

# MHQ

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL  
OF MILITARY HISTORY

**Mystery at  
Montfaucon**

**Dashiell Hammett,  
a WWII Story**

# HAMILTON AT WAR

*How he helped  
Washington win  
the Revolution*

SPRING 2017

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# OPENING ROUND

*During World War I thousands of spent cannon shells and other detritus of the battlefield were transformed by soldiers and prisoners of war into a wide variety of objets trouvés, such as this 37mm artillery shell and engraved shell casing from the Canon d'Infanterie de 37 modèle 1916 TRP—a French-made infantry support gun used to destroy enemy machine gun nests. A popular French newspaper, Le Pays de France, even sponsored a series of contests that offered cash prizes for the best pieces of what it called l'artisanat des tranchées (“art of the trenches”). The raw material for this new art form was especially plentiful at Passchendaele, on the last ridge east of Ypres, Belgium, where three years of battle had turned the terrain into a moonscape of shell craters. By 1917—the date on this decorated shell casing—massive concentrations of artillery fire had transformed the battlefield into a swamp of death, where men actually drowned in the muck. “Their graves, it seemed, just dug themselves and pulled them down,” a soldier whose battalion lost 16 men to the mud in just one month later remembered (see “Churchill’s Improbable Army,” page 78).*



*In 1918 a debacle at Montfaucon—the “Little Gibraltar of the Western Front”—almost doomed the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the bloodiest battle in U.S. Army history.*



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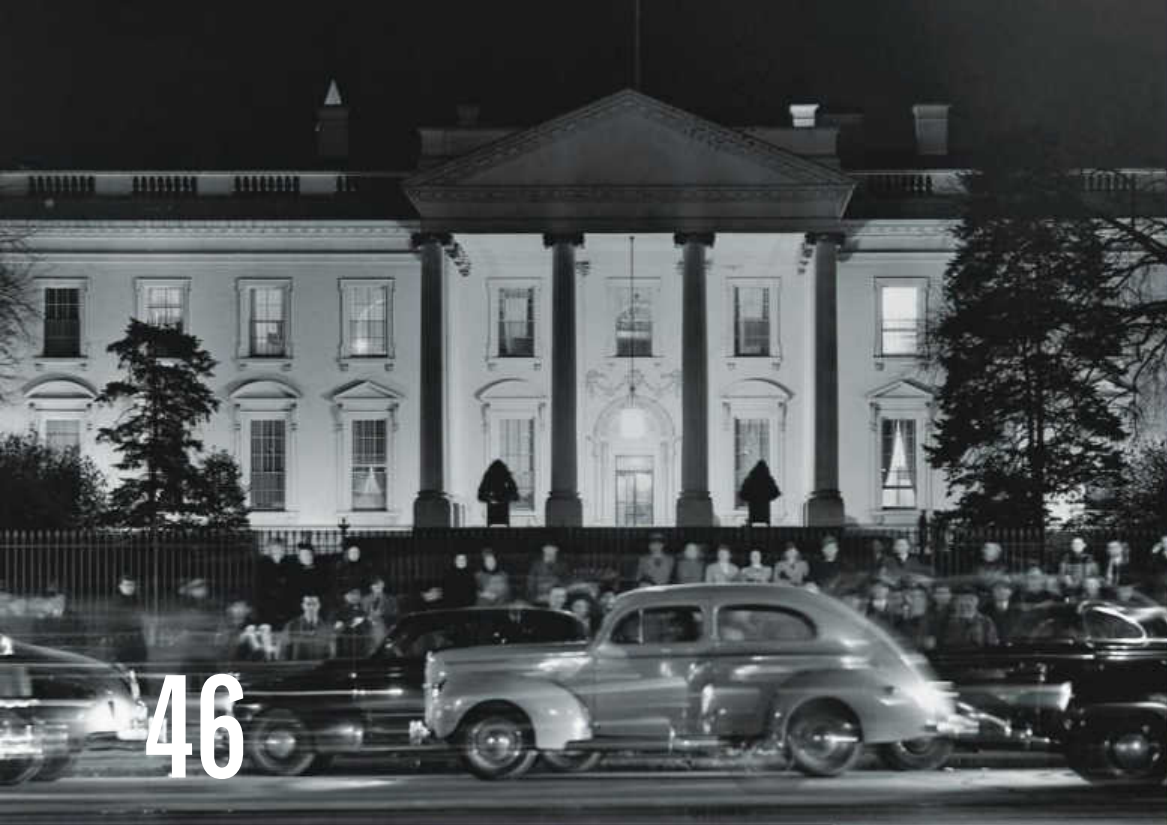
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## On the Cover

Before Broadway put Alexander Hamilton in front of the footlights, the U.S. Treasury seemed determined to remove his likeness from the front of the \$10 bill, where he had "lived" since 1928. (The engraving is based on John Trumbull's 1805 portrait of Hamilton, which hangs in New York City Hall.) An outcry over the government's proposed change kept the visage of the nation's first treasury secretary on the bill often known as a "sawbuck," "dime note," or, best of all, "Hamilton."

COVER: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO. CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE LEFT: U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS/GETTY IMAGES; BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES; THE ADAMIAN/U.S. ARMY; HORST FAAS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS; JUHANI SIERLA COLLECTION/FICKR; DEADLY BEAUTIES: RARE GERMAN HANDGUNS (SCHIFFER PUBLISHING)







## HAVANA, CUBA, 1961

*Cuban armed forces go on alert after Prime Minister Fidel Castro charges that the U.S. government is planning an invasion of the island nation—an allegation President Dwight D. Eisenhower's press secretary brands "nuts."*

**TODAY:** *A little more than two years after former President Barack Obama began normalizing relations with Cuba, at least 10 U.S. airlines are offering daily flights to Havana and other cities in the officially Communist nation.*

