features of their spartan yet sprawling temporary cities. There are no interpretive signs. An uninformed wanderer might think



Top left: California native George S. Patton Jr. chose the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts for the DTC. Top right: M-4 Sherman tanks take part in maneuvers in October 1942. Above: Thousands of soldiers marched miles across the desert to train in Palen Pass (visible in the distance).

TOP: NATIONAL ARCHIVES (2)

she had stumbled upon a rocky, quadrilateral version of a crop circle.

Strolling the deserted avenues, I spot the arched top of the Catholic altar. Handmade with stones surrounding a white quartz cross, it stands twice my height. I sit for a moment in the bare patches of sand where soldiers once prayed, enjoying absolute quiet until the wind whips up, swirling sand that instantly blurs the skyline. "Sand in your bed. Sand in your shoes. We had to live with sand. We got to where we hated sand," remembered Wiley Milford Thornton, veteran of the 95th Infantry Division, in *Sands of War*, a BLM-sponsored documentary on life at the DTC.

The average soldier trained at the DTC for 14 weeks, participating in a series of exercises that advanced from small unit to division level and included marches as long as 200 miles, live-fire drills, and multi-day maneuvers. To condition troops for the limited resources of North Africa, men were typically restricted to one canteen of water per day. According to California State Parks historian Matt Bischoff, many of the roughly 1,000 soldiers who died in training at the DTC succumbed to dehydration. In the summer, temperatures in what the 773rd Tank Destroyer Battalion dubbed in its official journal "a desert designed for hell" could reach 130 degrees in the shadeless afternoon—and 160 degrees inside a tank.

Patton, who often roamed the desert with a rented loudspeaker so he could chide or applaud his soldiers, was recalled to Washington, D.C., in July 1942 to plan Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of French North Africa. Six other corps commanders would follow him to the DTC in succession, each taking advantage of the open, unoccupied terrain to experiment with task force composition and supply lines and rehearse coordination among infantry, armored, and air divisions. Fighter and bomber groups trained at five DTC air fields, including Rice Army Airfield, 20 miles east of Camp Iron Mountain.

I backtrack east on Route 62 until I spy a dark gray obelisk on the south side, marking the remains of the airfield. A faint dirt road takes me a few hundred yards to the crumbling foundations of old storage buildings. The eclectic mix of artifacts I find signals that most of the people who venture out here these days are not drawn by the history. Wartime ration containers mingle in the blond sand with modern beer cans and the discarded shell casings from shotguns that have riddled the rusty insides of a piano and the frame of an old car abandoned on Rice Army Airfield's broad concrete parking apron. Eighty years

The desert is slowly reclaiming the abandoned roads and foundations of Rice Army Airfield.

ago, Bell P-39 Airacobras and Curtiss P-40 Warhawks waited here for the call to strafe mock enemy targets and cover ground forces marching into the tangle of mountains rising to the south, including Palen Pass.

To reach the pass, the final maneuver area for many of the 60 armored, infantry, and artillery divisions that trained at the DTC, I drive west then south around the mountains, passing two more division camps before heading east on Interstate 10 through the Chuckwalla Valley. Known in the DTC as "Little Libya" for its environmental similarities to North Africa, this was a proving ground for desert warfare enhancements that included vented combat boots, weapon lubricants, and new vehicle cooling systems. The Chuckwalla's climate continues to inspire innovation. The valley is home to some of the country's first and largest solar energy farms, whose dark blue rectangular panels stretch for miles in blinding contrast to the otherwise sepia-toned landscape.

After the Allies declared victory in North Africa in May 1943, the U.S. Army no longer needed desert training. Yet field commanders valued the rigor and realism of exercises in the DTC, which had grown to more than 18,000 square miles. In October, the training center was renamed the California-Arizona Maneuver Area (CAMA).

I exit the freeway at Blythe, a sleepy town three miles shy of the Arizona border, and wind my way up a series of mountain roads into the heart of Palen Pass. I explore on foot the narrow valley where whole divisions faced off in mock combat. The descending sun casts a golden glow over the network of shallow gullies where tens of thousands of soldiers dug in for starry desert nights as the dust and smoke settled from daytime battles. The only clues I find of their presence are occasional corroding bits of metal and faint parallel tank tracks in the gravely dirt.

The increasing demand for soldiers overseas led Army Ground Forces to scale back on the personnel necessary to support the CAMA. It was decommissioned in April 1944 and after the war the army returned the land to the Department of the Interior. The training center is memorialized in the General Patton Memorial Museum at Chiriaco Summit, California, which I visit the next morning. Open since 1988, the museum lies within the boundaries of Camp Young, the DTC/CAMA headquarters. In addition to historic tanks and an illustrated timeline of Patton's life, the museum houses training center artifacts that range from mailboxes and tattered unit pendants to pianos that likely accompanied Saturday night dances with "The Desert Battalion," a group of young women bused in from southern California cities to boost the morale of sun-bronzed, war-bound soldiers.

City dwellers are still drawn to the desert for entertainment. The annual Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival has summoned 120,000 visitors to nearby Indio this weekend. Local lodging is limited and as I navigate a potholed road through Camp Young, I pass a desert tortoise and a few revelers boondocking among the rows of rocks outlining the former location of the camp's 3,200 tents. Tuning out their modern music, I take one last, slow walk through the timeless heat of the desert. ★

WHEN YOU GO

The best remaining relics of the Desert Training Center can be reached in a few hours from Las Vegas, Phoenix, or Los Angeles. Four-wheel drive will save you some walking to the camps. The **General Patton Memorial Museum** (*generalpattonmuseum.com*) is a must, but avoid coinciding your visit with concerts or sporting events that render nearby hotel rooms scarce and expensive.

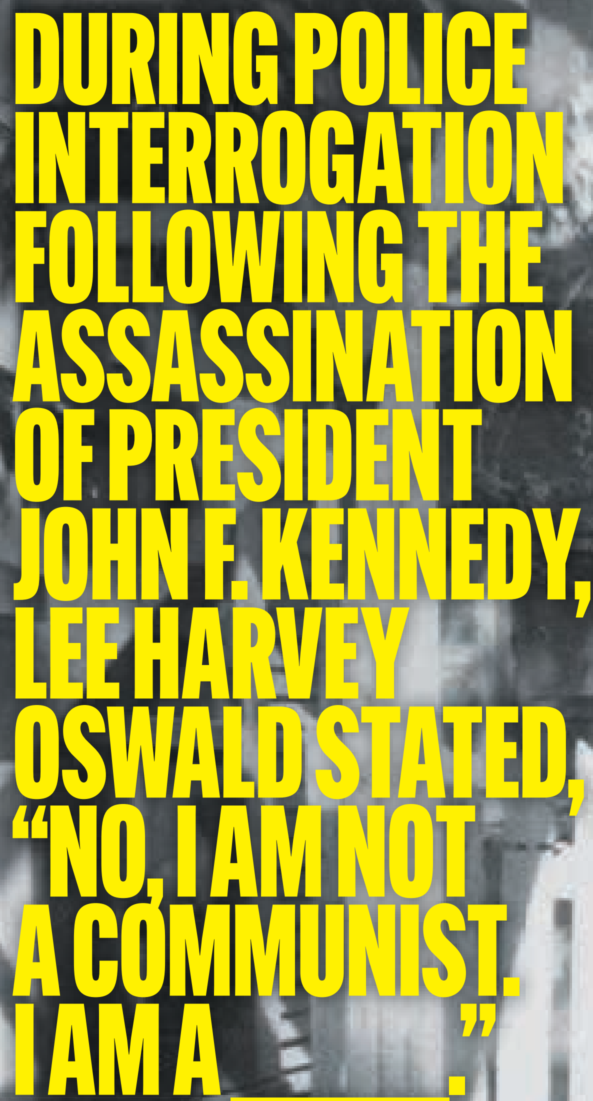
WHERE TO STAY AND EAT

Hotels abound in Indio, Needles, and Blythe, California. The RV mecca of Quartzite lies just across the Arizona border from the latter. Vacation rentals within the DTC boundaries range from semi-urban hostels to remote desert bungalows that boast unparalleled stargazing opportunities. Fuel up and pack a lunch if you plan to explore the isolated camps. Afterward, hit quirky **Steaks 'n Cakes** (760-922-4241) in Blythe for mouthwatering diner fare and mountainous desserts. In Quartzite, **Silly Al's Pizza** (*sillyalspizza.com*) satisfies cravings for the classic pizzeria experience.

WHAT ELSE TO SEE AND DO

Explore the otherworldly flora of **Joshua Tree National Park** (*nps.gov/jotr*), whose southern entrance is a half-mile north of Camp Young. The **Blythe Intaglios** (*blm.gov/visit/blythe-intaglios*) are huge geoglyphs etched into mesas north of town. The luxuries of **Palm Springs** (*visitgreaterpalmsprings.com*) are an hour's drive west from Camp Young, while aquatic adventures call from **Lake Havasu**, Arizona (*golake-havasu.com*), about 45 miles south of Needles, California.

MAP BY BRIAN WALKER



Law-abiding citizen, proud Texan, Catholic, or Marxist?

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ANSWER: MARXIST. OSWALD WAS SHOT IN THE BASEMENT OF THE DALLAS POLICE HEADQUARTERS WHILE BEING ESCORTED TO THE CITY JAIL. OSWALD DIED LESS THAN TWO HOURS LATER AT PARKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, THE SAME HOSPITAL WHERE KENNEDY WAS PRONOUNCED DEAD TWO DAYS PRIOR.

SIR FRANCIS DE GUINGAND
THE MAN BEHIND MONTY

Bernard Law Montgomery's chief of staff made things easier for a difficult general

By David T. Zabecki

Everyone called him "Freddie." Francis de Guingand (opposite, and with Montgomery, left) played a vital role as chief of staff. Said Monty, who was known for his abrasive personality, "Anything I have been able to achieve during the late war could not have been done if he had not been at my side."

Montgomery studies the defenses of the Libyan port of Tripoli from an American-made M3 Grant tank. After de Guingand's staff work helped secure a victory at El Alamein, Monty pushed Erwin Rommel's men back 1,300 miles.

Military history has given us some great teams of commanders and their chiefs of staff. Napoleon had Marshal Louis-Alexandre Berthier; Dwight D. Eisenhower had Walter Bedell Smith; and Bernard Law Montgomery had Francis Wilfred de Guingand. Fortunately for the Allies in World War II, Bedell Smith and de Guingand served not only in that same war, but also in the same theater starting in 1943. Together they forged a personal and professional partnership that was a vital element in the unprecedented success of the Grand Alliance. "Beetle" Smith is fairly well remembered today, but "Freddie" de Guingand remains largely forgotten outside of British circles.

He deserves better. The ultimate team player, de Guingand was the most-respected and best-liked British officer among the Americans. After the war Smith wrote of him: "General de Guingand is the best staff officer I have ever seen regardless of nationality...and I do not know of any man in whom I have more confidence and for whom I have greater affection." In his book *A Soldier's Story*, General Omar Bradley wrote of de Guingand's "patience, modesty, and understanding which helped to forge the Allied armies into a single fighting machine. Somewhere in almost every critical Allied decision of the war in Europe, you will find the anonymous but masterful handiwork of this British soldier."

During the war, Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery wrote of de Guingand to General Sir Alan Brooke (later Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke), Britain's Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS). He said, "I do not know what I should do without him as he is quite 1st class." And after the war Montgomery wrote, "Anything I have been able to achieve during the late war could not have been done if he had not been at my side." Unfortunately, Montgomery's fine words all too often failed to live up to his treatment of his former chief of staff, especially after the war ended.

DE GUINGAND WAS BORN in Acton, west London, in 1900. His mother was from a family of Yorkshire bankers; his father was the son of a man who left France for England after the overthrow of King Louis Philippe in 1848. In 1918 Francis had planned to enter the Royal Navy as a midshipman, but he was medically rejected for color blindness. Instead, he

PREVIOUS SPREAD: IWM/E 21999 (LEFT); IWM/E 22000 (RIGHT). ABOVE: CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

entered the Royal Military College at Sandhurst as a gentleman cadet, where his French surname earned him the lifelong sobriquet of "Freddie." (Despite his family's Gallic background, he was never completely comfortable speaking French.) Although he was exceptionally bright, the fun-loving Freddie's record at Sandhurst was less than impressive.

Commissioned into the West Yorkshire Regiment in December 1919, de Guingand served briefly in India and then in Ireland during the Irish War of Independence. In 1924 he was posted to his regiment's depot in York, where he met Major Bernard Montgomery, who was then a general staff officer assigned to the 49th (West Riding) Division. As bachelor officers, they both lived in the same mess, shared common enthusiasms for golf and bridge, and become fast friends. It was an odd-couple relationship on several levels. Montgomery was 13 years older than de Guingand, and was austere, arrogant, blunt, and utterly lacking in diplomacy and tact. De Guingand had a buoyant and charming personality, and was passionate about wine, women, and gambling. Nonetheless, Montgomery, recognizing de Guingand's intellect and the value of his organizational and diplomatic skills, became his mentor.

With Montgomery's endorsement, de Guingand was accepted at the highly competitive Staff College at Camberley, graduating in 1935. In 1939 he was assigned as the military aide to Leslie Hore-Belisha, Britain's reformist but controversial secretary of state for war. While serving as Hore-Belisha's close confidant, de Guingand honed his negotiating and diplomatic skills as he dealt personally with most of the senior officers in the British Army. A month after Hore-Belisha was fired from the War Office in January 1940, de Guingand was posted as an instructor to the Middle East Command's new staff college at Haifa in Palestine. The commandant of the college was Brigadier Eric Dorman-Smith, who had been one of de Guingand's instructors at Camberley. De Guingand quickly became the chief instructor of the college.

That December he was reassigned to the Middle East Command's Joint Planning Staff in Cairo. Now a major-general, Dorman-Smith had become the Middle East Command's Deputy Chief of the General Staff, and he recommended de Guingand for the post of Director of Military Intelligence, Middle East, with the rank of brigadier. Although he had no previous training or experience in the intelligence field, de Guingand proved very skillful at the job. He used the famous Long Range Desert Group to analyze the many differing reports that came in from various sources. When the intelligence indicated that Axis

Top: Born in London in 1900, de Guingand earned the nickname "Freddie" for his French heritage. Above: In a photo taken on May 21, 1945, de Guingand does what he did best: communicates.

TOP: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON; BOTTOM: IWM/H 39144

Left: De Guingand (at left) was on Malta for Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily. Here he discusses things with (left to right) Air Commodore Claude Pelly, Air Vice Marshal Harry Broadhurst, Montgomery, and Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay. Right: In Sicily, Montgomery had a competitive relationship with American Lieutenant General George S. Patton.

"I must have someone to help me, a man with a quick and clear brain," Monty said. "De Guingand was the man."

troops under *Generalleutnant* Erwin Rommel were massing to attack at Gazala in Libya in May 1942, de Guingand was able to issue an advanced warning. He also correctly forecast the Axis capture of Tobruk in June 1942. That July, after the First Battle of El Alamein (also known as the Battle of Ruweisat Ridge), de Guingand was reassigned as the Eighth Army's Brigadier, General Staff (Operations).

When Montgomery assumed command of the Eighth Army the following month, he broke with British military tradition by completely but unofficially changing the organization of his staff. Without seeking approval from London, he consolidated responsibility by making his chief of staff his primary adviser and the absolute master of all staff work, much as the Americans and French did, instead of separating it across three different branches (the general staff for planning, operations, and intelligence; the adjutant general's staff for personnel and administration; and the quartermaster general's staff for supply and transportation). As Montgomery wrote in his post-war memoirs: "The magnitude of the task in front of me was beginning to be apparent. I must have someone to help me, a man with a quick and clear brain, who would accept responsibility, and who would work out the details and leave me free to concentrate on the major issues—in fact, a Chief of Staff who could handle all the details and the intricate staff side of the business and leave me free to command....Before we arrived at Eighth Army HQ I had decided that de Guingand was the man; I would make him chief of staff with full powers and together we would do the job.... I never regretted the decision."