## FLASHBACK





# FLASHBACK

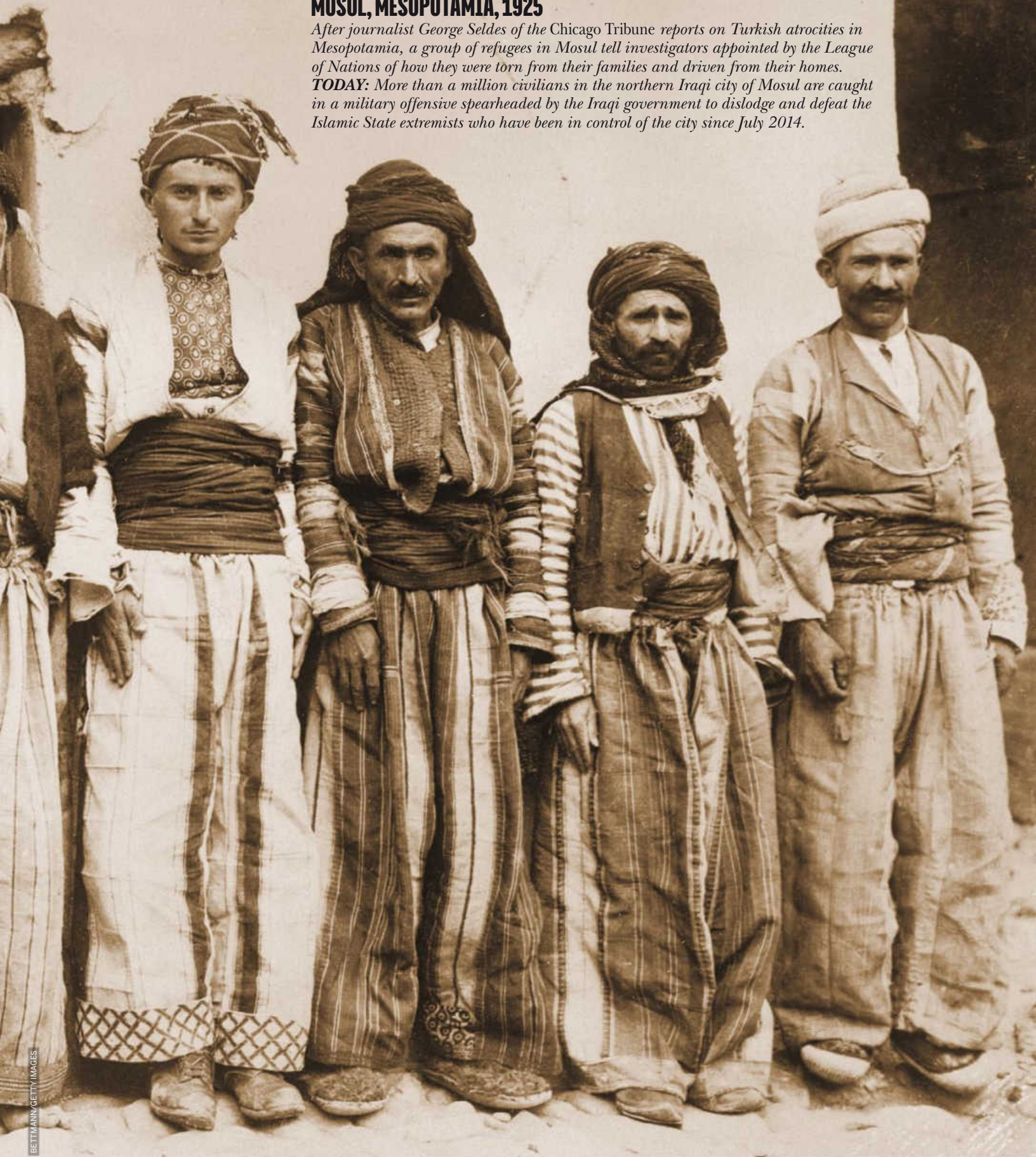




## MOSUL, MESOPOTAMIA, 1925

*After journalist George Seldes of the Chicago Tribune reports on Turkish atrocities in Mesopotamia, a group of refugees in Mosul tell investigators appointed by the League of Nations of how they were torn from their families and driven from their homes.*

**TODAY:** *More than a million civilians in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul are caught in a military offensive spearheaded by the Iraqi government to dislodge and defeat the Islamic State extremists who have been in control of the city since July 2014.*









## DELHI, INDIA, 1947

*A young refugee sits on the walls of Purana Qila, a 16th-century stone fort in Delhi that has been transformed into a vast refugee camp as India and Pakistan go to war following Pakistan's decision to support a Muslim insurgency in Kashmir.*

**TODAY:** *More than 80 civilians have been killed and thousands wounded—including many blinded by pellet guns—as violence continues to punctuate the decades-long conflict between India and Pakistan over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.*

## FLASHBACK





# COMMENTS

## MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN



*In this photograph, taken several months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, sailors from the Kaneohe Bay Naval Air Station place Hawaiian leis on the graves of 15 comrades who were buried along the shore of the Pacific Ocean on December 8, 1942.*

### Point Well Taken

The Autumn 2016 issue of *MHQ* features a photo of sailors placing memorial leis on the graves of men killed at Kaneohe Bay Naval Air Station during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (“Culture of War,” page 85). The caption contains what I believe is a piece of misinformation.

The caption says that Diamond Head can be seen in the background of the photograph. Having been stationed at Kaneohe Marine Corps base in 1955–1956, I believe the high hill in the background is Mokapu Point, which is adjacent to the Kaneohe base. Diamond Head would be on the other side of Oahu Island, near Honolulu.

For visual clarification, I refer you to two books that clearly show the outline of Mokapu Point in photos of the mass graves of the men killed at Kaneohe Bay: *East Wind Rain: A Pictorial History of the Pearl Harbor Attack* (Pictorial Histories, 1990), by Stan Cohen, and *Pearl Harbor* (Smithmark Publishers, 1990), by H. P. Willmott.

I thoroughly enjoy your magazine.

*John D. King  
Inver Grove, Minnesota*

### Hump Days

I dove for the Autumn 2016 issue of *MHQ*, thrilled to see an article on the supply flights to China (“Over the Hump,” by Stephan Wilkinson), as my

father had served with the U.S. Army Air Force in the China Burma India Theater (CBI) during World War II. After I had waded through the evolution of the various aircraft, I found little had been said about the men who served, other than one comment on their dismal living conditions, reputation for avoiding combat, and tendency toward exaggeration after the fact. There were a few token lines about sudden changes in altitude. The article made it seem as if my father had been on a two-and-a-half-year lark and that my mother had little to worry about.

Like many CBI pilots, he flew more than the Himalayas, supplying Lord Louis Mountbatten’s troops in India and Burma. Ferrying Chinese troops was another duty, as was transporting any food they could manage, including goat meat. He flew the Hump at night, sometimes with a stopwatch and a compass because the cold rendered his instruments unreliable. No small feat, even at a mere 8,000 feet. He came home seriously underweight, with jungle rot around his ankles, and told me he had no idea how the civilians survived. My mother said he made intense radio calls in his sleep for over a year after he returned home.

He signed up at age 22, not knowing where he would be sent. He said he did not expect to survive (so much for “allergic to combat”), and so my mother named their son after him in that event.



Yes, many went into airline work, but he shunned the suggestion, saying he never wanted to be responsible for that many lives again. My father never joined a CBI association; he only spoke of his experiences when prodded. He preferred the funnier tales and readily admitted to seeing little in the way of combat. But to suggest this was a lighter duty seems a bit dismissive. When you sign up for the military, in peacetime or at war, the military owns you and you go where they send you, period. You may live; you may die. My father expected to die but wanted to serve.

I passed this article on to my brother (a Vietnam pilot), and we both concluded that the author has never flown any combat missions, as he has so little understanding of the risks these men took. His efforts have done nothing to dispel any “myths” and has only added to the claim that CBI was an overly expensive and forgotten sector of the war. More’s the pity, for World War II vets are few and far between now, and any experience is irreplaceable.

L. Glen MacNicol  
Tampa, Florida

**STEPHAN WILKINSON RESPONDS:**  
*I never intended to demean the courage of the aircrew involved in the Hump trans-Himalayan flights. Bravery exists equally whether an operation is a success or a failure.*



*About 2,000 Russian women volunteered in 1917 to serve in the First Russian Women's Battalion of Death.*

## ASK MHQ Death Battalions

I have been reading George Bernard Shaw's play *Saint Joan*, and I found the following sentence in the preface quite puzzling: “In reactionary Russia in our own century a woman soldier organized an effective regiment of Amazons, which disappeared only because it was Aldershottian enough to be against the Revolution.” Who is “a woman soldier”? How to be “Aldershottian enough”? Could you kindly tell me what he means?

Shirley Wong  
Xin-Dian, Taiwan

*Shaw was probably referring to the Women's Battalions of Death, five units of female volunteers formed late in World War I by Marina Bochkareva, a peasant girl who had joined the Imperial Russian Army in November 1914. Bochkareva had*

*risen to the rank of sergeant by May 1917, when she suggested the formation of these units to Aleksandr Kerensky's provisional government, which approved it in June. They were expected to inspire adjacent male units to keep up the fight against the Germans, but at that stage of the war the men were becoming too demoralized and only resented the women's fanaticism.*

*In the case of the only such unit to see extensive action, the First Russian Women's Battalion of Death, about 2,000 women volunteered, but after being exposed to the realities of Bochkareva's strict discipline, their numbers soon dwindled to 300. On one occasion these women charged unsupported to overrun three successive German trench lines only to have to give up the ground because the adjacent male outfits failed to join or support their assault. Some of*

*the First Petrograd Battalion of Death were also active when the Bolsheviks stormed the winter palace there. Once in power the Bolsheviks gave some thought as to what to do with them, considering using them in an auxiliary role, but ultimately disbanded them on November 30, 1917. Some of the women continued to fight on both sides in the Russian Civil War. Bochkareva fought on the White side until she was finally captured, tried as an “enemy of the people,” and executed by a Cheka firing squad on May 16, 1920.*

*Shaw's use of the adjective “Aldershottian” almost certainly was meant to imply that the fighting women were acting too much like the British officer corps, as the English town of Aldershot has long been known as “the Home of the British Army.”*

JON GUTTMAN, HistoryNet's research director, is the author of many military histories.

*Something about military history you've always wanted to know? Send your questions to [MHQeditor@historynet.com](mailto:MHQeditor@historynet.com)*





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## The Korsun Noose

Encircled by an overwhelming and vengeful Soviet army, German soldiers on the Eastern Front desperately searched for a way out.  
*By Robert M. Citino*

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## HEAD SHOT

*In World War I photographer Arthur S. Mole traveled from one military camp to another making the elaborately staged images he dubbed "living photographs." This one, from 1915, features the 650 officers and enlisted men of Auxiliary Remount Depot No. 326 at Camp Cody in Deming, New Mexico, posed to form a horse's head.*

**AT THE FRONT**  
**EXPERIENCE 14**  
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650 Officers and Enlisted Men of  
Auxiliary Remount Depot No 326  
Camp Cody, N.M.  
Symbolic Head Pose of



# EXPERIENCE THE SURVIVOR

*Adelbert Holl survived Stalingrad. Then he lived through seven harrowing years as a German POW in the Soviet gulags.*

*As an infantryman in the German Sixth Army during World War II, Adelbert Holl fought in the protracted battle for control of the city of Stalingrad (now Volgograd) in Southern Russia. He was taken prisoner when the Germans surrendered in 1943 and spent the next seven years in Soviet prison camps. After he was repatriated to Germany in 1950, Holl recorded his experiences as a prisoner of war, including this account of his time in a prison camp near the small Siberian city of Angarsk.*

**W**e drive through the taiga for three days before the train stops at its destination: Bratsk. The terrain here is cut through by valleys and ravines and is very hilly.

From the railway wagons we went in smaller columns to the individual camps of Bratsk. All such movements were carefully guarded, including with tracker dogs. We were, according to those who brought us, to be divided up among the town's transit camps, so that those with political convictions and the criminal elements would be kept apart. The whole town seemed to consist of these camps and the personnel belonging to them. I did not see a single factory, only the great wooden watchtowers so characteristic of the Soviet Union.

The camp that we have been brought to is overcrowded. As preliminary accommodation we are allocated the dining room, in which people are already housed. Such overcrowding reminds me of the time shortly after I was taken prisoner. We put our bags on the little stage on which the camp inmates live. I go to the toilets for a moment.

During my absence of about 10 minutes my bag is taken. I do not know what to do and am upset, as most of the books that I have been able to save until now have gone. All of the papers that I have been working on in order to learn the Russian language are also in my bag. I can get over the loss of everything else, but this loss cannot be replaced in the taiga. Such a thing has never occurred in the years until now, while I have been living with my comrades, but it has occurred here within minutes of my arrival.

The Russian duty officer tells me that he can do nothing about it and that I should take better care next time. There will be no next time—I have now nothing to lose. I am angry with my comrades for not watching my bag although I had asked them to.

The night passes very slowly, as it always does when one has a poor sleeping place and people are so closely packed together. Everyone that has to go out must climb over the mass of bodies

and listen to all sorts of complaints. My thoughts are still busy with the stolen items. Fortunately, I still have the Fournier wooden-bound diary and the *Drift der Papanins* in English [*Life on an Icefloe*, a 1939 book by Ivan Papanin, the Soviet scientist and polar explorer]. If I want to learn more Russian I will have to use both these books as writing aids. I will cut out all the unpleasant things. I must escape during the summer and until then I must study.

Early in the morning we are driven out into the yard to be counted. This is always a very disorderly process. My comrades stand forward in the first rows of six. The commandant complains a lot about having to translate things that are not understood. I step forward to try to translate for him, but I have hardly opened my mouth when I get struck in the neck from behind, followed by a hard kick. I am pushed back with the most horrible swearing, with which this country is so richly blessed. With my teeth clenched together, holding back the tears of pain, I stand there looking into the hate-filled face of this fellow who looks subhuman. For hours after the counting I am still in no state to talk with my friends, who leave me alone.

Luckily, we are moved on the next day, the 8th of April, on trucks that drove up in front of the camp for this purpose and were specially equipped for it. We had to share with 30 other prisoners, while two sentries with machine-pistols saw to it that no one tried to escape.

Our destination is Kaimonovo, a village lying far out in the taiga on the planned railway line. We are driven a long distance on the ice of the Angara [River]. This is already showing some very wide cracks that the hidden stream would soon sweep away for a few months. The villages here lay very far apart, and their huts illustrate the poverty of the inhabitants. The Russians are frightened of the fast driving of the truck drivers.

As night sinks down over us, the driving becomes more difficult. We often have to climb off and push the trucks out of mud and holes in the snow. We stop on the edge of a village for a long time. Our truck driver has driven into a hole in the ice and the truck is now hanging with only the front axle secure.

It is cold. The veins on my hands are frozen from the frost. My gloves were among my stolen things. We have already been on our way for more than 14 hours. The guards are becoming ever more unpleasant. My legs ache from the tight seating. Wherever one looks, there is nothing but woodland. The taiga is unending here.





*In 1943, after the German Sixth Army surrendered in the Battle of Stalingrad, some 91,000 of the survivors became prisoners of war in the Soviet Union.*

At dawn we come through a small village. Kaimonovo at last. Another three kilometers and we stop. How our legs ache after such a strenuous journey. We are taken over by another guard and march from the road down a short hill to a camp.

As I soon discover, this is the 206th Column "Angarlag": a women's camp. Apart from the kitchen hut and the bathhouse, there are only two barrack blocks. Our provisional accommodation is a summer barrack that had been used as an isolation barrack until now. One could almost compare it to a cave, and had I not already experienced similar holes, I would have believed it impossible to sleep here with so many people. However, it suits us and we are especially pleased to have a roof, even if it has holes in it, and it also has a petrol can that serves as a stove. It is inadequately supplied with water, so snow is melted. There is no toilet.

Russian sentries ensure that the young prisoners do not get into the women's barracks, but some still manage it during the night. They report on their experiences with the usual smiles.

To my surprise there are female sentries in the watchtowers. It is explained to me that these are condemned prisoners with only short sentences to complete. The same thing happens in the men's camps. Despite my fatigue I can hardly get any rest. The lack of room in the barrack prevents me from sleeping. There are bugs here, too.

On the morning of the 10th of April we were deloused and examined by a doctor. The doctor himself did not speak a word to us, but his companion was full of hate toward us when he discovered that we were German. Then at midday we had to assemble at the camp gate and form up in our allocated work teams.

Silently, we go through the endless taiga. I visualize once more the map I had seen hanging in an office in Bratsk. According to that, we are now some 600 kilometers northwest of the northern edge of Lake Baikal. If I am going to flee, then my only option is to try to get to Irkutsk and from there via Schita to Manchuria. But how to achieve this, I have not yet worked out.

Suddenly, at a turn in the track, about two hundred female prisoners come into sight. We look at each other; the guards having forbidden any talking. All races and nationalities are represented. Old and young, with more or less tattered clothing or padded suits. Most seem careworn, but some of the younger ones give a carefree impression and ask us where we come from. Despite the ban on talking, some men speak to them as they go past. Immediately the guard commander jumps between them like a bulldog.