Freddie de Guingand thus became the British Army's first modern, comprehensive chief of staff. Montgomery made his intentions crystal clear when he told his assembled senior officers, "I want to tell you that I work on the Chief-of-Staff system. I have nominated Brigadier de Guingand as Chief-of-Staff Eighth Army. I will issue orders through him. Whatever he says will be taken as coming from me and will be acted on at once." Thus, once Montgomery made his decisions, he left de Guingand with a free hand to manage the staff to work out all the details necessary to execute the commander's intent. De Guingand functioned in all but name as Montgomery's deputy commander.

ONCE MONTGOMERY assumed command, he started strengthening the British defences on Alam el Halfa ridge in Egypt. He also pulled the Eighth Army's main command post to Borg el Arab on the Mediterranean coast from its location on Ruweisat Ridge. There the Eighth Army co-located with the headquarters of the Western Desert Air Force, commanded by Air Vice Marshal Sir Arthur

LEFT: IWM/NA 4088; RIGHT: POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Men of the 51st Highland Division wade ashore during the invasion of Sicily on July 10, 1943. Much to Montgomery's chagrin, Patton's Americans beat the British in a race to Messina.

Coningham. One of the RAF's most brilliant tactical air commanders, Coningham had a highly competitive personality that clashed with Montgomery's. De Guingand quickly became the primary operations coordinator between the RAF and the Eighth Army. The synchronization of close air support for Montgomery's ground forces remained one of de Guingand's key responsibilities for the remainder of the war.

Rommel attacked at Alam el Halfa on August 30. When the British defences held, the Axis finally lost the initiative in Africa. De Guingand recommended an immediate counterattack, but Montgomery decided to reconstitute his forces in preparation for a set-piece breakout battle.

De Guingand's usual practice was to operate from the main command post, while Montgomery directed the battle from a forward tactical command post—"Tac CP"—with his chief of staff making daily visits to Montgomery. Just before the British started their breakout at El Alamein on October 23, de Guingand established a forward satellite of the Main CP on the coast close to Montgomery's Tac CP and the CPs of the two attacking corps.

IWM/NA 4194

By the early hours of October 25, reports indicated that the southern arm of the British attack was faltering. After assessing the situation, de Guingand concluded that the situation was reaching a crisis that only the army commander could resolve. He asked the commanders of X and XXX Corps to meet him at the Tac CP at 3:30 a.m. He then drove to the Tac CP, woke Montgomery, and briefed him on the situation. After the meeting with the corps commanders, Montgomery agreed with his chief of staff's recommendation to suspend the attack along the southern corridor and to shift the effort to the northern thrust. That, however, required de Guingand to make a complete revision of the battle plan on the fly. He later received the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for his role at El Alamein.

Allied paratroopers descend on the Netherlands in September 1944 during Operation Market Garden. De Guingand expressed reservations about the attack, but Montgomery ignored them. The "bridge too far" offensive did not gain its objectives.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

After El Alamein, Rommel withdrew 1,300 miles westward along the Mediterranean coast of Africa, eventually linking up with Axis forces in Tunisia. Montgomery followed in what can only be termed a "slack pursuit." On March 29, 1943, the Eighth Army breached the Mareth Line in southern Tunisia, bringing it under control of General Sir Harold Alexander's 18th Army Group. The Allied theatre commander was General Dwight D. Eisenhower, with whom Montgomery already had a strained relationship. When they met for the first time in England at the end of May 1942, Montgomery had brusquely told Eisenhower to put out his cigarette. "I don't permit smoking in my office," he said. Ike complied but was quietly furious. Montgomery later told de Guingand his impression of Eisenhower: "Nice chap. No soldier." However, when de Guingand and Walter Bedell Smith met for the first time, they hit it off immediately, and the relationship would help de Guingand navigate the contentious Eisenhower-Montgomery relationship for the rest of the war.

In mid-April Montgomery sent de Guingand, now promoted to the temporary wartime rank of major-general, to Cairo as his deputy to take over the planning for Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily. Several days later, while flying back to Algiers for a planning conference, de Guingand's plane crashed at El Adem in Libya and he was forced to spend several weeks in the hospital with a concussion and multiple fractures. Nonetheless, he was back in action on July 10, sorting out landing operation problems in Sicily.

In late 1943 Eisenhower and Montgomery both relinquished their commands in the Mediterranean and transferred to London to assume their new positions for the invasion of Europe—Operation Overlord. Eisenhower was Supreme Allied Commander, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), and Montgomery became commander of the 21st Army Group, and also overall commander of land forces during initial operations in Normandy. Both of their chiefs of

Left: De Guingand (second from left) had to ease friction between Eisenhower (center) and Montgomery (next to Ike). Right: Fortunately for de Guingand, he had an ally in Eisenhower's capable chief of staff, Lieutenant General Walter "Beetle" Bedell Smith.

LEFT: IWM/E 23513; RIGHT: BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

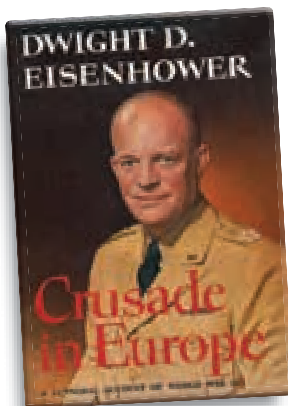
staff came with them. Bedell Smith and de Guingand continued to build on the solid professional relationship they already had established. De Guingand retained his temporary wartime rank of major-general, although the position was really authorized for a lieutenant-general. Montgomery asked him to accept the lower rank on the odd rationale that many of the brigadiers assigned to the staff would then push for promotions to major-general. De Guingand acquiesced to his boss's wishes, but that would come back to haunt him in just a few years.

The staff of Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Morgan, the designated chief of staff to the Supreme Allied Commander, had already done a great amount of detail work on the invasion plan, but when Beetle and Freddie got their first look at the plan in January 1944, they quickly recognized that the invasion sector was too narrow and the assigned troops too few. Together, they briefed Montgomery, who agreed with them immediately. Then they convinced Eisenhower, who finally persuaded the Combined Chiefs of Staff to allocate more forces. From that point on they had only 22 weeks to re-work the basic plan and all the detail work to support it. Montgomery, as usual, gave de Guingand a free hand.

Once the Allies landed in France on D-Day, the friction between Eisenhower and Montgomery only grew worse. But it was not only Americans that Montgomery alienated. Many of his fellow British senior officers also considered him insufferable, especially Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, Eisenhower's Deputy Supreme Commander at SHAEF. De Guingand increasingly found himself intervening with his fellow countrymen on Montgomery's behalf. More and more Montgomery refused to participate in meetings at SHAEF headquarters, sending de Guingand as his representative instead. Although de Guingand always supported his boss's positions on operational matters, he also managed to serve as an effective peacemaker and intermediary.

The running Ike-Monty feud took a turn for the worse on September 1, 1944, when Eisenhower assumed the role of combined ground forces commander. Montgomery, who believed he should retain that position, took it personally and continued to agitate for the role until the end of the war. Another source of friction was Ike's strategy of attacking Germany across a broad front; Montgomery insisted they should put all the Allied weight into a single rapier-like thrust into northern Germany—commanded by himself, of course. At one point, Eisenhower partially gave in, authorizing Montgomery to launch Operation Market Garden in September 1944 to push through the Netherlands into Germany and seize the Rhine bridges. De Guingand, however, had serious reservations about the operation and tried to convince Montgomery that the Germans would almost certainly be able

The Ike-Monty feud took a turn for the worse when Eisenhower assumed the role of combined ground forces commander.



Top: Eisenhower (right) and Montgomery had a contentious relationship from the time they first met, when Monty demanded that Ike put out his cigarette. Above: Ike's 1948 book about the war deepened the rift between the two generals.

to defeat it. Montgomery dismissed the concerns, but subsequent events proved de Guingand all too right when the Germans blocked the British advance at the Rhine.

The final crisis between Ike and Monty came in late December 1944, during Germany's offensive in the Ardennes, the Battle of the Bulge. True to form, Montgomery refused to attend Eisenhower's senior leaders' emergency meeting at Verdun on December 19, 1944. Tedder, Omar Bradley, Third Army commander George S. Patton, Bedell Smith, and 6th Army Group commander Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers were all there. Montgomery sent de Guingand. Eisenhower made the correct decision to place U.S. First and Ninth Armies temporarily under the operational control of Montgomery's 21st Army Group to fight the German penetration north of the Bulge shoulder. Montgomery, however, became openly very critical of American performance during the battle. The British press echoed the criticisms, suggesting that Montgomery had "saved the bacon" for the Americans, and demanding that Monty be made overall land forces commander for the rest of the war.

That was the final straw for Eisenhower. On December 30 Ike decided to tell British prime minister Winston Churchill and the Combined Chiefs of Staff that either he or Montgomery had to go. When de Guingand saw the draft of Eisenhower's letter, he had no doubt which way the decision would fall. But he persuaded Eisenhower to postpone sending the letter until he could talk to Montgomery. At first, Montgomery refused to accept the seriousness of the situation, believing that there was no other British general who could replace him. He was shocked when de Guingand told him that Eisenhower was prepared to recommend Sir Harold Alexander, now a field marshal, as the replacement.

Montgomery finally understood the gravity of his position. He asked de Guingand to draft an abject letter of apology to Eisenhower in an effort to defuse the situation. A very uncharacteristically humble-sounding Montgomery wrote, "Have seen Freddie and understand you are greatly worried by many considerations in these difficult days." And, "Whatever your decision may be, you can rely upon me one hundred percent to make it work." He signed the letter, "Your very devoted subordinate, Monty." It worked. Eisenhower was mollified. But of course, after the war and to the end of his life Montgomery never missed an opportunity to snipe at Ike.

IN 1946 MONTGOMERY was selected to succeed Alanbrooke as CIGS, the professional head of the British Army. Monty had already told de Guingand that he wanted him as his vice chief, and he arranged his assignment as Director of Military Intelligence at the War Office in London as a preparatory position. At the last minute, however, the outgoing Alanbrooke raised objections, citing de Guingand's health as the reason. Almost as soon as he took office, Montgomery summarily told de Guingand, "I've decided not to have you for my Vice." Stunned, de Guingand asked why, Montgomery callously answered, "Because it would not do me any good." End of discussion.

De Guingand realized he no longer had a role in the British Army. His only option was to retire, but he was still only a temporary wartime major-general. He could not afford to

TOP: IANDAGNALL COMPUTING/ALAMY; BOTTOM: HISTORYNET ARCHIVES

De Guingand served as an honorary pallbearer at Montgomery's funeral on April 1, 1976. He was the only major-general to receive that honor. The others were an air marshal, a full admiral, and five field marshals.

EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

retire at his substantive rank of colonel. De Guingand appealed to his old boss for help, but Montgomery declined to get involved in what he considered a petty administrative detail far beneath the level of a great commander. Bedell Smith, however, was outraged by de Guingand's situation and he brought it to Ike's attention. After Eisenhower intervened personally at the highest levels of the British government, de Guingand finally received promotion to the substantive rank of major-general on September 10, 1946. He retired five months later.

The United States recognized de Giungand's value. In April 1945 the U.S. awarded him the Legion of Merit in the degree of Commander, and in January 1948 the U.S. Army presented him with the Distinguished Service Medal. After the war de Guingand became a successful businessman in South Africa. But as Montgomery's vitriolic pot shots at Eisenhower continued throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, de Guingand increasingly leaned toward sympathizing with Ike, who cited him no fewer than 15 times in the endnotes of his 1948 book, *Crusade in Europe*. That book infuriated Montgomery, which naturally increased the growing separation between de Guingand and his former boss. Nonetheless, de Guingand was one of the eight official pallbearers at Montgomery's state funeral on April 1, 1976.

Sir Francis Wilfred de Guingand died at Cannes, France, on June 29, 1979. His place in the history of World War II is best summed up by what Eisenhower wrote in *Crusade in Europe* about the chief of staff of the 21st Army Group: "He was Major-General Francis de Guingand, 'Freddy' to all his associates in SHAEF and in other high headquarters. He lived the code of the Allies and his tremendous capacity, ability, and energy were devoted to the co-ordination of plan and detail that was absolutely essential to victory." ★

De Guingand appealed to his old boss for help, but Montgomery declined to get involved.

Major General David T. Zabecki (U.S. Army, Ret.) is Military History *magazine's chief military historian, and* Vietnam *magazine's editor emeritus.*

NIGHT

The 868th Bombardment Squadron's *Lady June II* flies a nighttime raid against Batavia, Dutch East Indies, in a painting by Shigeo Koike. Modified B-24 Liberators like this were part of a top-secret unit known as the Wright Project. As the squadron's radar countermeasures aircraft, *Lady June II* would have led formations to jam enemy radar.

STALKERS

Darkness could not spare the Japanese from the B-24s of the Wright Project. Neither could daylight

By Richard Phillip Lawless

In August 1943 members of the highly classified Wright Project departed Virginia's Langley Field for service in the South Pacific. Ten Consolidated B-24D Liberator bombers—equipped with an untried combat electronics system and designated SB-24s—and their handpicked crews were off to join the Thirteenth Air Force, then battling the Japanese in the Solomon and Bismarck Islands. The project's leader, Colonel Stuart "Stud" Wright, had a letter in his breast pocket with the letterhead of U.S. Army Air Forces Headquarters, signed by no less a person than Commanding General Henry "Hap" Arnold. The Arnold letter instructed all commands to help the unit deploy as soon as possible and provide all necessary support.

Wright and his team touched down at Guadalcanal's Carney Field on August 23, 1943, and, initially designated as the 394th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) of the 5th Bomb Group, flew their first combat missions three days later. Before long the Wright group became known as "the Snoopers."

The project's ten crews—100 officers and men—and aircraft intended to prove the combat effectiveness of an electronics system devised by Radiation Laboratory, a research and development team of civilian scientists and engineers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. Working closely with the 1st Sea Search Attack Group at Langley Field, the lab's technology would allow an aircraft to fly into to the blackness of night, spend 10 or more hours hunting over large swatches of enemy-dominated ocean, detect targets at great distances, and home in on them with precision low-level attacks. A single nightstalking aircraft could seek prey from 5,000 feet or more, then drop to a thousand feet or less to strike, unseen by the target vessel until the bomb blasts lit up the night. The attacking aircraft would then speed away to return home safely at daybreak.

While good intelligence frequently suggested where the SB-24s should look for its targets, just as frequently an aircraft's advanced microwave search radar detected enemy ships from distances of 50 to 70 miles. A competent operator could use the SCR-717-B radar to position the attacking aircraft for an out-of-the-night run, catching a moving target with a bomb spread triggered by the onboard APQ-5 computer that allowed a precision release of a string of 500-pound bombs.

But these low-level attacks took their toll on the unit as the enemy fought back. And while Colonel Wright had warned his men that many would not return, the loss of two of the 10 original crews within a few weeks would be sobering.

ALTHOUGH WRIGHT'S MEN had been attacking targets almost every night from the day of their arrival, the first really "big show" occurred on the night of September 28-29, 1943. The U.S. Naval Intelligence Group alerted ComAirSols, the Guadalcanal-based command that coordinated and directed all air operations in the South Pacific at the time, that a Japanese resupply convoy, comprising a bevy of fast transports escorted by a half-dozen destroyers, would be making a supply

PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATONS COURTESY RICHARD PHILLIP LAWLESS UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

Before departing for the Pacific, the members of the Wright Project gather for a group photo at Virginia's Langley Field in August 1943. *Devil's Delight* was one of their 10 airplanes.

Three airplanes from the 868th Bombardment Squadron, as the Wright Project was later designated, wait for action at Munda Field in the Solomon Islands in March 1944. From front to back they are *Ramp Tramp*, *Devil's Delight*, and *Madame Libby the Sea Ducer*.

run down "The Slot," the nickname for the sea passage from Bougainville Island through New Georgia Sound and on to Guadalcanal. ComAirSols tagged Wright and his SB-24s to find, track, and attack the convoy.