At last we reach the camp. In fact, it is quite a new camp. There is no fencing and apart from the guardroom, in which the camp commandant lives, only two tents have been set up. In the





*After the Battle of Stalingrad, columns of tens of thousands of German prisoners disappeared into Soviet captivity. Few would survive Stalin's gulags to be repatriated after the war.*

first tent there are already about a hundred men who arrived yesterday. They were not, however, political prisoners, much to our regret, as it seemed to us that those imprisoned for political offenses were rarely also thieves.

The living conditions here are very bad. There is no kitchen, only a cauldron in the open air. There is no toilet, so we use anywhere outside that is suitable. There is no bath, so we have to content ourselves with washing with melted snow. The water for the kitchen is brought in by cart, but it is hardly sufficient. There is no bakery, the bread being brought from a neighboring camp.

Apart from the guardroom, everything has to be planned and erected. Our first job is to fence ourselves in, erecting a 3.5-meter-high fence around the whole camp complex. It is a difficult and tiring task. Götz, Franke, Schroeter, and I work on the holes that have to be dug for the posts. The ground is frozen down to a meter's depth and hardly thaws at all in the summer here, where the woodland closes in and the sunlight cannot penetrate. Often stones make it difficult too. As tools for the workers there are only crowbars, hammers, hoes, and spades. The food here is also completely insufficient and our strength soon diminishes. As our foreman, a Russian called Schlakov, cheats on our provisions, we soon come into conflict with him. We are able to move to a carpentry brigade, but here too the work norms are very high in order to obtain additional food.

Despite the strenuous work and the poor food, I keep up my language studies. I try to write down every new word that I hear, together with the German translation, so as to at least learn something.

The bread deliveries from the neighboring camp are wholly inadequate. Until now, we have not had the correct amount on a single day. The hunger is overwhelming. We are supposed to get it all later, but I do not believe this. We worked feverishly on making an oven so that the camp could be independent for bread. The old ones among us are the most pessimistic and believe that they will not live much longer. There is a 58-year-old among them who has been given a 25-year sentence.

Something out of the ordinary has occurred. Three young Russians from the neighboring tent have escaped. For me this is proof that it is possible to escape if one so wishes. But how far will they get? Their disappearance was discovered at this morning's head count and within two hours there were people here from the main administration with tracker dogs.

If the fugitives are caught then they can expect the same treatment as was meted out to the men from the 209th Column who were on the run for three days. When they were caught, one was shot, the second was badly wounded and was taken to hospital, and the third came back to the camp. I saw him standing in front of our camp with a battered face describing himself as an idiot and giving us the advice not to make any attempts at escape.

Nevertheless I will try should a suitable moment occur. **MHQ**

Excerpted from *After Stalingrad: Seven Years As a Soviet Prisoner of War*. German text copyright © Adelbert Holl, 1965; English translation copyright © Tony Le Tissier, 2016. Reproduced with permission from Pen & Sword Military.



# **LAWS OF WAR** **THE GENESIS OF ‘GENOCIDE’**

*By Jay Winter*

Inventing new terms about war is as unusual as adding elements to the periodic table: It happens, but only rarely. One such word, unknown before 1942 but now commonplace, is “genocide.” The word has a history, bound inextricably with the life of one man: Raphael Lemkin.

Lemkin was a Galician-born Polish lawyer trained in the 1920s in international law in Lwów, Poland (now Lviv, Ukraine). He was a difficult man to like—obsessed, paranoid, a bit of a fabulist about minor matters and supposed achievements with which he adorned his lonely life. Another famous international lawyer, Hersch Lauterpacht, later a professor at the University of Cambridge and an intellectual adversary of Lemkin, also trained in Lwów in the interwar years, before the Nazis swept away the entire world of Galician Jewry in which they both lived. Both men left Poland; Lauterpacht to Vienna and London in the 1920s, Lemkin in the late 1930s to Lithuania, Sweden, and then to the United States, to Duke and Yale Universities. Both men contributed significantly to the framing of the Nuremberg Tribunal and to the postwar order of international law in general and of human rights law in particular.

But there the similarities stop. Lemkin was an outsider; Lauterpacht, an insider. Lemkin never had a permanent post; Lauterpacht was the doyen of international lawyers in Britain, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Lemkin was emotional, eager to buttonhole anyone who could help his cause, a born lobbyist, and a general pain in the neck; Lauterpacht was cool, rational, and utterly practical in his sense of what the law could and could not do.

Their temperamental differences paled in comparison to the distance between their respective visions of human rights. To Lauterpacht, who was responsible for inserting the term “crimes against humanity” in the list of charges against the Nuremberg defendants, individuals had human rights, and in crushing them the Nazi regime had offended the conscience of mankind. Every man, woman, and child murdered or abused by the Nazis had rights—indivisible rights—that defined their humanity. The leadership of the Nazi state violated these rights, and no claim of obedience to order or to “sovereignty” could be a legitimate defense. No state had the right to abuse its own citizens or those of conquered peoples, as the Nazis had. This was the principle the Nuremberg judges applied, and Lauterpacht framed the ideas that governed their arguments and their judgments.

For Lemkin, in contrast, the Nazis’ crimes went beyond the violation of the rights of individuals; their crime was to methodically murder of an entire people, defined not only demographi-

cally but also culturally. They laid waste to the cultural ground on which Jewish life had grown for 300 years; they poisoned the terrain in which the Yiddish language had flourished; they waged a cultural and biological war against a specific group, a people, that was more than the sum of its constituent lives.

Lemkin had come to this position after studying the murder of some million and a half Armenians during the First World War. Lemkin’s coining in 1942 of a new term, “geno-cide,” half Latin and half Greek, to mean the murder of a people, arose out of his reflections on that catastrophe. He had followed closely the trial of Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin in 1921, in which a young Armenian was acquitted of the murder of one of the architects of the deportation and destruction not only of his family but of the entire Armenian people in Anatolia, where they had lived for a millennium. It puzzled Lemkin that in Berlin a man was standing trial for the killing of one person, Talaat Pasha, a leading figure in the triumvirate that ordered the Armenian deportations, whereas there was no law that could have brought Pasha to justice for the deaths, not of one, but of millions. Over many years and in many countries, Lemkin turned his life into a one-man crusade for the legal recognition that murdering a group, or a people, was a crime in international law. As a consultant to the U.S.

Board of Economic Warfare, he wrote his most important book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, published in 1944 by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. It is there that the term genocide emerged as an essential tool for understanding the Nazi practices of expropriation, terror, and extermination.

The term “genocide” suggested that whatever rights states had, the murder of entire peoples went beyond them. This seems common sense today, but that was not the case in 1944. Why was it so hard for Lemkin to realize his goal of making illegal the extermination of an entire people? The fundamental reason was the sturdiness of the notion of sovereignty, both in international law and in political science. For Britain, the First World War was fought to restore the sovereignty of Belgium, illegally invaded and occupied by the German army for four years. Yugoslavia and Poland became sovereign states in 1919

**Lemkin turned his life into a crusade for the adoption of the new term he’d coined.**





*The Nazi concentration camps in Auschwitz, Poland: A prisoner's secret photograph of bodies being burned, ca. 1943; the barracks; young survivors dressed in clothing from adult prisoners, 1945.*

because the Allies believed that they had a right to exist as sovereign states. The Nazi invasion of Poland 20 years later was another violation of sovereignty that had to be addressed.

Even before the Nazis came to power, war had changed notions of sovereignty, giving leaders virtually total freedom to act in defense of their homelands. As the great and malevolent political philosopher Carl Schmitt wrote in the interwar years, war brought a state of emergency in which the sovereign was all-powerful. Indeed, Schmitt's definition of the sovereign was he who could declare the state of emergency when an enemy came into view. The Nazis took that definition to its ultimate, if unnatural, conclusion—namely, that the state of emergency brought on by war erases all boundaries of criminality.

In effect, the Second World War was a conflict between two notions of state sovereignty, one absolute, the other constrained partially—and only partially—by laws. Did the Nazi state have the right to treat its own citizens in any way it pleased? Did it have the right to treat subject peoples as cattle or as the vermin they, the Nazis, claimed that they were?

The unequivocally negative answer to these questions was slowly but surely forced on the Nazi regime and the German population behind it. The victorious powers were not prepared to undermine completely the concept of state sovereignty, but they agreed there was room for some new limits. A compromise answer between absolute sovereignty and none at all had to be found, respecting the legitimate aspirations of sovereignty

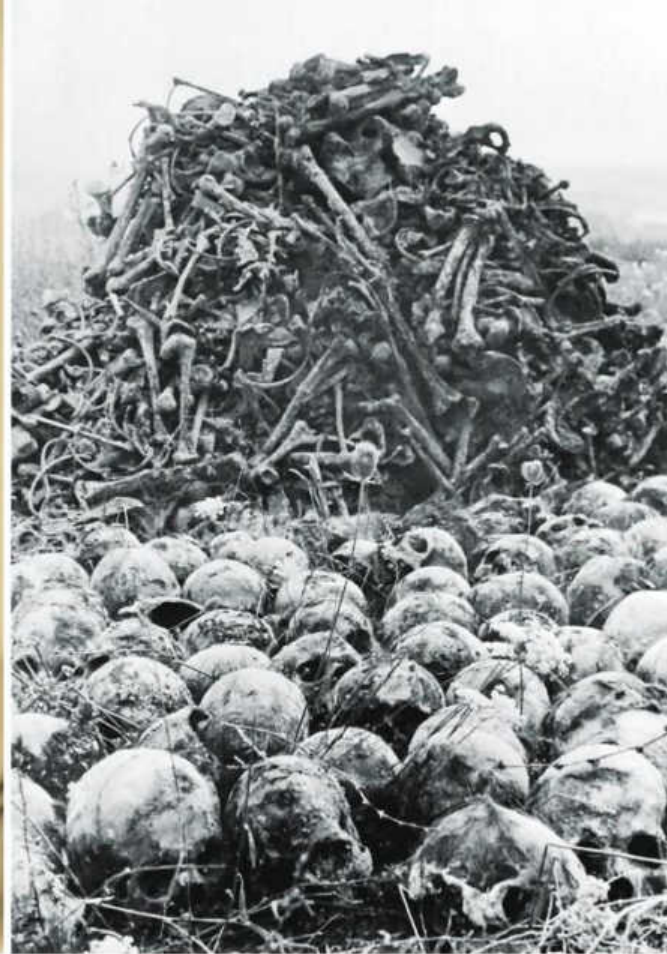
and separating them from the behavior of the Nazi (and later the Japanese) state.

That answer, which determined the framework of Nuremberg, was Lauterpacht's. Individuals had rights under international law. They could bring to justice those whose actions could no longer be justified in terms of the absolute sovereignty of the state. Members of the Nazi high command could be found guilty of taking the lives of millions of others, one at a time, and be made to pay for their crimes with their own lives.

It is important to recognize that at Nuremberg, Lauterpacht effectively won the argument with Lemkin, whose plea for justice against those who were guilty of the crime of murdering an entire people was not accepted. Lemkin had learned, while working with the team of American prosecutors at Nuremberg, that 49 members of his family, including his parents, had died at the hands of the Nazis. But while he was able to get the prosecutors to include the term "genocide" in their indictment, the Nazi higher-ups did not hang for the crime of committing genocide. They died for crimes against humanity. But this bitter setback for Lemkin—recounted brilliantly alongside a compelling account of Lauterpacht's victory at Nuremberg in Philippe Sands's recent book *East-West Street: On the Origins of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*—was not the end of the story.

Lemkin was a man who never took no for an answer. He moved from Nuremberg to New York and turned to the United Na-





*Raphael Lemkin, undated identification photograph. A pile of human bones and skulls at the Nazi extermination camp of Majdanek on the outskirts of Lublin, Poland, 1944.*

tions as the institution that could recognize genocide in law. This time he waged his own personal war against another jurist, René Cassin. Cassin, Charles de Gaulle's right-hand man and jurist in London during the occupation of France, was a tireless advocate of the need to limit the sovereignty of the state. He was given the unenviable tasks of cleansing the French bureaucracy of the Vichy legacy and of returning France to a state of Republican legality after Liberation in 1944. As if this were not enough, he formed a firm partnership with Eleanor Roosevelt to take the United Nations through the steps needed to frame and adopt a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Here was a document denouncing absolute state sovereignty but on the level of norms rather than courts and convictions. Neither Lemkin nor Lauterpacht approved of this approach, which they believed had no teeth. Many human rights lawyers today believe that human rights exist only if there are courts to ensure that they are respected. Cassin was not among them. He believed that it would take generations before the old idea of state sovereignty accommodated itself to the new notion of universal human rights. And, as we can see today, he was right.

Lemkin, paranoid as ever, saw Cassin, like Lauterpacht, as an enemy—someone who could wreck Lemkin's vision of a binding legal commitment to outlaw genocide. But he was wrong about Cassin; Cassin's work was parallel to—not in conflict with Lemkin's. And they both won. Their two achievements will forever be braided together, because the United

Nations, assembled in Paris, approved Lemkin's Genocide Convention on December 9, 1948, and on the following day it approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Cassin had helped to draft. It was in this month, just before the Cold War forever froze the wartime alliance, that the victorious powers came together to recognize both the crime of genocide and what everyone deemed to be universal human rights.

This trio of great jurists—Lauterpacht, Lemkin, and Cassin, all Jews who had survived the Nazis—each put his stamp sequentially on the three great declarations of human rights of our times: Lauterpacht on the Nuremberg prosecutions, Lemkin on the Genocide Convention, and Cassin on the Universal Declaration, and they did so over the astonishingly short period of two years.

Lauterpacht and Cassin went on to great honors and world acclaim. Lemkin, a wanderer without family or fame, died in 1959—a decade after his great moment in Paris—after suffering a heart attack at a bus stop on 42nd Street in New York City. Only seven people showed up at his funeral.

But Lemkin's achievement was at least as great as theirs, and possibly greater. For it was Lemkin who almost singlehandedly brought the word "genocide" into being and made it a cornerstone of international law as well as a constant warning of the fragility of the political and social order in which we live. **MHQ**

JAY WINTER is the Charles J. Stille Professor of History at Yale University.







# BATTLE SCHEMES HEART ATTACK!

Though he started out as an apprentice brewer, Georg Matthäus Seutter (1678–1757) found his real calling as a mapmaker. As a young man he moved to Nuremberg to learn the art of copper engraving under the tutelage of Johann Homann, Germany's preeminent geographer and cartographer. Sometime in the early 18th century Seutter left to establish his own cartographic firm in Augsburg, and he soon became one of the most prolific map publishers of his time.

Seutter's most famous work may well be this unusual, hand-colored allegorical map, published in 1735, which presents the pleasures and pitfalls of romantic entanglement in the style of a typical 18th-century battle plan. Seutter's map is meant not so much to educate as to amuse. The fortress that dominates the map is a man's heart. It sits in an icy, passionless sea as its soldiers try to fend off a full-bore attack from the fairer sex. Employing four sets of artillery batteries, she bombards the castle's walls with a variety of feminine wiles and virtues and "un certain je ne sais quoi."

The finely engraved cartouche on the right shows Venus, the goddess of love, being pulled through the clouds in her chariot by doves. Meanwhile, the "forces" of love—commanded by their general, Cupid—are encamped until the target of the attack surrenders and makes his way down the coastline to the Palace of Love, which resides in a sea of peace.