Captain Franklin T.E. Reynolds and his crew took the lead in the SB-24 *Coral Princess*, found the targets, and determined the convoy's position, course, and speed. Reynolds' radar operator identified 11 ships and he selected the largest, a cargo vessel, for his attack. The system performed with perfection. Reynolds made a beam-on run at 1,000 feet altitude and 135 knots indicated air speed, and the computer toggled a string of six bombs spaced at 75-foot intervals. The bombs walked across the ship, delivering two direct hits and four near misses. Fires were soon raging out of control, with the flames visible for 20 miles.

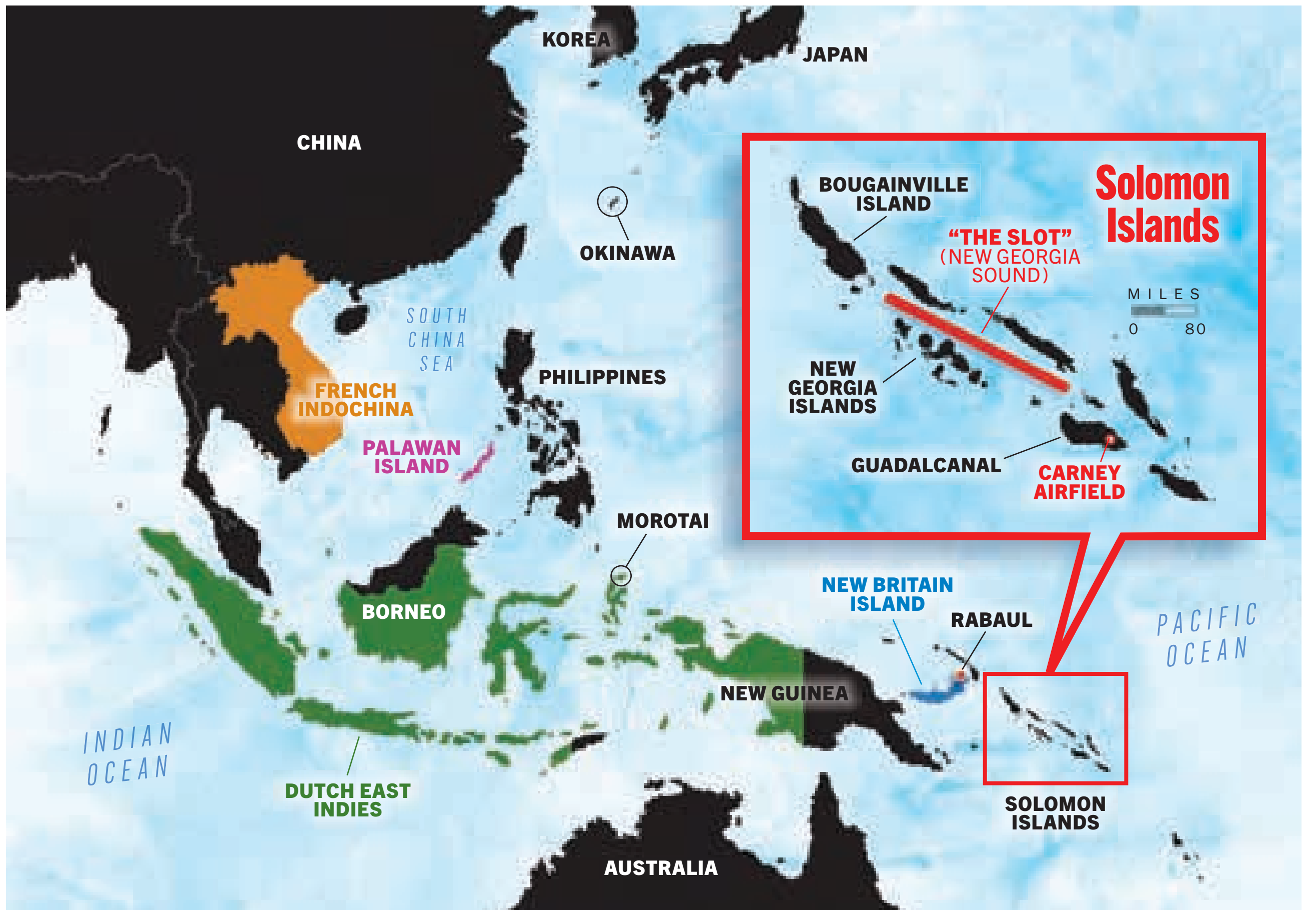
Reynolds summoned other SB-24s out that night to join in his attack and they used the fire as a beacon when they arrived. Captain John Zinn and the crew of *Uncle's Fury* were next but failed to make any hits as anti-aircraft fire increased. Major Leo Foster, who would take over command when Wright went

The loss of two of the original 10 crews within a few weeks would be sobering.

Above: Major Leo Foster piloted *Devil's Delight* during the fight over the Slot on the night of September 28-29, 1943. Left: Lieutenant Fred Martus (standing, center) and his crew flew *Gremlins' Haven* that night, but didn't return.

home to report on the unit's success, led the second wave into the convoy. Flying in *Devil's Delight* with Wright as copilot, he and his crew dropped bombs that just missed a frantically maneuvering destroyer, then climbed atop the action to direct more incoming aircraft. *Bums Away,* piloted by Lieutenant Bob Lehti, was next into the fight. The SB-24 found a target and started a low-altitude bombing (LAB) run, but Lehti banked away moments before release when the identification-friend-or-foe (IFF) system malfunctioned and signaled that the ship he was attacking was a U.S. Navy vessel. Lieutenant Ken Brown in *Ramp Tramp,* hearing Lehti communicate that his IFF was sending confusing signals, checked his IFF and also elected not to attack out of concern that the ships were American.

Two other SB-24s soon arrived, delayed because they had to recruit airmen from other aircraft to fill out their crews. Lieutenants George Tillinghast and Fred Martus, each in the aircraft they had brought over from Langley Field, *The Lady Margaret* and *Gremlins' Haven,* rolled in last on the now scattered ships. By this time the Japanese had shaken off the shock of the attack and responded with a heavy volume of fire. Although darkness did hide the SB-24s' approach, the Japanese were able to pick up the attackers as they made the final run to their bomb release points, making the aircraft highly vulnerable as they passed over their targets.



Starting at their original posting at Carney Field on Guadalcanal, the crews of the Wright Project gradually moved closer to Japan. By 1945 they were attacking French Indochina from the Philippine island of Palawan.

MAP BY BRIAN WALKER

Martus selected his ship, took the lead, and radioed to Tillinghast, "This is Martus. Have them in sight. We're going in." Tillinghast followed Martus into the fight but selected a different ship, which he just missed. He then climbed to 10,000 feet and circled the fires below to establish contact with the Martus crew, these two being the last of the attackers to depart for home. But there was no trace of Martus and the crew of *Gremlins' Haven*.

The loss of the Martus crew came in the wake of the crash of Lieutenant Bob Easterling's *Princess Slipp* a few weeks earlier. In the early morning of August 31, that SB-24 had reached base badly shot up while attacking Japanese vessels and it had crashed while attempting to land at Carney Field, killing all 10 men on board. The losses hit the project hard. As one veteran remarked some 35 years later, "Now it was personal, the easy times were over."

AS OCTOBER moved into November, and Admiral William Halsey's forces fought their way up the Solomon Island chain, the Wright Project SB-24s found themselves not only hunting Japanese shipping but also directly supporting the U.S. Navy cruiser-destroyer task groups that combated Japanese forces determined to disrupt Allied landings in the advance toward Rabaul, Japan's main naval and air base on New Britain Island.

One such decisive black-of-night encounter between speeding warships was the Battle of Empress Augusta Bay. In this case a powerful Japanese cruiser-led task force attempted to wreak havoc an Allied amphibious landing at Cape Torokina on Bougainville Island. On the night of November 1-2, 1943, the strike force, under Admiral Sentaro Omori, left Simpson Harbor at Rabaul. Its two heavy cruisers, two light cruisers, and brace of destroyers intended to attack the 14,000 men of the U.S. 3rd Marine Division who had splashed ashore earlier that day. Opposing this strike force was a U.S. task group comprising four light cruisers and eight destroyers under the command of Rear Admiral Aaron S. "Tip" Merrill. Every sailor in Merrill's command knew the Japanese were coming hard at them, steaming for a fight. But they did not know from where they were coming, when they planned to attack, or how many vessels they had.

That evening the XIII Bomber Command sent the SB-24s of Lieutenants Vince Splane and Duward Sumner into the night to patrol

In the nighttime fight in Empress Augusta Bay, Lieutenant Vince Splane and his crew scored a hit on the Japanese heavy cruiser *Haguro*, pictured here in Rabaul's Simpson Bay the day after the attack.

NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Splane knew he had damaged the flagship and rattled its bridge crew.

separate sectors of New Britain Island's St. George's Channel, the most likely path of the Japanese approach. Sumner in *Ramp Tramp* found Omori first, his SCR-717-B radar detecting the Japanese from 35 miles out. Sumner positioned his plane overhead as his radar operator fine-tuned his scope so he could count the ships, allowing Sumner to radio an alert to provide course, speed, and number of vessels to Merrill's task group. Sumner alerted Splane's crew, aboard their favorite squadron aircraft, *Devil's Delight,* and Splane closed to back up Sumner. Splane's radar was performing exceptionally well that night and picked up Omori's task force at 75 miles. With Splane now joined overhead to continue the tracking mission, Sumner sought and received permission from ComAirSols to attack. Over a two-hour period, Sumner made several LAB attacks, one of which near-missed the light cruiser *Sendai*. He then turned over the tracking of Omori's strike force to Splane and *Devil's Delight*. In his after-action mission report Sumner noted that issues with his bomb release mechanism affected his attacks. But even Sumner's failed attempts impacted Japanese plans. Omori, his battle flag flying from the veteran heavy cruiser *Haguro,* realized he was being tracked. Recognizing they had lost the element of surprise and faced an alerted Allied force, Omori and his headquarters elected to forgo one element of the attack, causing a group of troop-laden destroyers to abort their mission and turn back to Rabaul.

Splane tracked Omori for an hour, radioing updated details to Merrill, who maneuvered his task group to intercept the Japanese. At this point, well after midnight, *Devil's Delight* received permission to mount its own LAB run. Splane had his radar operator pick out the strongest radar signature and homed in to deliver "six five-hundred-pound bombs in a 30-foot interval release sequence that walked right up to the side of the ship." Banking away, Splane knew he had damaged the flagship and rattled its bridge crew. The attack had caught the cruiser by surprise and Splane received no fire from the *Haguro* on this run nor on a follow-up attack up the wake that just missed the cruiser.

Omori was flustered and confused. He changed course, then reduced speed to assess the damage to his ship and determine the overall situation. He had damage to his hull and, as rain pelted his bridge and scout planes delivered reports of sighting Merrill's ships, Omori's tight formation lost needed cohesion. The Japanese soon encountered Merrill's radar-equipped task group, well-organized and waiting for their enemy. Merrill's destroyers leaped to the battle and released their torpedoes, as the light cruisers, their radar tracking the Japanese and directing gunfire,

Okinawa -
8, Sept. '45

Dear Snooper -

Words cannot express my feeling of gratitude for the spirit of cooperation, consideration, and loyalty you've given me - the cheerfulness and grim determination you've shown when things were tough, the way you have tackled impossible jobs and the way you've overcome all obstacles to make our outfit the best - is the greatest honor I'll ever have bestowed upon me. I shall always cherish our association and remember your friendship - Good hunting, and good luck to you always.

Most Sincerely

Baylis Harriss

maneuvered to gain best advantage.

By four in the morning, it was over. Omori limped back to Rabaul with the light cruiser *Sendai* sunk, a destroyer rammed and sunk in the battle's confusion, two other destroyers badly damaged, and *Haguro* and sister ship *Myoko* damaged. In the morning, Merrill's superior, Admiral Thomas Kinkaid, dispatched a special thank you to Halsey at ComAirSols at Guadalcanal for a "splendid night tracking mission."

The following night, three more SB-24s lifted off into the darkness, this time into the face of a rain squall, to begin the hunt anew. Operating independently of any bomb group and mostly flying single-aircraft missions, these specialized airplanes and their crews continued their fight against Japan for the next 22 months as the unit moved forward across the Pacific. Over time, the 868th Bombardment Squadron, as they would soon be formally designated, increasingly fought during the day, not just at night.

Top: Major Baylis Harriss took command of the 868th on March 10, 1945. When the squadron was demobilized, Harriss expressed his appreciation for the "Snoopers." Above: Harriss assumes the pilot's seat for a strike on the Dutch East Indies on June 3-4, 1945. Earle Smith is the copilot; the flight engineer is unidentified. Note the "Snoopers" bomber jacket.

U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES Lieutenant Walter N. Low was 21 years old when he took his crew of 10 young men to war in the Pacific in the spring of 1945. They joined the 868th in April when it was based at Morotai, an island in the Moluccas in the Dutch East Indies.

Major Baylis Harriss had been recently appointed squadron commander. A Texan with years of combat experience, he was rebuilding the squadron with additional crews and new aircraft, while pushing his men to undertake longer missions designed to build unit cohesion and confidence.

Lieutenant Low's first mission occurred on May 6. He and his crew received their baptism of fire attacking the Japanese airdrome at Mandai in the Dutch East Indies. Three days later they hit the Samarinda shipyards on Borneo with the bomber's normal load of six

500-pound bombs, and three days after that they struck Kendari airfield to crater the runways and keep it unserviceable. They flew five more missions in May, all attacks against shipping facilities, airdromes, and vessels in this same area.

In early June the Low crew kept up this pace, flying missions against many of the same targets in the Dutch East Indies. On June 12, Low and his crew flew to the Flores Sea on a daylight search for shipping, where they found and attacked a collection of small cargo vessels. And on June 18 Low and crew flew as a two-ship mission to hit Oelin Airdrome. Both planes came home with feathered props, having nearly run dry on fuel. On that mission Low had drawn the B-24 *Lady Luck II* as his airplane. The airplane had arrived in the squadron a few weeks before, already had a dozen missions to her credit, and was regarded by all who flew her as a "solid airplane."

Late July found the squadron preparing to relocate to Okinawa to join the air campaign against the Japanese home islands in preparation for the planned invasion of Kyushu. The landing on Kyushu, the first of two such operations designed to force a surrender on the ground in Japan, was scheduled to occur sometime in late October or early November of that year. It was assumed that the period of August to November 1945 would be one of intense combat for the 868th above and around the four home islands, where Japanese resistance would be fierce. But as the ground elements of the squadron packed their equipment to head north in July, the combat crews of the 868th still operated in the Dutch East Indies.

That third week in July, higher authorities directed the squadron to strike farther west to hit targets in French Indochina. Their mission was to search and destroy Japanese shipping along that coast to block the flow of any oil or military supplies to the home islands. Lieutenant Low, in the company of three other squadron aircraft commanded by Lieutenants Mel Jensen, Hensen Sprawls, and George Koonsman, hunted at low level on July 21. The mission was a long one, with the four aircraft departing home base at Morotai before daylight and staging through an advanced airfield on Palawan Island in the Philippines to extend their range. Reaching the French Indochina coast at midday, they discovered shipping targets aplenty, most sheltering in the harbors or slightly upstream in the rivers. This was virgin territory, at least for the far-ranging 868th SB-24 Liberators, and the four hunters made the best of it, bombing and strafing several small merchant ships. One of the mission crews flew inland and destroyed a railroad bridge. The four aircraft returned safely to home base, holed by ground fire but suffering no casualties.

On this day, Low and his crew followed an 868th tradition of attacking at a very low level, bombing from 500 feet or below, then following up with multiple gun runs at 200 feet or less, skimming the water to fire into the sides of vessels with sustained bursts from their .50-caliber weapons. Unlike the dark-of-night LAB missions that had placed the 868th in a league of its own, and to which the unit would soon return in the campaign over the Home Islands, these missions were all by daylight. The hunting Liberators were seen by the vessels they attacked and the result was often a ship-to-airplane shootout.

Two days later Low reprised his visit to the French Indochina coast on his twentieth combat mission, on this occasion in aircraft

Opposite: Two photos show the before and after of an attack piloted on July 23, 1945, by Lieutenant George Koonsman over the Bassac River. This page: Lieutenant Walter N. Low and his crew find their own targets on the Bassac. Afterward, they were forced to ditch in the sea.