The key at the bottom of the map lists 95 stratagems that a man can employ to ward off a heart attack. **MHQ**





## WAR LIST

# PATTON'S REQUIRED READING

*In 1952 the widow of George S. Patton Jr. provided an intimate glimpse into the legendary general's thinking.*

*By Beatrice Ayer Patton*

It began with the classics, for the Pattons felt that life was too short to get one's education unless one started early, and the family loved to read aloud. By the time the future general had reached age eight, he had heard and acted out *The Illiad*, *The Odyssey*, some of Shakespeare's historical plays, and such books of adventure as *The Scottish Chiefs*, Conan Doyle's *Sir Nigel*, *The White Company*, *The Exploits and Adventures of Brigadier Gerard*, *The Boy's King Arthur*, and the complete works of G. A. Henty.

As a cadet he singled out the great commanders of history for his study, and I have his little notebook filled with military maxims, some signed J. C., some Nap, and some simply G. Sources were his specialty, and as a bride, I remember him handing me a copy of von Treitschke, saying: "Try and make me a workable translation of this. That book of von Bernhardt's, *Germany and the Next War*, is nothing but a digest of this one. I hate digests." Unfortunately, my German is not of that caliber, and he had to make do until a proper translation was published several years later. He was, however, one of the first Americans to own that translation, as later he owned translations of Marx, Lenin, and the first edition of *Mein Kampf*—believing that one can only understand Man through his own works and not from what others think he thinks. No matter where we moved, there was never enough room for the books. We were indeed lucky that an army officer's professional library is transported free.

He made notes on all the important books he read, both in the books themselves and on reference cards, and he was as deeply interested in some of the unsuccessful campaigns, trying to ferret out the secret of their unsuccess, as he was in the successful ones. I have one entire book of notes on the Gallipoli campaign. He was especially interested in landing operations, expecting to make them himself someday.

Our library holds many works on horsemanship, foxhunting, polo, and sailing, all sports with a spice of danger to keep a soldier on his toes in time of peace. He was an intensive student of the Civil War, and one of his regrets was that his favorite military biography of that period was a foreigner...G. F. R. Henderson's *Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War*. Imagine his delight when Douglas Southall Freeman's *Lee* be-

gan to appear. He bought and read them one volume at a time, and when I showed it to the author, crammed with my husband's notes and comments, he smiled: "He REALLY read it, bless his heart." His memory was phenomenal and he could recite entire pages from such widely different sources as the *Book of Common Prayer*, Caesar's *Commentaries*, and Kipling's and Macaulay's poems. On the voyage to Africa in 1942, he read the Koran, better to understand the Moroccans, and during the Sicilian campaign, he bought and read every book he could find on the history of that island, sending them home to me when he had finished them.

During the campaigns of '44 and '45, he carried with him a Bible, prayer book, Caesar's *Commentaries*, and a complete set of Kipling—for relaxation. A minister who interviewed him during that winter remarked that when he saw a Bible on his table, he thought it had been put there to impress the clergy, but had to admit later that the general was better acquainted with what lay between the covers than the minister himself.

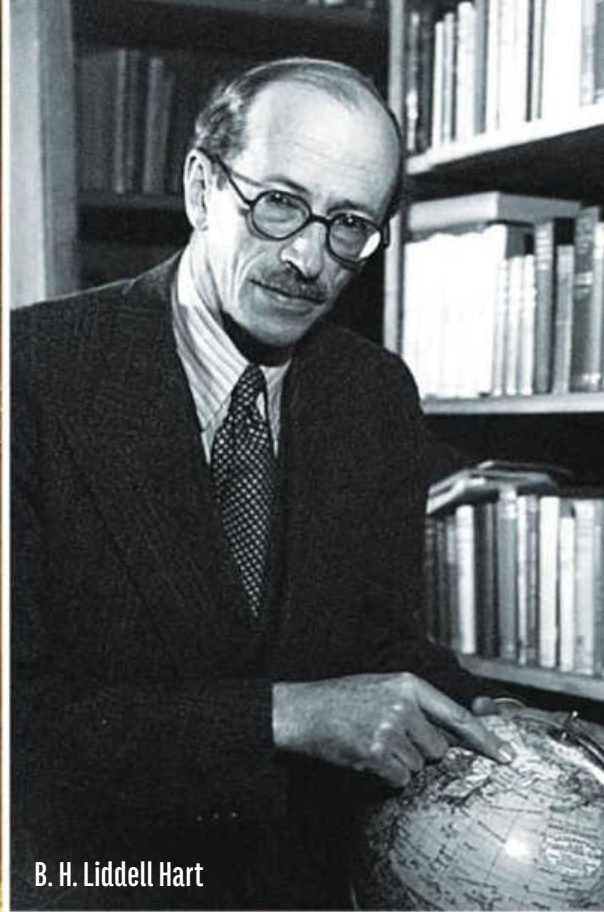
Most of all, he was interested in the practical application of his studies to the actual terrain, and as far back as 1913, during the tour at the French Cavalry School, we personally reconnoitered the Normandy Bocage country, using only the watershed roads used in William the Conqueror's time, passable in any weather. When he entered the war four years later, he fought in eastern France, but in 1944, his memory held good. People have asked me how he "guessed" so luckily.

"Terrain is sometimes responsible for final windup of a campaign, as in the life of Hannibal," he wrote. To him, it was not a coincidence that the final German defeat in Africa was near the field of Zama. His letter, "I entered Trier by the same gate Labienus used and I could almost smell the sweat and dust of the marching legions," is an example of how dramatically he could link the present with the past. As he had acted out the death of Ajax on the old home ranch, so he and our family acted out Bull Run, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. I have represented everything in those battles from artillery horses at Sudley's Ford to Lieutenant Alonzo Cushing, Army of the Potomac, at the battle of Gettysburg. That was a battle long to be remembered. At the end of the third day, as the girls jumped over the stone wall into





Julius Caesar



B. H. Liddell Hart



Alexander  
the Great

Harper's Woods, Ruth Ellen fell wounded, took a pencil and paper from her pocket, and wrote her dying message. (The original by Colonel Waller Tazewell Patton, C.S.A., is in the Richmond Museum.) I heard a sort of groan behind me. As Lieutenant Cushing, firing my last shot from my last gun, I had been too busy to notice a sightseeing bus had drawn up and was watching the tragedy of Pickett's Charge.

If I have digressed from my subject, reading, it is to show the results of reading. First he studied the battles; then, when possible, played them out on the ground in a way no one who ever participated in the game can forget.

From his reading of history, he believed that no defensive action is ever truly successful. He once asked me to look up a successful defensive action...any successful one. I found three, but they were all Pyrrhic victories. History seasoned with imagination and applied to the problem in hand was his hobby, and he deplored the fact that it is so little taught in our schools,

for he felt that the study of man is Man, and that the present is built upon the past.

As I read the books coming out of this last war, I know those that he would choose: authoritative biographies and personal memoirs of the writer, whether he be friend or enemy. No digests!

### Mrs. Patton's Annotated List

#### Maxims of Frederick the Great

*Napoleon's Maxims of War*, and all the authoritative military biographies of Napoleon, such as those by Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne and William Milligan Sloane.