808. When he spotted a large tug dragging two oil barges on the Bassac River, Low rolled in to make a bombing run, pushing his luck at a mere 200 feet in altitude. Three 500-pound bombs hit dead center and the barges exploded in a massive fireball, with orange flames shooting into the sky and a dense plume of smoke rising in a mushroom cloud to 1,500 feet. Although his bombs were fused to delay for four seconds to allow an attacker to drop at low altitude, the detonation of the bombs and their target rocked the aircraft. As it came off the target, veteran squadron ship 808 had its waist windows blown out and the airframe twisted. Low was thrown from his seat and landed on the flight deck.

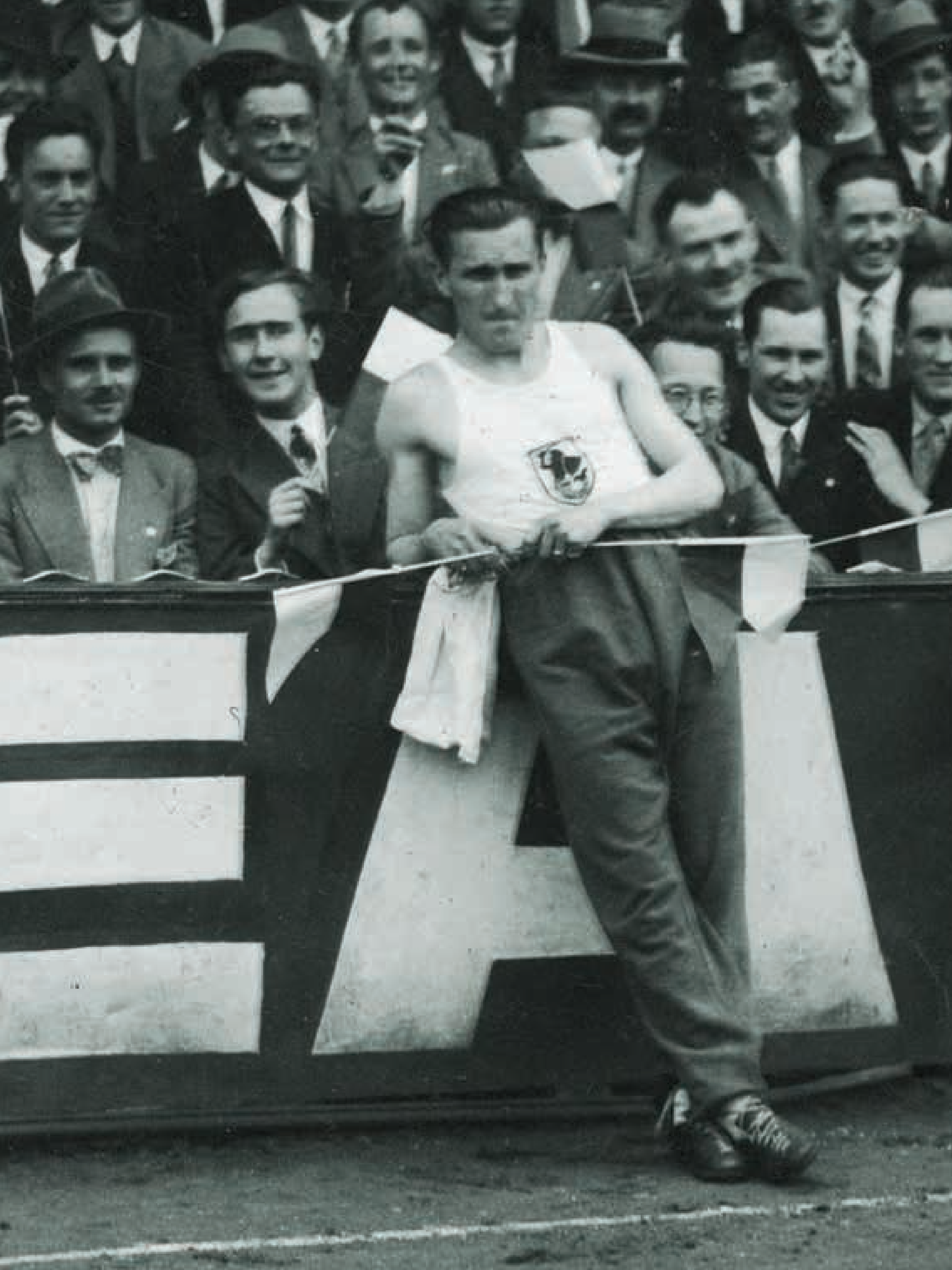
Low reclaimed his seat and he and copilot Don McDermott struggled to regain control of their crippled plane. But serious damage had been done and the aircraft was doomed. A few miles out, over open waters and headed home, number two engine burst into flames and had to be feathered. A fuel leak made it clear that the aircraft could not make it to Palawan, and a decision was made for the crew to bail out. Koonsman flew alongside Low and maintained communications with him, while managing to contact a U.S. submarine in the area. After confirming an emergency rendezvous with the rescue sub, the 10-man crew of Low's airplane prepared to bail out. Low reached the pick-up point and made three runs over the location as all crew members safely parachuted. Low was the last to jump.

The following day, Lieutenant Sprawls set out on the same course, staging again from Palawan, to search for the missing crew. By then it had become certain that the submarine had not picked up the missing airmen and that Low and his men were adrift somewhere in the South China Sea. Three of the crewmembers managed to survive and were rescued after several days in the water. The other seven perished. Walter Low one of those who survived.

Pilot Walter N. Low was thrown from his seat and landed on the flight deck.

In July 1945, the squadron lost a total of 21 officers and men missing in action and saw its roster reduced to 13 combat-qualified crews and 12 aircraft. But new crews were reporting in, and new aircraft were arriving to replace losses. Importantly, the increased operational tempo established by Major Harriss was the highest ever reached by the unit and this achievement was recognized by the Far East Air Forces leaders. The squadron was now primed to complete its move north to join the final campaign of the war and was ordered to relocate to Okinawa in the final days of the month. The 868th would begin operations over the home islands in early August 1945, well prepared for a war that all assumed would extend into the summer of the following year, if not longer. ★

Richard Phillip Lawless is a former career clandestine service officer of the Central Intelligence Agency and served as the Under Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs (2002-2008). He is the author of Nightstalkers: The Wright Project and the 868th Bomb Squadron in World War II (Casemate Publishers), *from which this article was adapted. The website is* nightstalkers868.com.



Polish track star Janusz Kusociński strikes a confident pose at a 1931 athletics competition in Antwerp. When war broke out in 1939, Kusociński began fighting the Nazis.

DEATH OF A POLISH ICON

Janusz Kusociński had gained fame as an Olympian before he was murdered by the Nazis

By Christopher Warner

In the spring of 1940, Nazi officials launched AB-Aktion (*Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion*, or "Extraordinary Pacification Action"), the second phase of a systematic campaign to eliminate intellectuals, politicians, clergy, and other influential leaders in German-occupied Poland. Those the Nazis targeted were either placed in concentration camps or murdered by paramilitary death squads at secret locations. One series of mass executions took place in a secluded forest near the small village of Palmiry. The dead included Janusz Kusociński—an Olympic hero, decorated soldier, and national icon.

Janusz Tadeusz Kusociński was born on January 15, 1907, in Warsaw. Armed conflict would take a heavy toll on his family, beginning with his oldest brother, Zygmunt, who was killed in France during World War I. Another brother died in the Polish-Bolshevik

workload involving gymnastics and intense interval training, similar to the training elite Finnish runners of the day employed. The plan worked. Beginning in 1928, Kusociński won the first of 10 Polish titles in events ranging from 800 to 10,000 meters while setting 25 national records.

Kusociński had to place his running career on hold while he completed two years of compulsory military duty in the Polish Army. As a member of the 36th Legion Infantry Regiment, he achieved the rank of corporal before completing his service in 1930. He then resumed his winning ways, capturing national titles for 800, 1,500, and 5,000 meters and cross country. His grueling training regimen saw him work out twice a day, which he scheduled around his job as a gardener at Łazienki Park, the largest open-air grounds in Warsaw. He understood that unwavering dedication and discipline were vital if he wanted to beat the world's best athletes. In his biography, he described the austere training he undertook: "Regardless of snow or rain, gale or frost, dressed as warmly as possible, in a few sweaters, I run Lazinki Park."

Throughout the 1920s, Finland's Paavo Nurmi dominated middle- and long-distance running, winning nine Olympic gold medals. But his iron grip on the sport had begun to slip, and even Finnish newspapers were now hailing Kusociński as the "Polish Nurmi." In June 1932, Kusy broke the world record for 3,000 meters with a time of 8:18.8. Less than two weeks later, he shaved 13 seconds off the four-mile all-time best, clocking 19:02.6. Both records

After turning 21, Kusociński spent two years of compulsory service in the Polish Army as a Corporal in the 36th Legion Infantry Regiment.

War in 1920. Young Janusz showed early potential on the football pitch and also excelled at palant, a popular bat-and-ball sport similar to baseball. His athleticism continued to develop after he joined the sports club RKS Sarmata, where he picked up the nickname "Kusy," but after falling behind in school, his father sent him to the State Secondary School of Horticulture so he could learn a trade as a gardener.

The chances of Kusociński becoming an Olympian runner, let alone a gold medalist and world record holder, appeared slim. But as fate would have it, after being pulled from the grandstands as a last-minute replacement at a track meet in 1925, the feisty 18-year-old, who stood 5′ 5″ with a modest build, responded with an impressive performance, propelling his club to victory and setting in motion an improbable path to glory.

Kusy soon attracted the attention of Estonian decathlete Aleksander Klumberg, who had recently been named head coach of Polish national athletics. Klumberg, a bronze medalist at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, recognized the young man's raw potential and encouraged him to embrace a more rigorous

had previously belonged to Nurmi. The Warsaw runner then set his sights on representing his country that summer at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles—and a showdown with the "Flying Finns."

Kusy's high pain threshold led to multiple surgeries to repair his knees.

Some runners effortlessly bound down the track with the grace of a gazelle. Not Kusy. He ran ugly—more like a charging rhino—working hard every step of the way. This contrast set the stage for the Olympic 10,000-meter final, featuring a clash between the Pole and two Finnish runners, Volmari Iso-Hollo and Lasse Virtanen (Nurmi didn't compete after being disqualified on allegations of violating the amateur code). Adding to the drama, a new pair of track spikes gave Kusociński cuts and blisters on both feet and he ran the last eight laps in excruciating pain. Entering the bell lap, he trailed Iso-Hollo before kicking past his rival on the final curve en route to a new Olympic record. Poland now had its first-ever male Olympic champion.

His elation, however, was short-lived. The deep lacerations on his feet forced him to withdraw from the 1,500-meter and 5,000-meter events—races in which he was expected to medal. Although disappointed, Kusociński returned home a conquering hero, regaling people with stories of his 10k triumph and how he met Hollywood stars Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and Tom Mix. Kusy's own celebrity led to packed stadiums whenever he competed, and his races were

PHOTOS COURTESY NARODOWE ARCHIWUM CYFROWE UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

often broadcast on the radio. But his relentless drive for success had become a double-edged sword. An innate stubbornness and high pain threshold eventually led to multiple surgeries to repair the degenerative menisci on his knees. While recovering, Kusociński utilized the downtime to explore some new avenues, including coaching, pursuing a degree in physical education, and becoming editor-in-chief of Poland's oldest daily sports newspaper, *Kurier Sportowy*.

Lingering injuries prevented him from defending his Olympic title in 1936. Nonetheless, he attended the Games in Berlin as a reporter and technical adviser to the Polish athletics team. At the German capital, which featured the largest Olympiad to date, the world witnessed Adolf Hitler blatantly propagandize his master race ideology. The heroics of American Jessie Owens aside, the home team ruled the podium, hauling in a total of 101 medals.

In 1939, Kusy made a triumphant return to the track, winning the 10,000-meter event at the Polish championships. He capped the season by breaking the national record twice for 5,000 meters and looked forward to taking another crack at the Olympics the following year, with an eye on the marathon. The Games of the XI Olympiad had been originally awarded to Tokyo, but a confluence of factors, including Japan's war with China, resulted in Olympic organizers naming Helsinki as the replacement host city. Such details, however, are now a trivial footnote in history. Both the 1940 and 1944 Games were canceled because of World War II—hostilities that were sparked by Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939.

HITLER ATTEMPTED to justify the attack by falsely claiming German forces had acted in self-defense, stemming from "false flag" incidents staged along the Polish border. The deceit included a fake assault on a radio station in Gleiwitz—a ruse involving murder victims dressed in Polish Army uniforms. The Wehrmacht wasted little time before unleashing more than 2,000 tanks supported by massive air cover from the Luftwaffe.

The offensive also introduced a new term to describe the Nazis' fast-moving tactic: blitzkrieg ("lightning war"). Created in response to Germany's failures in WWI and the need to overcome trench warfare deadlock, blitzkrieg hinged on the ability to penetrate a weak point in an enemy's line while launching unprecedented speed of movement on the battlefield.

The battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* fired the opening shots of World War II when it unleashed its guns from the port of Danzig (Gdańsk) on the Polish garrison at Westerplatte. German ground forces, spearheaded by 11 Panzer divisions, rolled into Poland on several fronts, closely supported by Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers. Army Group North, under General Fedor von Bock, launched a two-pronged attack with the Third Army advancing south from East Prussia and the Fourth Army pushing east across the Polish Corridor to seize Danzig. Meanwhile, General Gerd von Rundstedt's Army Group South attacked from southeastern Germany and Slovakia.

At the outbreak of war, Kusociński attempted to enlist in the army, but his previ-

Top: The Los Angeles Coliseum hosted the 1932 Olympics. Here Kusy leads in the 10,000 meter event, despite severe blisters on his feet. Center: The conquering hero is feted in Warsaw, flanked by two trumpeters from the 1st Light Cavalry Regiment. Above: A medal commemorates the 1932 games.

MEDAL: MUSEUM OF SPORTS AND TOURISM IN WARSAW

Top: The Royal Castle in Warsaw burns during the German attack on the Polish capital. Center: The Nazis transformed the once-tranquil Kampinos Forest near the village of Palmiry into a killing field, murdering more than 1,700 Polish citizens there between 1939 and 1941. Above: Polish men await execution. After the war, hundreds of bodies were exhumed, including the remains of Kusociński.

ous surgeries rendered him "category D" (incapable of active military service). Nonetheless, he volunteered with the 360th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion, and posted to Czerniakowski (IX) Fort, a section of the outer ring that formed the Twierdza Warszawa (Warsaw Fortress). Built in the late 19th century under Russian Tsarist rule, the large, pentagon-shaped garrison secured the city from the south and featured a deep and wide moat. Kusociński, armed with a heavy machine gun and FB Vis 9mm pistol, commanded a platoon responsible for defending a bridge spanning the Vistula River.

German troops reached the southwestern suburbs of Warsaw by September 8. The undermanned and outgunned Poles managed to repel the initial attack before coming under siege as relentless artillery and aerial bombardment pounded the bustling, cosmopolitan city of 1.3 million. Making matters worse, the Soviet Union entered the war on September 17, having signed a secret pact with Germany to divide Poland in half. The lack of support from Western Allies further exacerbated the hopeless situation.

As enemy troops closed in on the fortress, Kusy was shot in the thigh but refused to leave his post. According to fellow soldier Józef Korolkiewicz, "At some point, Janusz Kusociński's machine gun jammed. While the servicemen struggled with dismantling and cleaning the seized parts...he leaned out of his position and shot his Vis pistol towards the crawling Germans. A moment later, the machine gun re-launched. Almost simultaneously, Kusociński is wounded again. Despite being injured for the second time, he does not want to leave his position. Both his legs are now injured."

Warsaw fell on September 28, 1939. For Kusociński's actions, the Polish government-in-exile awarded him the Cross of Valor, a military citation awarded for "deeds of valor and courage on the field of battle." He spent several weeks in a hospital, where nurse Zofia Biernacka treated his wounds. Years later, she recalled her encounter with the famous Olympian: "I remember that during dressing changes, looking at his small and slim legs, I wondered how he could achieve such world-class success. I even made a note about it during the dressing. Then I heard the answer: 'At the stadium, I was driven by ambition and love for my homeland.'"

AFTER RECOVERING, Kusy became involved with the Polish Resistance, joining an underground military organization called "Wolves." He adopted the pseudonym "Prawdzic" ("True") and took a job as a waiter in the Pod Cockem, a popular bar that allowed him to pass along critical information. The position also him put under surveillance by the Gestapo, who arrested him on March 28, 1940, in front of the house he shared with his mother and sister. Over the next three months, the Nazi secret police carried out lengthy interrogations marked by routine beatings and torture. Most of the abuse took place at Pawiak Prison, which more or less served as an inner-city concentration camp for political prisoners or anyone considered a threat to the Third Reich. The Nazis used a variety of methods to extract information, such as starvation, dog attacks, and ripping out fingernails. Kusy gave them nothing.

Palmiry is now the site of a museum and cemetery dedicated to the victims whom the Nazis killed here. The gravesite of Kusy stands out.

Mass executions had been taking place in Poland since the start of the German occupation. Although early campaigns specifically targeted Polish leadership from academic, political, and cultural circles, the massacres served as a prelude to genocide throughout Europe that culminated with the Holocaust. Executions during AB-Aktion were usually carried out by SS units and the *Ordnungspolizei* ("Order Police"). In an effort to maintain secrecy, the Nazis shifted the killings to the Kampinos Forest, located near the village of Palmiry, about 19 miles northwest of Warsaw. There, Nazi officials undertook several precautions to carry out their plans. Forestry crews cut down trees to enlarge a clearing; the *Arbeitsdienst* (Reich Labor Service) dug graves in the shape of long ditches, assisted by members of *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth) who camped nearby; and German police undertook intensive patrolling to secure the area.

The Nazis shot them with machine guns, then killed any survivors with pistols.

Transport trucks departed Pawiak at dawn to give prisoners the impression they were going to another prison or labor camp. Nazi officials reinforced the subterfuge by allowing them to take their documents and luggage. Some victims who saw through the ruse tossed out hastily written letters and personal items from the trucks. Upon arrival at the murder site, the condemned men and women were forced to line up along the edge of the pits, blindfolded. The Nazis shot them with machine guns, then killed anyone still alive with pistols. After filling in the ditches, work crews added a layer of moss and planted pine trees over the graves.

From 1939 to 1941, the Nazis murdered more than 1,700 Poles in the massacres at Palmiry. Records show that 358 victims, including Kusociński, were murdered in a single operation on June 20-21, 1940. According to eyewitness accounts, Kusociński had been severely beaten and could barely stand. Two other Olympians died with him: sprinter Feliks Żuber and cyclist Tomasz Stankiewicz.

Although the perpetrators went to great lengths to carefully cover up their crimes, the deaths at Palmiry would eventually be exposed. Local residents and Polish forest service workers knew about the executions and had marked the location of the graves. After the war, Poles exhumed hundreds of bodies, including the remains of Kusociński, found with fragments of a striped suit, a comb he received from his sister while in prison, and a figure of St. Anthony. Polish authorities later transformed the area into a war cemetery and established the Palmiry Museum-Memorial Site. Among the long rows of burial plots, Kusy's gravestone stands tallest.

Those directly involved in the murders were never held responsible, except for SS-*Standartenführer* Josef Albert Meisinger. Known as the "Butcher of Warsaw," Meisinger had authorized the killings at Palmiry while serving as commander of the Security Police in the Warsaw District. After the war, Meisinger was tried by Polish authorities and hanged at Mokotów Prison in March 1947.

The legacy of Janusz Kusociński remains a source of immeasurable national pride in Poland. There are several schools, streets, athletic facilities, a Polish Ocean Lines ship, and an airplane of LOT Polish Airlines that have been named after him. In 2009, the Polish government posthumously awarded Kusociński the Commander's Cross with Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta "for outstanding contribution to the independence of the Polish Republic, and for sporting achievements in the field of athletics." ★

Christopher Warner is an actor and freelance writer. He has written extensively about military history, including the experiences of his great-uncle, who flew combat gliders in World War II.

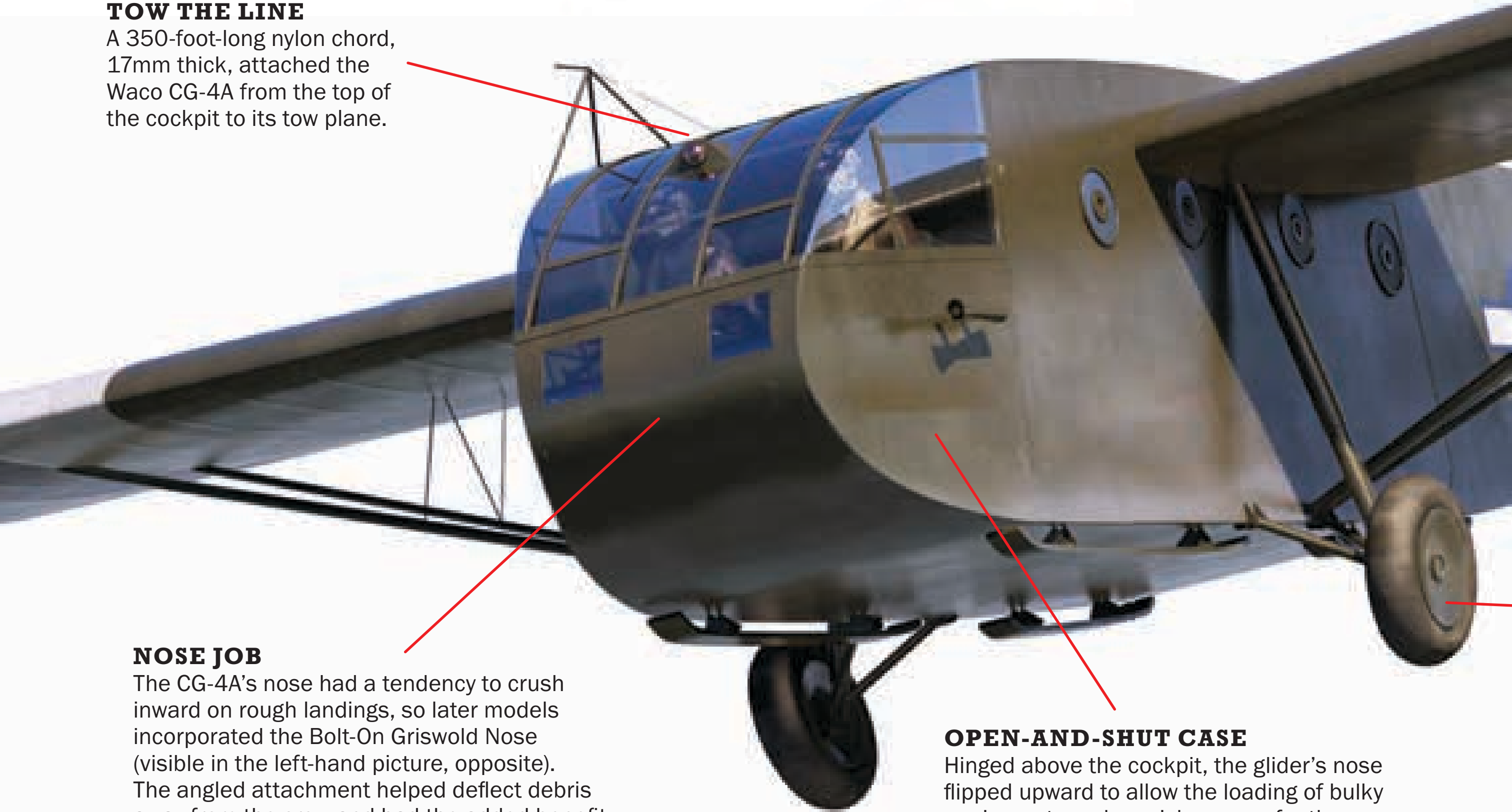
ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM TOOBY

SILENT PARTNER

THE WEHRMACHT JARRED the Allies into action when it introduced gliders to the fight for Belgium in 1940 and Crete in 1941. By 1942, the U.S. had developed its own glider prototype, the Waco CG-4A, to deliver men and materiel to the front or behind enemy lines and supplement the transport aircraft that dropped paratroopers and supplies. The high-wing monoplane, made primarily of fabric and plywood over steel tubing, could carry up to 13 fully equipped troops or an array of heavy machinery—7,500 pounds in total. Ford and several other companies built nearly 14,000 wartime gliders.

The engineless CG-4A had to be tethered and towed to its destination, a job most often performed by Douglas C-47 Skytrains. The gliders saw extensive service in the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 and during the 1944 campaigns in France and the Netherlands. But it wasn't a refined system. Once released, pilots in mass operations often had to complete for viable landing spots, and quite a few gliders crashed. One American private recalled the scene on the ground: "We thought it was incoming artillery when they began crashing in, and we began looking for cover." In theory, the gliders could be retrieved by C-47s via a tail hook and pick-up cord, but this proved difficult in real-life situations, and most CG-4As were abandoned or destroyed after landing. Despite this, after D-Day Allied Supreme Headquarters reported "sober satisfaction" with the gliders' performance.

After the war, most CG-4As were sold for parts. Some, their wings and tails detached, saw second lives as trailer homes or vacation cabins. *—Larry Porges*



TOW THE LINE
A 350-foot-long nylon chord, 17mm thick, attached the Waco CG-4A from the top of the cockpit to its tow plane.

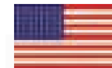
NOSE JOB
The CG-4A's nose had a tendency to crush inward on rough landings, so later models incorporated the Bolt-On Griswold Nose (visible in the left-hand picture, opposite). The angled attachment helped deflect debris away from the crew and had the added benefit of improving the glider's aerodynamics.

OPEN-AND-SHUT CASE
Hinged above the cockpit, the glider's nose flipped upward to allow the loading of bulky equipment—and a quick escape for the crew, if their side force-out panels were blocked. Jettisonable doors on the fuselage sides provided emergency exits for passengers.

The CG-4A glider's adaptable cargo hold could be configured to carry heavy materiel like jeeps (left), a strapped-down howitzer and its crew of five (right), or more than a dozen soldiers and their gear.

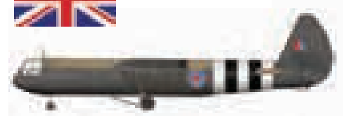
SHOWING ITS STRIPES
Adorned here in D-Day stripes, the glider's huge wings were nearly 84 feet long and had a surface area of 851 square feet.

AMERICAN WACO CG-4A
Crew: 2 / Length: 48 ft. 4 in. / Wingspan: 83 ft. 8 in. / Capacity: Up to 13 troops / Cruise speed: 75 mph / Max. tow speed: 125 mph / CG-4As could deliver heavier equipment and more troops in tighter concentrations than airdrops.

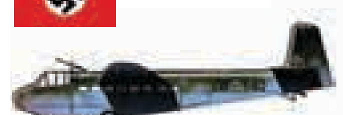


THE COMPETITION

BRITISH HORSA GLIDER
Crew: 2 / Length: 67 ft. / Wingspan: 88 ft. / Capacity: Up to 28 troops / Cruise speed: 100 mph / Max. tow speed: 160 mph / The British Horsa was larger than the CG-4A and could haul more cargo, but also needed more space to land.



GERMAN DFS-230 GLIDER
Crew: 1 / Length: 37 ft. / Wingspan: 72 ft. / Capacity: Up to 10 troops / Cruise speed: 112 mph / Max. tow speed: 130 mph / The DFS-230, used by Germany throughout the war, was designed for one-way use and contained only very basic instrumentation.



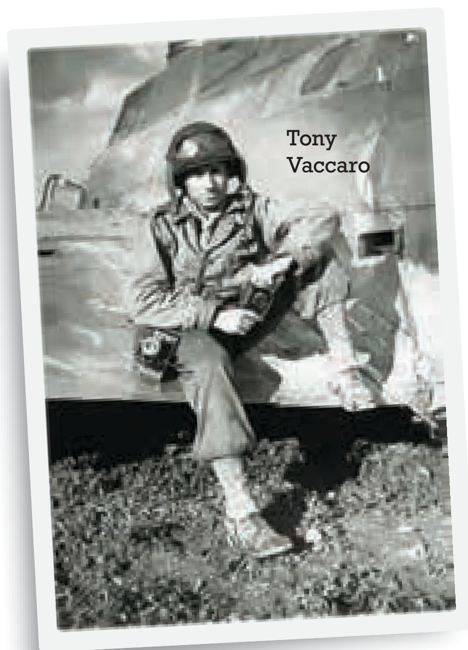
THE FIX IS IN
The glider had two fixed mainwheels and a nonsteerable tailwheel, all of which could be jettisoned after take-off for landing on skids. In emergencies, the tail wheel could be secured to a dolly and the CG-4A pulled backwards.

PHOTOS: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TONY VACCARO'S SHOOTING WAR

This young soldier broke the rules to capture raw images from the European Theater.

In one of Vaccaro's photographs, American soldiers at the end of the war in Europe contemplate the view through an empty window at *Kehlsteinhaus*, Hitler's Bavarian "Eagle's Nest" near Berchtesgaden. Glass from the broken window litters the floor.



As U.S. Army private Tony Vaccaro's boat sailed for Normandy on D-Day+12 in June 1944, he kept his M-1 rifle at the ready but had a very different tool hidden beneath his coat—his Argus C3 35mm camera. Defying army regulations that forbid combat photography except by Signal Corps personnel, Vaccaro used his camera to take surreptitious pictures of Allied forces in the English Channel. Those were the first of more than 8,000 images he snapped during his 272 days with the 83rd Infantry Division as it battled through France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany. Vaccaro and his camera became unique witnesses to World War II, capturing intimate moments—

A U.S. soldiers follow a tank during fighting near Hemmerden, Germany, on February 28, 1945. **B** Photographer Vaccaro came ashore in Normandy on D-Day+12 and captured this image of the beach. **C** American G.I.s remove mines from a Luxembourg field in November 1944. Recovered mines are visible on the left. **D** Fred Praily and Robert Svenson of K company, 331st Regiment, 2nd Battalion of the 83rd Infantry Division pass by graves outside Grevenbroich, Germany, on February 28, 1945. **E** The body of American G.I. Henry I. Tannenbaum lies in the snow near Ottré, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge in January 1945. Tannenbaum and Vaccaro had been friends.

PHOTOS BY TONY VACCARO/GETTY IMAGES UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. LEFT: ANTHONY MONTANA/TONY VACCARO/GETTY IMAGES

B

C

D

E

F Vaccaro took this photo at the moment that Private Jack W. Rose of the 83rd Division was killed on January 11, 1945, in Ottré, Belgium. Rose was killed by the exploding shell visible in the center of the image. "I was photographing him when this shell comes and explodes," Vaccaro said. **G** Stretcher bearers perpare to evacuate an American G.I. wounded by sniper fire in Vahlbruch, Germany, in April 1945.

sometimes celebratory, other times brutal and raw—that bypassed the military censors and recorded the U.S. Army's fight east across Europe.

Vaccaro, an Italian American who was raised in Italy but relocated to the U.S. at the outbreak of World War II, was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943 at age 21. He tried convincing the army to let him join the Signal Corps so he could pursue his passion for photography, but Uncle Sam rejected his request on account of his youth and lack of photography experience. He ended up in the infantry instead. Camera always at the ready, he took it upon himself to chronicle the daily struggles of the soldiers in his unit with an honesty and immediacy that often eluded those in the Signal Corps, whose heavy cameras limited their mobility. Eventually, the army loosened its regulations and allowed Vaccaro to take photographs openly, but made it clear he was a soldier first and a photographer second.

"Tony," he reminded himself, "What kind of witness to this war are you? You go back there and take this picture."

Vaccaro's images range from happy scenes in liberated French villages to the harsher truths of war. Once, when shying away from an

ugly scene, he reminded himself, "Tony, what kind of witness to this war are you? You go back there and take this picture." Two of his most famous images chronicle the deaths of two men in his unit, both taken in Belgium on January 11, 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge.