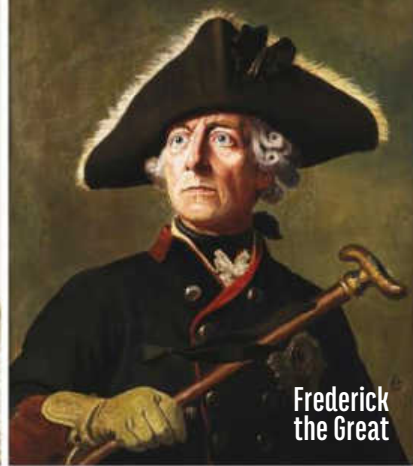
#### Caesar's Commentaries, Julius Caesar

Treatises by Heinrich von Treitschke, Carl von Clausewitz, Alfred von Schlieffen, Hans von Seeckt, Baron Antoine-Henri De Jomini, and other Napoleonic writers

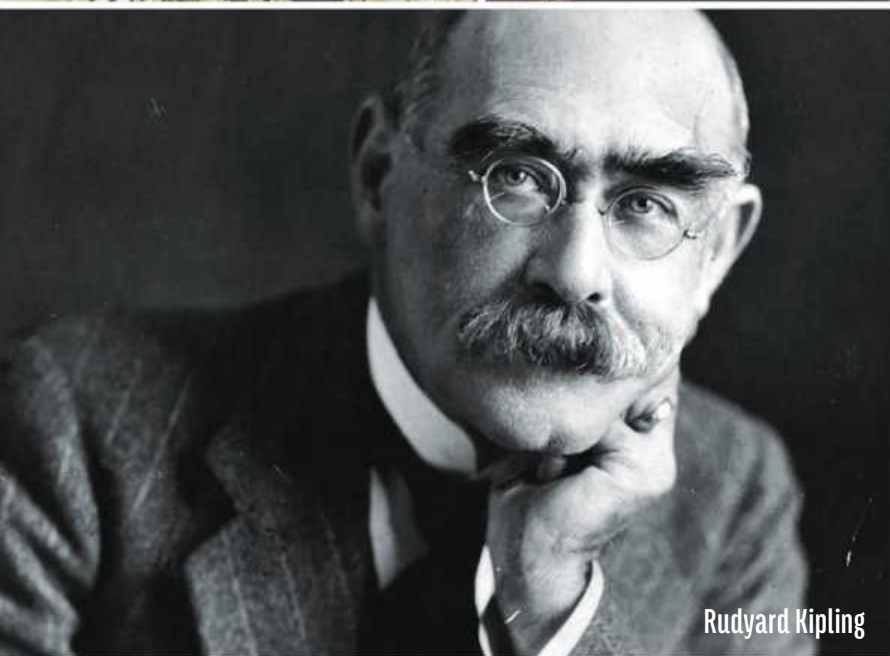




Sir Ian Hamilton



Frederick the Great



Rudyard Kipling



Stonewall Jackson

*The Memoirs of Baron de Marbot*, a colonel under Napoleon. We were translating the latter when he went to war in 1942.

*The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, Edward Shepherd Creasy

*Charles XII—King of Sweden*, Carl Klingspor

*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon

*Maurice's Strategikon*, George T. Dennis

*The Prince*, Niccolo Machiavelli

*The Crowd*, Gustave Le Bon

*The Art of War in the Middle Ages*, Charles Oman, and other books by him

*The Influence of Sea Power on History*, A. T. Mahan, and other books by him

*Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War*, G. F. R. Henderson

*Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*, and those of George B. McClellan

*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*

*R. E. Lee: A Biography and Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*, Douglas Southall Freeman

*Years of Endurance and Years of Victory*, Arthur Bryant

*Gallipoli Diary*, Sir Ian Hamilton

*Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War*

*Memoirs of Erich Ludendorff, Marshal von Hindenburg and Ferdinand Foch*

*Genghis Khan, Alexander of Macedon*, and other biographies, Harold Lamb

*Alexander the Great*, Arthur Weigall

*The Home Book of Verse*, in which he loved the heroic poems

Anything by Winston Churchill

Kipling, complete

Anything by B. H. Liddell Hart, with whom he often loved to differ

Anything by J. F. C. Fuller, especially *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure*. He was so delighted with this that he sent a copy to his superior, a major general. It was never acknowledged. Later he gave 12 copies to friends, colonels only, remarking that prevention is better than cure. MHQ

Adapted from "A Soldier's Reading," by Beatrice Ayer Patton, which originally appeared in the November–December 1952 issue of *Armor*—The Magazine of Mobile Warfare.



# WEAPONS CHECK DISCUS HAND GRENADE

By Chris McNab

It was World War I that, more than any other conflict, proved the utility and tactical value of the hand grenade. The defining grenades of the war were the British No. 5 Mk 1 “Mills Bomb” and the German Model 24 *Stielhandgranate* (stick hand grenade), but there was much experimentation on both sides. One of the most distinctive of these weapons was the German *diskushandgranate* (discus hand grenade), which aimed to prevent the enemy from picking up a grenade before it exploded and throwing it back at the hurler.

First developed in 1913, but refined in the M1915 variant shown here, the *diskushandgranate* consisted of two metal half-sections, filled with explosive and mounted around a

star-shaped detonator system, all riveted together into a discus shape. When the grenade was thrown with a spinning motion, the centrifugal force armed it, and any of the four contact plungers around the edge detonated the grenade on impact, with no delay. Dubbed the “turtle grenade” by the Allies, the *diskushandgranate* was mechanically complex, and the simpler and more powerful *stielhandgranate* became the dominant German type for both world wars. **MHQ**

CHRIS MCNAB is a military historian based in the United Kingdom. His most recent book is *Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay: Pacific War Combat Missions* (Sterling, 2016).

## Plungers

When the grenade struck the ground, one or more of its four plungers was driven inward, pushing a primer onto a striker, which in turn triggered the detonator and exploded the grenade.

## Explosives

The grenade contained 4.5 ounces (130 grams) of explosive content, the weapon relying on blast effect rather than fragmentation.

## Body

The body was made of 0.04-inch (1 mm) pressed steel, and the grenade had a total weight of 17 ounces (490 grams).

## Safety Pin

Pulled to arm the grenade prior to throwing, the safety pin released an internal rod that in turn exposed the detonation primers to an internal striker.









# LETTER FROM MHQ FIRST IN WAR

**I**n 1773 Alexander Hamilton, a 16-year-old orphan from the Virgin Islands, first set foot in the nascent United States, with little more than the intelligence and drive that had inspired a couple of wealthy benefactors in St. Croix to bankroll his education at King's College (now Columbia University) in New York City. But Hamilton was already thinking big. He surely understood that he was in the right place at the right time to make a name, and a place in the world, for himself. "I wish there was a war," Hamilton had written while he was a young clerk in the Caribbean, and by 1775 there was one, with him in the thick of it.

On Christmas Day 1776, Hamilton and some 5,400 Continental Army troops under the command of General George Washington crossed the ice-choked Delaware River at McConkey's Ferry, Pennsylvania, and, over the next 10 days, won two crucial battles of the American Revolution at Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey. Washington almost certainly saw both fearlessness and genius in Hamilton, who in battle had proven himself to be a bold leader and artilleryman. Washington promoted Hamilton to lieutenant colonel and made him his aide-de-camp, and in short order Hamilton all but became his commander in chief's alter ego; in Washington's innermost circle, he was called "The Little Lion." Even in this role, though, Hamilton never got too big for his breeches, always addressing Washington as "Your Excellency."

But Hamilton chafed for a field command, as David Silbey recounts in this issue, and Washington finally consented. He put Hamilton in charge of a battalion of light infantry, and on October 14, 1781, Hamilton led the men who successfully stormed Redoubt No. 10 at the Siege of Yorktown, Virginia—the decisive battle of the Revolutionary War. It's likely that he was carrying the powder horn shown here, engraved with his name, a drawing of a unicorn, and a cinquefoil from the Hamilton coat of arms. In 2016, when the powder horn sold at auction for \$115,620, it was said that it represented the station

in society and wealth that Hamilton aspired to but never really achieved, owing to scandal and tragedy—the scandal being a notorious episode in which he was blackmailed by his mistress's con-artist husband and the tragedy being his untimely death by duel at the hand of Aaron Burr.