After the war, Vaccaro became a renowned fashion and celebrity photographer, but his experiences in Europe remained with him. He remembered, years later, "You are in the grip of these nightmares. The faces of the people you've killed. They just don't leave you alone. I'm not the same man."

Tony Vaccaro died at his New York home at age 100 in December 2022. ★

H German prisoners of war wait in the square of Rosslau, Germany, east of the Elbe, in May 1945. **I** Vaccaro captured the young face of war in this portrait of a Wehrmacht soldier who had been captured by the Allies in Rochefort, Belgium, on December 29, 1944. **J** In March 1945 this German soldier returned to his home in Frankfurt, only to find that it had been bombed out. Vaccaro was there to capture his grief. **K** Citizens of Saint-Briac-sur-Mer, France, celebrate the town's liberation by American troops on August 15, 1944.

WEDEMEYER AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN CHINA

The Japanese were not the only problem the U.S. Army general faced in Asia

By John C. McManus

Major General Albert Wedemeyer was a difficult man to surprise, but he knew that war often confounded the predictable. Born to German American parents in Nebraska, fluent in the tongue of his ancestors, and one of the U.S. Army's few graduates of the *Kriegsakademie*, Germany's war college, he did not expect to succeed General Joseph Stilwell in China. The news of this had come to Wedemeyer in the form of an urgent message from Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall on the evening of October 27, 1944, just as Wedemeyer drifted off to sleep in his bunk at Kandy on the island of Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). At the time, Wedemeyer served as deputy chief of staff to Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, the British commander of South East Asia Command, the polyglot theater that included Burma and India.

Tall, stately, impeccably groomed and neatly coiffed, Wedemeyer's pleasing physical appearance accurately suggested a man more at ease in a boardroom than a foxhole. A 1919 West Point graduate with two and a half decades

Lieutenant General Albert Wedemeyer experiences some local color after replacing Joseph Stilwell in China. His role required diplomacy and often led to frustration.

The Japanese weren't the only threat Chiang Kai-shek faced. He also had the communists under Mao Zedong (left) to deal with.

of loyal service, he had no combat experience, little command time, and almost nothing in common with the average soldier. Clever, diplomatic, and adept at under-the-radar self-promotion, Wedemeyer counted himself among George Marshall's many protégés. He also found an influential sponsor in Lieutenant General Stanley Embick, whose daughter Elizabeth he had married in 1925. Wedemeyer clearly lacked the inspirational characteristics of a frontline commander.

Much more a manager than a leader, Wedemeyer's understanding of modern combat tended more toward the intellectual than the experiential. But he possessed an incisive strategic mind, one that marked him as an insightful military thinker who was blessed with a strong understanding of geopolitics. On the eve of the war, when Wedemeyer was only an overaged major in the War Plans Division at the Pentagon, an organization his father-in-law had recently commanded, Marshall had chosen him to work on a team to produce a comprehensive plan for mobilization and victory when the United States entered the conflict. Wedemeyer's significant contributions to this so called "Victory Plan" had circuited his career in a relentlessly upward direction, with a rapid two-year rise from major to major general, and led historical posterity, with his gentle prodding, to afford him a bit too much credit for the plan's success. For the first two years of the war, Wedemeyer had remained part of the War Plans Division, functioning as a roving planner and consummate military insider, and an intimate participant in high-level conferences from London to Casablanca and Washington, D.C., helping to craft Allied grand strategy. He emerged as one of the army's leading experts on German military capabilities, a skill set that he expected—incorrectly, as things turned out—would lead him to spend the war in Europe. He argued passionately for a cross-channel invasion of France in 1942 and 1943, butting heads with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who advocated successfully for Mediterranean operations. Wedemeyer's strategic views were so adamantly opposed to those of Churchill that it was said in high command circles—and Wedemeyer came to believe—the prime minister himself orchestrated his assignment to Mountbatten's headquarters in October 1943 just to prevent him from having any influence on European grand strategy.

Joseph Stilwell came to despise Chiang during his time in China and began referring to the Chinese leader as "Peanut."

If Wedemeyer was something of a map board and typewriter officer, his appointment to China did make some sense in a theater bereft of U.S. ground combat units and where the American military presence never rose above 60,000 soldiers, over half of whom belonged to the Army Air Forces. The situation called for a strategy-savvy military diplomat, not necessarily a warrior. As Wedemeyer served Mountbatten ably for a year, he had observed China's many problems and Stilwell's demise, albeit from a distance. Wedemeyer respected Stilwell's extensive experience on the ground in China and his obvious expertise about the country and its people. But he could not fathom Stilwell's inability to get along with Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek when the success of his mission, and American strategic aims, so conspicuously depended upon it. Honest and upright, yet prone to small-minded pettiness, Stilwell loved China and its people, but he had grown to detest, in equal measure, Chiang as little more than a third-rate despot and his government as a corrupt, repressive oligarchy with little inclination to fight the Japanese, at least in a manner he thought appropriate. Stilwell's unvarnished contempt for Chiang finally, in October 1944, exhausted Stilwell's welcome in China when the Chinese leader demanded his relief after an especially stormy meeting.

THESE ELEMENTAL IDEAS belied the complex realities that actually confronted Wedemeyer when he arrived in China at the end of October. After eight terrible years of war, and the loss of millions of lives, three main power brokers besides the Japanese continued to vie for dominance over a country in which one out of every five people had, at some point, become a refugee. In Japanese-occupied China, the Reorganized National Government of the Republic of China under Ching-wei Wang, an

PREVIOUS SPREAD: NATIONAL ARCHIVES VIA DUTTON CALIBER; TOP: HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; LEFT: CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

Japanese Occupation
1942-1944

SOVIET UNION
MANCHURIA
MONGOLIA
SEA OF JAPAN
JAPAN
KOREA
PACIFIC OCEAN
CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER
YAN'AN PROVINCE
YELLOW SEA
SHANGHAI
CHINA
CHENGTU
CHUNGKING
BURMA ROAD
KWEILIN
LEDO ROAD
KUNMING
CANTON
HONG KONG
INDIA
BURMA
SOUTH CHINA SEA
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
BAY OF BENGAL
THAILAND
FRENCH INDOCHINA
NEW GUINEA
MALAYSIA
BORNEO
CELEBES
INDIAN OCEAN
SUMATRA
JAVA
TIMOR

ardent follower of the great Chinese nationalist Dr. Sun Yat-sen, saw itself as the best hope to salvage an autonomous China from the ashes of Japanese continental dominance. The Americans and their Chinese allies dismissed this regime as little more than a Japanese puppet (similar to the Allied view of Vichy France). In Yan'an province and nearby portions of northern China, Mao Zedong's communist shadow government continued to grow in power and influence. Mao now controlled an army of 900,000 soldiers augmented by a similar number of militia and guerrilla fighters. Communist propaganda perpetuated the notion that Mao's troops were fighting stubbornly and effectively against the Japanese. In reality, they were doing little besides observing mutual back-scratching truces with the Japanese, though communist military formations, by their very existence, did function as an impediment to Japanese influence and expansion in northern China. Instead of fighting, Mao focused on enhancing the political position of his movement and preserving his military strength to fight Chiang and the Nationalists. Both leaders saw the other as the main adversary, far more dangerous than the Japanese and Wang's so-called puppets; both knew they must one day either destroy or neutralize the other in order to establish real control over China.

Left: China had been at war with Japan since the Japanese attacked in 1937. Chiang (top) resisted the invaders as head of the Nationalist government, while Ching-wei Wang (above) headed the Vichy-like Reorganized National Government of the Republic of China in Japanese-held territory.

Chiang once opined that the Japanese were like a skin disease, the communists like heart disease. Colloquially known as the "Generalissimo" in acknowledgment of his days as the army's commander in chief, he remained the face of legitimate public government in China, a flawed but respectable, patriotic figure who had managed to preserve the notion of an independent, modern China through nearly a decade of war. He nominally controlled southern and western China. But his armies were hollow, his government was still plagued by corruption and sapped by the disloyalty of all too many local officials who pursued their

MAP BY BRIAN WALKER; TOP RIGHT: TOPICAL PRESS AGENCY/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM RIGHT: BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Top: Stilwell addresses Chinese soldiers. He and Wedemeyer both struggled to improve China's military. Above: Wedemeyer (right) confers with Brigadier General Frank Dorn (center) and Lieutenant General Yu Ta-Wei, Nationalist China's minister of war and chief of ordnance.

TOP: KEYSTONE/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM: CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

own personal agendas, often to the point of defying Chiang's orders or observing backhanded cease-fire arrangements with the Japanese. The hated foreigners remained in control of Manchuria, the entire coastline, major cities such as Canton and Shanghai, and much of the Chinese heartland. Their ongoing Ichi-go offensive, a massive effort that the Japanese had launched in April 1944, now menaced the eastern frontiers of Nationalist-controlled China, placing the key transit point town of Kweilin in danger as well as perhaps even the Generalissimo's capital city of Chungking 480 miles to the northwest and the Chinese city of Kunming, a vital supply hub and the location of air bases for American Major General Claire Chennault's Fourteenth Air Force. Newly established B-29 bases at Chengtu, located some 240 miles northwest of Chungking, were probably well beyond the reach of the invaders, but these fields would inevitably become compromised logistically if the Japanese succeeded in taking any of the other objectives.

Wedemeyer received a multipoint directive from the Joint Chiefs stipulating that his "primary mission with respect to Chinese Forces is to advise and assist the Generalissimo in the conduct of military operations against the Japanese." He would command all American military forces in the country and serve as Chiang's chief of staff, as Stilwell had done before him. No doubt with an eye on the looming death struggle for power between Chiang and Mao, the chiefs cautioned Wedemeyer not to let his troops become embroiled in Chinese domestic strife "except insofar as necessary to protect United States lives and property."

Wedemeyer believed that the key to accomplishing his mission hinged on establishing a good relationship with Chiang. Though Wedemeyer lacked Stilwell's Chinese linguistic skills, he understood many nuances of Chinese culture, especially the notion of saving face. He had served in China with the 15th Infantry Regiment in the early 1930s and of course learned much during his year on Mountbatten's staff. He had already met Chiang on several occasions, so he simply built upon the existing relationship. Constitutionally even tempered, the tactful Wedemeyer spoke nary a sharp word to the Generalissimo. He unfailingly treated Chiang with courtesy and respect and the Chinese leader responded in kind. The two men got on well. They met nearly every day, often to discuss the long, thoughtful daily memos that Wedemeyer composed for Chiang.

Wedemeyer sympathetically recognized that Chiang was surrounded by a poisonous coterie of scheming family members, political advisers, and generals who usurped his power and often served as a negative influence. In viewing Chiang as an unrepentant advocate of freedom, though, the American seemed not to grasp the repressive nature of the Nationalist government, at least in the eyes of many Chinese who resented the regime's confiscatory taxation, its heavy-handed conscription, its wasteful neglect of public health, its inflationary currency, and the tyrannical police state run by the odious but fanatically loyal Lieutenant General Dai Li, Chiang's right-hand man and intelligence chief. Or perhaps Wede-

Chinese soldiers of the 1st Provisional Tank Group use American Sherman tanks in northern Burma in December 1944. Control of the region would have let China import supplies overland from India.

KEYSTONE/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

meyer understood all this well, but diplomatically decided that he must overlook the regime's flaws in pursuit of a greater good.

Without question the new commander's genial relationship with Chiang defused some of the tension that had accumulated, like clogged arteries, during the Stilwell years. But Wedemeyer, with his bird's-eye approach to military life, tended erroneously to equate this with success. "[He] is the kind of man who sees only the great picture, strategy on a global scale," one of his public affairs officers analyzed confidentially, "but he seems utterly incapable of adjusting his grandiose ideas to practicable conditions and facts. This situation is probably the result of being a 'book soldier' with little practical experience." As General Wedemeyer soon discovered, a nicer work environment could not paper over ugly ground-level realities. An in-depth assessment he sent to General Marshall nearly mirrored many of Stilwell's reports. "They are not organized, equipped, and trained for modern war," Wedemeyer wrote of the Nationalist government. "Psychologically they are not prepared to cope with the situation because of political intrigue, false pride, and mistrust of leaders' honesty and motives. Frankly, I think that the Chinese officials surrounding the Generalissimo are actually afraid to report accurately conditions for two reasons, their stupidity and inefficiency are revealed, and further the Generalissimo might order them to take positive action and they are incompetent to issue directives, make plans, and fail completely in obtaining execution by field commanders."

CHIANG'S UNDERFED, overmatched armies reeled under the weight of a new phase of the Ichi-go offensive, launched by the Japanese in response to China-based raids by American B-29 Superfortresses against southern Japan. The Japanese took Kweilin on November 10, 1944. "The Chinese are not fighting," a dejected Wedemeyer confided to Major General J. Edwin Hull in one gloomy missive. "It is indeed disconcerting to take over under [these]...depressing circumstances." For several weeks thereafter, it seemed that the enemy might actually capture Kunming and Chungking, a nightmare scenario that would have compromised the American position in China and might well have destroyed the Nationalist government. "It was highly discouraging when even the highly touted divisions which at great effort we have moved by air or motor transport to the Kweilin-Liuchow

Chinese machine gunners above Burma's Salween River resist the Japanese in June 1943. Chiang wanted Wedemeyer to shift troops from Burma to face the Japanese in eastern China.

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Wedemeyer felt like the captain of a Chinese junk whose hull was full of holes.

area also fell back," Wedemeyer later wrote.

He found himself in crisis mode, wondering if the military situation was so dire that the Allies might have to choose between hanging on to the cities of Chungking or Kunming. To Army Air Forces Major General Larry Kuter, an old friend, he confided his deep concerns in colorful terms. "I feel that the War Department has made me Captain of a Chinese junk whose hull is full of holes, in stormy weather, and on an uncharted course. If I leave the navigator's room to caulk up the holes, the junk will end up on the reef and if I remain in the navigator's seat, the junk will sink." With admirable resolve, Chiang vowed to stay in Chungking and, if necessary, die there. Wedemeyer made it clear to the Generalissimo that he had no such intentions. Secretly, he and his staff prepared evacuation plans to Chengtu and Kunming, the latter of which he viewed as an irreplaceable supply node whose military value far exceeded the threadbare Nationalist capital.

In 1943 Chiang had agreed to send his best troops to fight with Stilwell in northern Burma as part of the American general's attempt to open a supply line from India, through northern Burma, and into China. During the spring and early summer of 1944, at the dawn of Ichi-go, Chiang understandably chafed at having those troops in Burma while the Japanese threatened to overrun his country. Once again in the late fall he pushed for their return to defend Chinese soil. A supplicating Wedemeyer managed to persuade his old boss Mountbatten to agree to airlift two divisions, the 14th and the 22nd, back to China throughout December. American transport planes managed to move 25,105 soldiers and 1,596 horses and mules, plus weapons and equipment, into western China. Fortunately, the crisis passed, more due to Japanese limitations than the intervention of these divisions. Had the Allies understood more about enemy intentions, they might not have even gone to the trouble of airlifting these troops home. As always seemed to be the case in China, the Japanese could take territory, inflict tactical defeats on Nationalist forces, and unleash untold horrors upon the population. But they seldom possessed the manpower and logistical heft to establish real control over large swaths of territory, especially the farther inland they advanced from their coastal bases. They had no intention, nor really the capability, of pushing for Kunming and Chungking, both of which remained firmly under Allied control.

Promoted to lieutenant general on January 1, 1945, Wedemeyer focused on reforming the Chinese Army, just as Stilwell had before him. "Sometimes I feel like I am living in a world of fantasy, a never never land, but we are going to continue our efforts…despite discouraging experiences along the way," Wedemeyer confided in a private letter to Hull. For all of Wedemeyer's famous tact, he laid out the army's many deficiencies for Chiang in frank

terms, especially in relation to the paucity of food for the soldiers and the tyrannical nature of the draft system in which men were forcibly taken into custody, sometimes bound and tied like prisoners. "Conscription comes to the Chinese peasant like famine or flood, only more regularly—every year twice—and claims its victims," he wrote to Chiang in a detailed memo urging immediate reform. "Famine, flood and drought compare with conscription like chicken-pox with plague." While poor and illiterate people were brutally forced into service, the educated and the wealthy could evade the draft by hiring a substitute or paying an official. "One can readily see that it was the poor, weak, and those with insufficient money who were forced to defend their more fortunate countrymen against the Japanese invader," one of Wedemeyer's staff reports bemoaned.

To improve the treatment, care, training, and effectiveness of the average soldier, and thus the army as a whole, Wedemeyer urged sweeping reforms and reorganization. He proposed the creation of a new fighting force, known as Alpha, comprising between 36 and 39 divisions of 10,000 soldiers apiece, plus supporting troops. They were to be entirely trained, equipped, armed, and advised by the Americans. The plan bore an almost uncanny resemblance to one that Stilwell had proposed, in vain, to the Generalissimo a year and a half earlier. The only major difference was that Stilwell envisioned a 60-division force. Thanks to the Ichi-go scare, and perhaps owing to Wedemeyer's more nimble diplomacy, Chiang agreed this time. The core of Wedemeyer's strategy centered around launching an offensive with the Alpha Force in the latter half of 1945 designed to advance to the coast to reclaim the port cities of Hong Kong and Canton. This would achieve the dual objective of opening up another supply route for China and providing staging bases for the invasion of Japan. He spent most of his 1945 time and energy preparing to fulfill this objective.

Chiang's newfound tractability might well have owed just as much to his looming showdown with the communists as to any other factor. The Generalissimo continued to walk a perilous tightrope. The difficulties of holding together his own government, dependent as it partially was on alliances with corrupt, exploitive local leaders, while also pursuing reforms that inevitably diminished their power, would have challenged the acumen of even the most skilled political practitioner. Nor could Chiang afford to alienate the Americans on whom he depended for crucial Lend-Lease economic and military aid, not to mention the international prestige he received from their political support. For nearly four years, they had helped him stave off the Japanese; in turn he had played a crucial role for the Americans by absorbing, at terrible human cost, substantial Japanese manpower and resources.

As the power of the enemy now receded, and serious conflict with the communists bubbled, Chiang could not afford any deterioration in relations with the Americans, though they continued to prod him to consummate some sort of power sharing agreement with Mao. But Mao had no intention of submitting his troops to Nationalist authority, and Chiang knew that recognizing the political legitimacy of the communists could prove mortal to his own government. Mao and his Chinese Communist Party (CCP) envisioned no real endgame that did not include the triumph of their revolution, inevitably at Chiang's expense. Chiang well understood, perhaps better than did his allies, that any attempt to share power with such zealots was like trying to divvy up freshly killed meat with a hungry lion—by its nature it tended toward a zero-sum game. Wedemeyer could make all the plans he wanted to hasten the demise of the Japanese in China. But, with each passing day, this mattered less compared to the burgeoning brawl that loomed between the Nationalists and the CCP, a conflict of world historical importance. In truth, neither Wedemeyer nor any other American truly had the power to prevent this civil war, one that ironically grew likelier and nearer as the war's end finally came into view. ★

Top: Wedemeyer (standing) discusses Burmese strategy in May 1945 with (left to right) U.S. general Daniel Sultan, British admiral Louis Mountbatten, and U.S. general William Donovan, head of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services. Above: Wedemeyer meets with Chiang. Unlike "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, Wedemeyer tried to treat Chiang with respect.

John C. McManus is Curators' Distinguished Professor of U.S. Military History at the Missouri University of Science and Technology and one of the nation's leading military historians. This article is adapted from his latest book, To the End of the Earth: The US Army and the Downfall of Japan, 1945, *the final volume of his trilogy about the Pacific Theater.*

TOP: MONDADORI VIA GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM: KEYSTONE FRANCE/GETTY IMAGES

LAND, SEA, OR AIR

IN THE AFTERMATH of a brutal fight on the Philippines' Leyte Island on December 7, 1944, 19-year-old Calvin Lincoln, a private first class with the 11th Airborne Division's 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, approached a mortally wounded Japanese soldier, rifle at the ready. As the American neared, the enemy soldier asked in perfect English if he could get a priest. "That stunned me," Lincoln recalled. "I asked him, 'Where did you learn to speak such good English?' He said, 'I graduated from Catholic University in Washington.'"

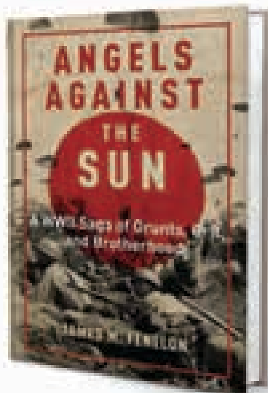
After receiving last rites from a medic, the soldier asked Lincoln for a cigarette and died shortly later. "It was the first incident where I came in contact with a Japanese soldier and I talked to him," Lincoln continued. "It put a human face on the enemy." Still, that made little difference: "If they were shooting at me," he explained,

Some of the glider troops from General Joseph Swing's command wade ashore on Nasugbu Beach on the Philippine island of Luzon on January 31, 1945.

"I would obviously kill them first before they killed me." Over time, Lincoln and his fellow soldiers found the decision to kill became easier and easier.

Lincoln's story is just one of many compelling accounts of combat that author James M. Fenelon weaves into *Angels Against the Sun* as he follows the men of General Joseph Swing's 11th Airborne—the "Angels"— from their formation and training, through their grim months of fighting, and into occupation duty in Japan. The wealth of first-person accounts and Fenelon's depth of research and deft writing make for a compelling read.

Intended as elite shock troops, the Angels ended up serving mainly as standard foot soldiers, fighting across Leyte and Luzon with the goals of liberating the Philippines. The primary target on Luzon was the capital city of Manila, where the true horror of the Japanese occupation confronted them. The Imperial troops had been charged with killing civilians, and they did so with a vengeance: bayonetting infants; raping women and shearing their breasts off before leaving them to die; shooting hospitalized patients, along with nurses and doctors; trapping people in buildings and burning them alive.



ANGELS AGAINST THE SUN
A WWII Saga of Grunts, Grit, and Brotherhood
By James M. Fenelon. 528 pp. Regnery History, 2023. $34.99

As he was checking on his platoon's positions, Sergeant Edmund Harris saw a woman pulling a wagon containing a young girl. "She was sitting upright, but I don't know how," Harris recalled. "Her little face had been blown away from the eyes down." As the wagon passed by, the girl looked at Harris. "I lived with that look the rest of the war, and to this day I can picture that pitiful little body and those beautiful eyes that exposed the soul of a three-year-old who was an innocent victim of war."

No wonder then that the division's next mission proved so meaningful to them. On February 23, 1945, the Angels, supported by a Filipino guerrilla force, rescued 2,147 mostly American civilians from the Los Baños internment camp. One combat engineer recalled how the prisoners broke into applause at the sight of the troopers. "It was awesome, pleasant, and warm. It's hard to explain." Fenelon finds one explanation: "that day, they were saving lives instead of taking them." Sadly, they would soon discover more atrocities, with more than 1,500 found massacred in nearby villages. "No wonder we developed an un-Christian hate for the Japs as we discovered their vicious, criminal methods of fighting," the division historian wrote.

Ultimately, though, what resonates most here are the many accounts of the Angels' bravery in the face of these horrors—all in dedication to a cause. Not to "God, country, mom, and apple pie" but in support of their fellow soldiers. "You have a friend there that's like your brother," one paratrooper explains. "And he guards you and you guard him." *—Karen Jensen is the former editor of* World War II *magazine.*

OPPOSITE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES VIA REGNERY HISTORY; ABOVE: BRIAN MONNONE

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES M. FENELON

The author of Angels Against the Sun *talked to* World War II *about his book and the 11th Airborne Division. Here's an excerpt.*

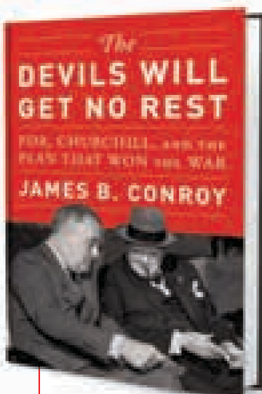
I'm a former paratrooper myself and so I tend to be naturally drawn to that aspect of World War II. That was my entrée into an appreciation for military history.... The 11th was unique not only in that it was one of the lesser-known airborne units that Americans fielded during the war, but it was the only airborne division that was sent over to the Pacific Theater, so that drew my attention. I felt like they needed a spotlight to refresh us on their history. One of the things that their commander, Joseph Swing, was really keen on was getting himself flexibility with how he could deploy his division in combat. And one of the ways he did that was to make sure they received amphibious training, so they knew how to board and get off ships as part of a beach landing. Also, everywhere they went, he would set up a division-level jump school so that he could get as many of his men parachute qualified as possible. At the height of the division's training regimen, he had about 75 percent of his enlisted men parachute qualified and about 82 percent of his officer corps. So, he really had the ability to go into combat either by glider, ship or air drop.... General Swing was a big fan of the airborne concept, but very much viewed it as a means to an end—a commute, if you will, the way to get to work.

★ *This transcript has been edited for publication. To see the entire interview online, go to* **historynet.com/james-m-fenelon-interview**

President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill take time for the photographers at the Casablanca conference.

REVIEWS BOOKS

HOW TO WIN A WAR



THE DEVILS WILL GET NO REST FDR, Churchill, and the Plan that Won the War
By James B. Conroy. 432 pp. Simon & Schuster, 2023. $34

IN JANUARY 1943 American and British representatives met in the Moroccan city of Casablanca to wrangle over their competing visions about the best way to defeat the Axis powers. The British delegation, led by Prime Minister Winston Churchill, advocated strongly for a “beat Germany first” strategy, starting with operations in the Mediterranean. The Americans, led by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, pushed for a cross-channel invasion of France—an operation for which the Allies were woefully unprepared—and advocated for more effort against the Japanese in the Pacific. Of the stakes, Conroy writes, “The blessings of success were immeasurable; the consequences of failure too horrific to consider.”

Simply getting to the conference in Morocco was difficult. Roosevelt started his trip to Casablanca aboard his customized train car. After feinting toward the president’s home in Hyde Park, New York, the train rolled back through Washington and on to Miami, where the president and his entourage boarded two Boeing flying boats for a flight to South America and then across the Atlantic. Support staff flew ahead aboard a pair of C-54 Skymasters that FDR and his party borrowed for the final leg of their journey. By the time he returned to Washington, the president had flown 14,000 miles.

Churchill and his immediate entourage had it a little easier, flying from Britain aboard an American B-24 Liberator. Conroy paints a ludicrous image of the prime minister, clad only in a silk nightshirt, on his hands and knees attempting to adjust a heater during the overnight flight, which he passed on a cot in the bomb bay.

But despite some levity, the conference was serious business. The Americans found themselves outmatched by the British, who had

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

already been at war for more than three years, the United States just over one. The Americans were "scandalously unprepared," Conroy writes, a lack of preparation that was "negligent." As one U.S. general noted, "We came, we listened, and we were conquered." In private, the Britons mocked the Americans' tendency to begin statements with "It is believed that," and even waggishly found a way to introduce the statement into the final report. Britain ended up getting the Mediterranean campaign Churchill wanted, and delayed the cross-channel invasion (probably correctly) as much as it could.

Conroy includes detailed—perhaps too detailed—accounts of the bickering around the conference table but lightens his narrative with colorful accounts of the strong personalities involved, among them cantankerous Admiral Ernest King ("a schoolyard punk in a hand-tailored Brooks Brothers uniform"), Major General George S. Patton (who was responsible for security), General Sir Alan Brooke (a dedicated bird watcher with the appearance of "a predatory owl"), Roosevelt aide and confidant Harry Hopkins ("who looked as though he slept in a hay loft"), and many others whom Conroy sketches with sure brushstrokes. And then there's Charles de Gaulle, the petulant head of the Free French who had to be coaxed into making an appearance and never overlooked a slight, real or imagined. (In the index there's a listing under de Gaulle for "easily bruised ego.")

The British may have gained most of their aims at Casablanca, but things were changing now that America was injecting its growing industrial might into the war effort. Conroy describes how Churchill was taken aback at the end of the conference when FDR blithely announced to the press that the Allies were seeking unconditional surrender, without bothering to clear it with the prime minister. When FDR was informed that Churchill resented the impromptu announcement, Conroy writes, "It did not upset him. Nothing much did." The tides were starting to shift—not only against the Axis, but also in favor of the Americans. *—Tom Huntington is the editor of* World War II.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A Focke-Wulf Fw-190 feels the sting of Allied airpower during a duel in the skies.

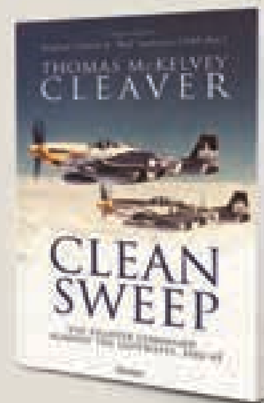
REVIEWS BOOKS

FIGHTING THE WAR IN THE AIR

ON AUGUST 7, 1942, three months before American troops landed in North Africa, airmen of the Eighth Air Force became the first U.S. military personnel to go into combat against Germany in the European Theater of Operations. From then until the end of the war in Europe the "Mighty Eighth" suffered more than 47,000 casualties, more than half of all those incurred among the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) throughout World War II.

Clean Sweep recounts the experiences of the fighter pilots who flew with the 15 air groups belonging to the VIII Fighter Command, which provided fighter escort to the Eighth Air Force's bombers over western Europe. It is a story for which author Thomas McKelvey Cleaver is conspicuously well qualified, since he knew many of the individuals about whom he writes.

When World War II began in 1939, the U.S. Army Air Corps was only the fourth or fifth largest in the world, well below most European air arms. The 4th Fighter Group, which became the first operational USAAF fighter group deployed in Europe following America's entry into the war, was actually formed out of the three Royal Air Force "Eagle Squadrons" manned by unauthorized American volunteers who continued flying their Supermarine Spitfires. By April 1945, however, USAAF fighters enjoyed complete supremacy in the skies over Germany, escorting bombers and strafing Luftwaffe airfields almost with impunity. *Clean Sweep* describes how that transformation came about through vivid first-hand accounts derived both from American and German pilots. It will undoubtedly prove a must-read for those interested in World War II's air war. *—Robert Guttman is a frequent contributor to HistoryNet publications.*



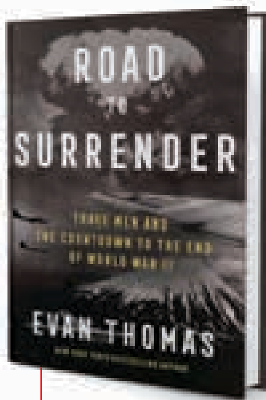
CLEAN SWEEP
VIII Fighter Command against the Luftwaffe, 1942-45
By Thomas McKelvey Cleaver. 464 pp. Osprey Publishing, 2023. $32

An American serviceman in Nagasaki after the surrender surveys the devastation left by the second atomic bomb dropped on Japan.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

REVIEWS BOOKS

REACHING THE END



ROAD TO SURRENDER Three Men and the Countdown to the End of World War II
By Evan Thomas. 336 pp. Random House, 2023. $28

ROAD TO SURRENDER IS A FINE, insightful account of the last months of World War II's Pacific conflict. It concentrates on the Americans who masterminded the deployment of atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and on the Japanese response to those bombardments. (The two apocalyptic bombs *almost* weren't enough to prompt Japan to capitulate.) Author Evan Thomas tells his story mostly through the experiences of three men, bureaucrats whose intelligence and depth of feeling made them continually suffer over crises and decisions that no one ever had to contemplate before.

The three men were Henry L. Stimson, President Harry S. Truman's secretary of war; Japanese foreign minister Shigenori Togo; and the Army Air Forces General Carl Spaatz, who received the assignment to lead the strategic bombing campaign for Operation Downfall, the planned final campaign against Japan's home islands. They were three very different men, but each was tormented by the significance of what the atomic bomb meant for his nation—and the world.

Togo was a high-echelon diplomat devoted to Japan's Emperor Hirohito, but by the spring of 1945 he realized that his nation had lost the war and became determined to prod Japan into accepting that summer's Potsdam Declaration—the Allied demand for unconditional surrender—as long as it meant the emperor wasn't deposed. Togo could have been assassinated for his efforts by military fanatics who wanted to resist until the last Japanese citizen was killed, but he persevered in his shrewd negotiations with saner colleagues. One has to admire his bravery and resolve. When Hirohito finally sided with Togo and accepted peace terms, the war ended. (The final peace treaty retained the emperor—with caveats.)

Stimson, a virtuous patrician dedicated to public service, "oversaw the building of the atomic bomb and authorized the order to deliver it." But there were other leaders in the government and military who played a role in determining America's atomic warfare policy, and they too were often burdened with ambivalence and guilt. Inevitably, A-bomb realpolitiking was often tortuous. As Thomas writes: "How did [officials] choose how many bombs to drop, when, where, and to what end? I learned that the word *decision* does not describe the fraught, inexorable process that [Stimson, Truman, Spaatz, General George C.

Marshall, et al.] went through." Indeed; but the author acquits himself impressively in exploring that process and the other momentous issues raised by *Road to Surrender.* Here is something *I* learned from the book: It's a lot easier to start a war than it is to end it. *—Howard Schneider has reviewed books for* Aviation History, Military History, American History, *and other publications.*

EARLY PACIFIC RAIDS 1942
The American Carriers Strike Back
By Brian Lane Herder. 96 pp. Osprey Publishing, 2023, $25

THE DEVASTATING December 7, 1941, strike on Pearl Harbor by six Japanese aircraft carriers left Japan with the world's most powerful concentration of naval power. Even then, however, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto felt anything but secure after learning that the raid had failed to eliminate a single U.S. Navy carrier. Meanwhile, as he could well have predicted, the destruction of its battle fleet left the U.S. Navy with no alternative but to form a response around its handful of available flattops. In *Early Pacific Raids 1942*, Brian Lane Herder describes the opening moves and nuisance raids by American task forces built around single carriers, which demonstrated the value of making aggressive use of its resources.

Although the Japanese Combined Fleet was still enjoying major successes, the author points out some curious blunders. For one thing, when the carriers *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* made their first raids on the Marshall and Gilbert islands on February 1, 1942, they were met predominantly not by top-of-the-line Mitsubishi A6M2s Zero fighters and G4M-1 bombers, but by older A5M4 fighters and G3M2 bombers—strange defenders for what the Japanese should have known would have been America's likely targets. Also during this period, the Japanese split up its fleet occasionally at a time when Yamamoto himself realized that they should have concentrated their force with the aim of eliminating the American carriers. The Japanese would eventually do that, but only after some two months of opportunities squandered—and with results that would dramatically alter the entire course of the war in the Pacific. *—Jon Guttman is research director of* World War II.

REVIEWS GAMES

FIGHT TO THE FINISH

1944 BATTLE OF THE BULGE *Worthington Publishing, $70.00.*

WORLD WAR II RATING ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE BASICS *1944 Battle of the Bulge* allows players to recreate the epic Ardennes clash as either the Germans or the Allies, commanding the individual divisions that fought in the battle.

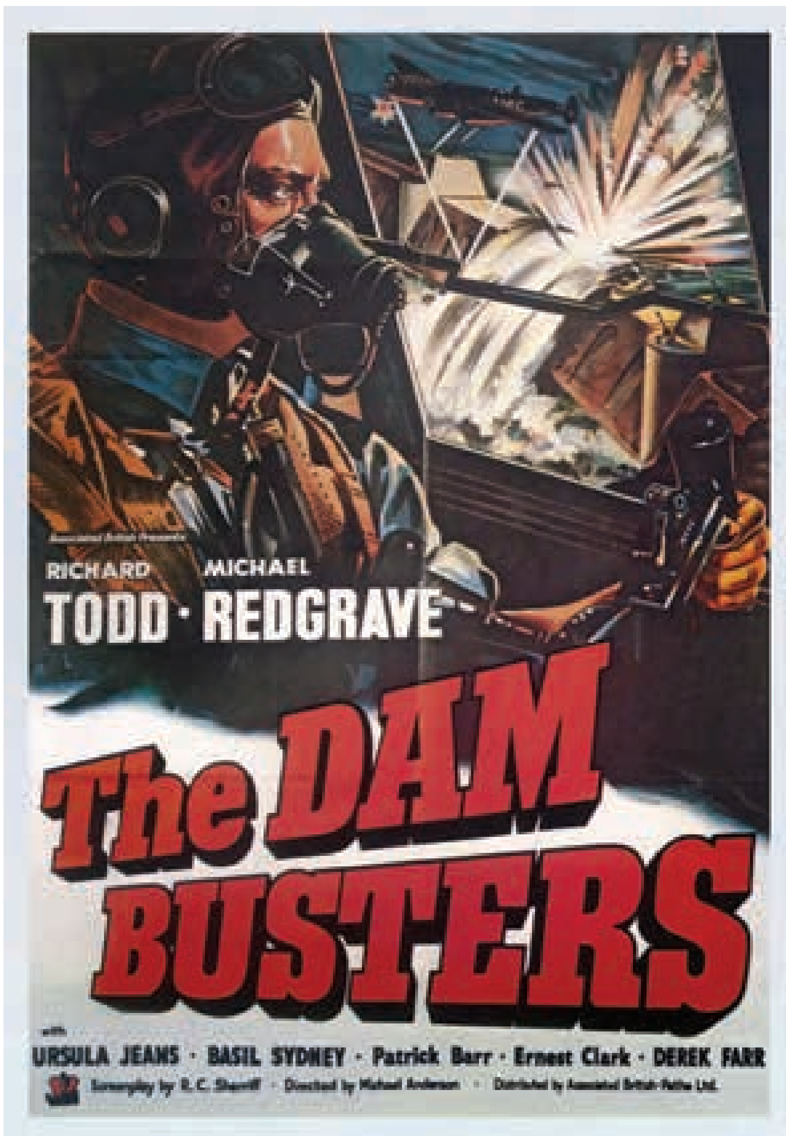
THE OBJECTIVE The German player chooses from one of four different objectives. The objective may differ from the historical one, thus giving the German player a chance to win, and having choices gives the Allied player the challenge of determining what the German player is up to. The Allied player's objective is simply to stop the German. Both players will have to carefully maneuver their divisions and manage their Resource Points, which represent a side's ability to supply, reinforce, and replenish the units.

HISTORICAL ACCURACY The accuracy of *1944 Battle of the Bulge* is one of the reasons it receives five stars. The units involved are correctly represented, as well as their locations. The map beautifully recreates the Ardennes and presents players with all the same challenges in moving units as actually occurred.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY Lots of good. The game is easy to play, and the components are beautifully rendered. You need Resource Points to move, fight, or repair damage to a unit, but the points are limited so allocating them becomes your challenge. The only drawback lies in the game's greatest strength, which is its historical accuracy. If the German player draws the historical objective, it is nearly impossible for that side to win.

PLAYABILITY *1944 Battle of the Bulge* is a great blend of playability and accuracy. It has a simple and elegant rules system that allows you to begin playing right after opening the box. However, because of its historical accuracy, after repeated play the game may lose some of its luster, as the results can become predictable.

THE BOTTOM LINE The game is entertaining, which a game needs to be. But more importantly, players will learn a great deal about how and why the battle was fought. Players will understand why particular decisions were made as they confront the same challenges the Allies and German faced. *—Chris Ketcherside is a retired Marine with a PhD in military history.*



HISTORYNET ARCHIVES

BATTLE FILMS

BY TOM HUNTINGTON

OUT OF DATE

THE "DAM BUSTERS" MISSION has gone down in history as a legendary feat by the Royal Air Force. On the night of May 16, 1943, 19 Avro Lancasters of the recently created 617 Squadron took off from their base at RAF Scampton. Their mission: to breach three dams in Germany's Ruhr Valley and deal a major blow to the enemy's industrial capability. Led by Wing Commander Guy Gibson, the airplanes of Operation Chastise carried a specially designed "bouncing bomb" developed by inventor Barnes Wallis. The dam busters managed to breach two of the dams, but at great cost. Eight Lancasters were lost, and 53 airmen were killed and three captured. The Germans were able to repair the damage relatively quickly. Despite the losses and the Germans' quick recovery, the feat captured the British imagination as an example of the bravery and innovation that was needed to win the war.

The Dam Busters, the 1955 film about the mission, is based on the 1951 book of the same name by Paul Brickhill and Gibson's own account, *Enemy Coast Ahead* (published posthumously in 1946). The movie opens as Wallis (Michael Redgrave) experiments at his home trying to bounce marbles across the water in a tin basin. It's part of his scheme to design a bomb that can destroy German dams. Conventional weapons don't work because the water dissipates the force of their explosions. Wallis theorizes that a bomb skipping across the surface would hit a dam and sink before exploding at the base, where the water pressure behind it would amplify the explosion's effect. Officials are skeptical, and their doubts only increase following failure after failure. Finally, Wallis achieves success, and the mission moves forward.

Playing Gibson, who had a reputation for not suffering fools gladly, is actor Richard Todd, a World War II veteran himself. Gibson finds that the mission will be no piece of cake. The four-engine Lancasters will have to go in very low—60 feet above the water on their final approaches—and the bomb drops need to be precise. The film embraces one dam busters legend by asserting that Gibson got the idea of how to determine proper altitude when he noticed the spotlights at a theatrical performance. He is inspired to mount two downward pointing spotlights on each bomber, adjusted so the beams will converge on the water at 60 feet. To determine range, the bombardiers use a simple wooden handheld sight.

Director Michael Anderson opted to shoot the film in black and white to give it a grittier, documentary feel. It also allowed him to incorporate actual footage from the bomb testing, but with one drawback: aspects of the weapon remained classified at the time, so the filmmakers had to paint over the test footage frame by frame to hide the bombs' shapes and the fact that they spun backwards (which allowed them to "crawl" down the side of the dams before exploding). The end result may have preserved secrecy, but the alterations are obvious.

The special effects in general have not aged well. Ground fire is clearly an animated effect and some of the model work doesn't stand up

Richard Todd played Wing Commander Guy Gibson in *The Dam Busters*. As a paratrooper, Todd had parachuted into Normandy on D-Day. Behind him is one of the four Avro Lancasters that the filmmakers wrangled for the picture.

to scrutiny. The filmmakers might have been aware of this. The first aerial shot of one of the dams is clearly a model, but then the camera pans back to show that it *is*, in fact, a model, one constructed for the aviators' training. What remains timeless are the sequences of the Lancasters. The production was able to procure four of them for the shoot—only 10 years after the war's end the bombers were already in short supply—and the sight and sound of these mighty Merlin-powered beasts roaring by at low altitude will please aviation aficionados. The attack sequences remain exciting, models notwithstanding.

The battle scenes inspired George Lucas when he was making *Star Wars*.

Those battle scenes inspired George Lucas when he was creating the final attack on the Death Star in 1977's *Star Wars*, and a comparison of the two films will show some startling similarities and even some shared dialogue. (They also shared the talent of Gilbert Taylor, who did special effects photography on *Dam Busters* and was the cinematographer for *Star Wars*.) The attacks are not the only thing that might have inspired *Star Wars*. The hairstyle worn by Wallis's movie wife (Ursula Jeans) has more than a passing similarity to the "cinnamon buns" sported by Carrie Fisher's Princess Leia in Lucas's movie.

The special effects, however, are not the only thing about *The Dam Busters* that has aged badly. There's also the matter of Gibson's dog, whose name is a racial slur that would have been, at the very least, offensive in 1955 and has since become completely unacceptable, and it's a word that is woven throughout the movie (the dog's name provides one of the code words the busters use to signal a dam breach). American distributors considered overdubbing to change the name to "Blackie," but did not. Although the dog's name is historically correct, modern audiences will find it jarring, or may think they stumbled into a bit of pointed *Blazing Saddles*-style social satire by mistake. No doubt this aspect of the film is the reason why *The Dam Busters* is impossible to find on any streaming services; a 2021 Blu-ray release, though, offers a restored print of the film and plenty of extras. ★

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CHALLENGE

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

We altered this photo of destroyer crewmen using models for aircraft identification to create one inaccuracy. What is it?

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ANSWER TO THE SUMMER CHALLENGE:
As 114 of you correctly guessed, we moved the armband and stars from General Yoshijirō Umezu's cuff to his arm.

Please email your answers to this issue's challenge to *challenge@historynet.com.*

SEE OUR WINTER ISSUE FOR THE ANSWER TO THIS ISSUE'S CHALLENGE!

FAMILIAR FACE

ENOUGH OF THE NAVY

Harry Belafonte—born in Harlem to Jamaican parents—enlisted in the U.S. Navy at 17 in the spring of 1944. He ended up at Naval Ammunition Depot Earle in New Jersey, where he remained until war's end, "wheeling live munitions from bunkers to trucks, then driving down to the docks to unload them for cargo vessels," he wrote in his memoirs. By the time his hitch was over in December 1945, Belafonte had had his fill of the navy and "the all-too-frequent incidents of prejudice that kept me in an almost constant state of simmering rage." Shortly afterward he attended *Home is the Hunter,* an American Negro Theatre play about African American soldiers returning from the war, and succumbed to the lure of show business. By the time the singer released the album *Midnight Special* (below) in 1962 he was a superstar in films, TV, and records and a committed social activist. Harry Belafonte died on April 25, 2023.

U.S. NAVY; INSET: CBW/ALAMY

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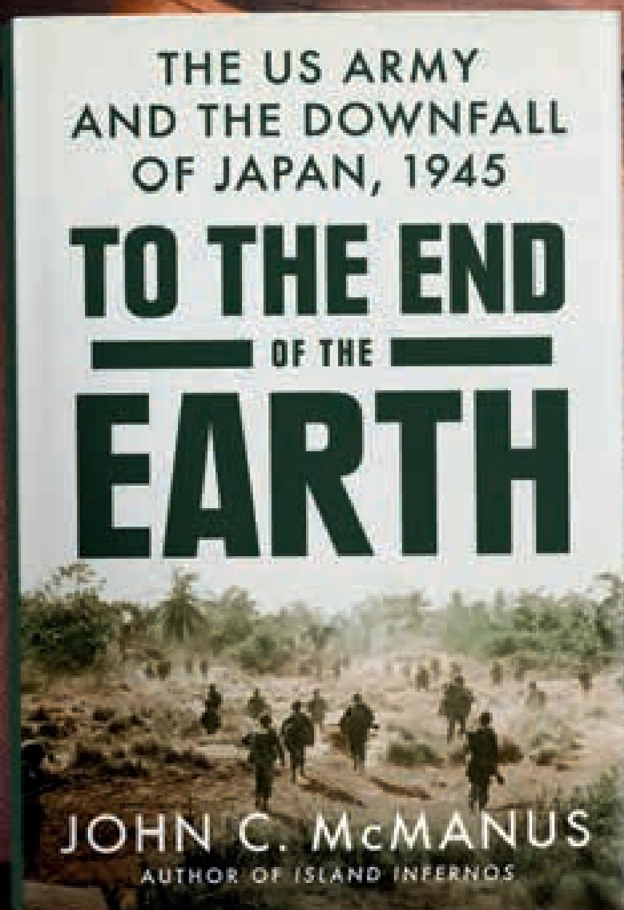

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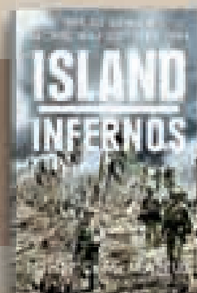

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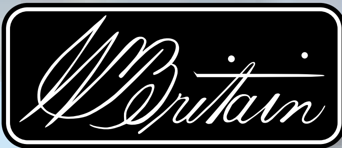

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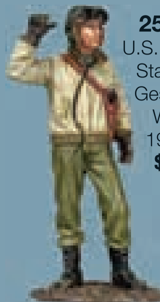

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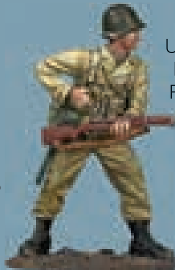

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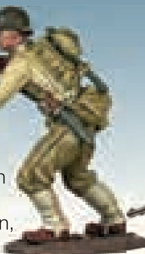

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