Also in this issue is an account of how President Franklin D. Roosevelt and other top government officials in the nation's capital reacted in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor a little more than 75 years ago. That same day an American lumber ship, the *Cynthia Olson*, was halfway between Seattle and Honolulu when it reported being attacked by a submarine and then vanished. Many of our readers will surely be interested to know that Stephen Harding, the editor of our sister magazine *Military History*, has written the definitive account of what really happened to the *Cynthia Olson* and its crew in *Dawn of Infamy: A Sunken Ship, a Vanished Crew, and the Final Mystery of Pearl Harbor*, newly published by Da Capo Press.

This issue also marks the official "retirement" of Michael W. Robbins as the editor of *MHQ*, which he has expertly and lovingly shepherded to press for some years now. We wrap the "R" word in quotation marks for two reasons. First, anyone who knows Mike—an inquisitive soul eager to plumb the unplumbed—surely understands that retirement just isn't part of his DNA. Second, although he is stepping down, Mike has assured us that he isn't stepping away—that he will continue to provide us with ideas and inspiration, along with occasional book reviews and other pieces. That's all to the good. As the editor of *MHQ*, and before that as the editor of *Military History*, Mike brought insatiable curiosity, indefatigable scholarship, and a hefty dose of good cheer to his work and to those around him, including me. We wish him the best, as he gave his best to *MHQ*.

—Bill Hogan

[MHQeditor@historynet.com](mailto:MHQeditor@historynet.com)



# MYSTERY AT MONTFAUCON

*In the last weeks of World War I, thousands of American soldiers needlessly died in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. A 100-year-old coverup kept the truth out of the history books.*  
*By William Walker*





*“Aptly named is the Mount of the Falcon. Sharp are its beak and claws. Before the attackers can even reach it they have to cross rough ground where well-hidden machine-guns give them a rough passage. Rougher still is the handling suffered by those who attempt to gain its forbidding crest.” —B. H. Liddell Hart*





**E**merging from a communication trench in northern France on September 13, 1918, the doughboys of the U.S. Army's 79th Division gasped on seeing the Little Gibraltar of the Western Front looming over the no man's land in front of them. Nicknamed by French officers who wasted countless lives proving its impregnability, the butte of Montfaucon was the most formidable obstacle in the way of General John J. Pershing's Meuse-Argonne Offensive, a massive attack that would, it was hoped, end World War I. The big push was scheduled for September 26.

Sensing that the sight of the famous fortress had unnerved his raw recruits, Colonel Frank Barber, the commander of the 79th's engineering troops, sought to put their fears to flight. "It would not be likely," he told his men, "that a green division would be hurled at the strongest point in the whole German line."

As unlikely as it may have seemed to Barber, the young recruits would soon be ordered to attack Little Gibraltar, which towered some 300 feet above the ruined countryside. Its commanding view had made Montfaucon an ideal site for an observatory, a fact that German crown prince Wilhelm realized in August 1914, after his troops stormed through the border north of Metz at the beginning of the Great War.

Two years later, as the Germans planned their assault on the fortress of Verdun, a few miles southeast of Montfaucon, Wilhelm ordered his engineers to erect a telescopic periscope inside the shell of a ruined manor house atop the butte. The periscope was the equivalent of today's spy satellites, and the Germans used it to call down a deluge of artillery on any target within a 20-mile radius. The instrument proved its worth during the enemy's attempt to retake Verdun in 1916.

In 1918, as the Americans planned the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Pershing designated Little Gibraltar as the opening objective of the attack. If it could be captured quickly, Pershing reasoned, the German guns would be effectively blinded and the doughboys would have an easier time piercing enemy defensive lines before reinforcements arrived. After bursting through the feared Kriemhilde Stellung—a devilish network of German defenses between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest—they would drive 30 miles north to cut a vital German supply line near Sedan. The capture of the enemy railway would force the kaiser's troops to surrender or starve. "If we strike hard enough," Pershing told an aide, "we may end the war this fall."

The Germans, understanding the value of precision artillery, had taken elaborate steps to protect their observatory so that it could continue to function in the midst of an attack. Little Gibraltar was guarded by numerous trenches and concrete bunkers, many of them connected by underground tunnels that had been carved through solid rock, and hundreds of machine-gun nests. In addition, the Germans had constructed twin field fortifications two miles south of the butte to slow any enemy advance against Montfaucon.

These stout defenses lay directly in the path of the 79th, by several measures the weakest division in Pershing's army. More than 15,000 of the division's 28,000-man roster had been drafted in May 1918, little more than two months before the 79th left Camp Meade, in Maryland, for Europe. Some of the recruits had never fired a rifle before landing in France. Once they arrived, the men in the division completed less than half of the allotted three months of combat training before they boarded trains for battle. They had never seen a front-line trench, much less experienced the brutal combat of the world's first industrialized war.

Generations of military historians have wondered why Pershing and his planners in the U.S. First Army placed the success of the entire operation on the shoulders of these green troops. The traditional answer is that most of the experienced U.S. troops were then caught up in another battle, some 60 miles away, to blot out the St. Mihiel bulge. But Pershing still had more capable divisions at the ready. Just to the right of the 79th, for example, the battle-proven 4th Division was positioned to advance through a lightly defended sector.

The placement of that veteran division is, in fact, a clue that helps solve the mystery of Montfaucon. Its positioning on the 79th's right flank and the inclusion of a turning maneuver in the 4th's attack order should make the First Army's intention clear to those familiar with U.S. military doctrine. Taught assiduously at Fort Leavenworth's Staff School and cited by First Army Chief of Staff Hugh A. Drum in a postwar lecture on the offensive, the maneuver consists of two simultaneous movements. "One force, the weaker, is designated to engage and hold the enemy," Drum explained, "while the other, the stronger, makes a detour to strike the enemy in the flank." This concept was the heart of the attack plan for Montfaucon.

The turning maneuver ordered by the First Army's planners for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive skillfully accommodated the weaknesses and strengths of the two divisions and addressed the features of the distinctly different sectors. While the 79th might not be able to take Little Gibraltar in a frontal attack, it could nonetheless be counted on to pressure the fortress's German defenders; meanwhile, the veterans of the 4th Division, with their extensive battle experience, could skirt their sector's obstacles, dash east of the preoccupied troops on Montfaucon, and attack the lightly defended rear of the butte.

Though the plan was elegant, it had a built-in flaw: The two assault divisions had different commanders. The 79th was in Major General George H. Cameron's V Corps; the 4th was in Major General Robert Lee Bullard's III Corps. The two men were a study in contrast: Cameron, laconic and reserved; Bullard, blustery and hard driving.

Expecting divisions in different corps—and with different leaders—to coordinate a complex attack violates the cardinal military principle of unity of organization and command. Hav-





*Top: The faces of men in the 314th Regiment betray the stress they experienced as they drove into the German-held woods east of Little Gibraltar. Bottom: General John J. Pershing hoped that his massive Meuse-Argonne Offensive would end World War I.*



## LITTLE GIBRALTAR

ing two assault divisions headed by different commanders meant that corps orders affecting one of the adjoining divisions would have to be distributed to the adjacent corps to be mirrored in its corps, division, brigade, and regimental orders, presenting numerous opportunities for miscommunications and miscues.

Drum's planners ordered Cameron's V Corps to attack Montfaucon head on, while handing Bullard's III Corps a different directive: "By promptly penetrating the hostile second position [a defensive line running thorough the butte], it will turn Montfaucon and the section of the hostile position within the zone of action of the V Corps, thereby assisting in the capture of the hostile second position west of Montfaucon." Importantly, the planners also sought to prevent friendly fire incidents by alerting V Corps that neighboring 4th Division troops would be operating in its sector north of the butte. For the most part, the twin staffs firmly buttoned up this and other technical aspects of the operation.

But another, nontechnical element would come into play at Montfaucon: the ambition of General Bullard.

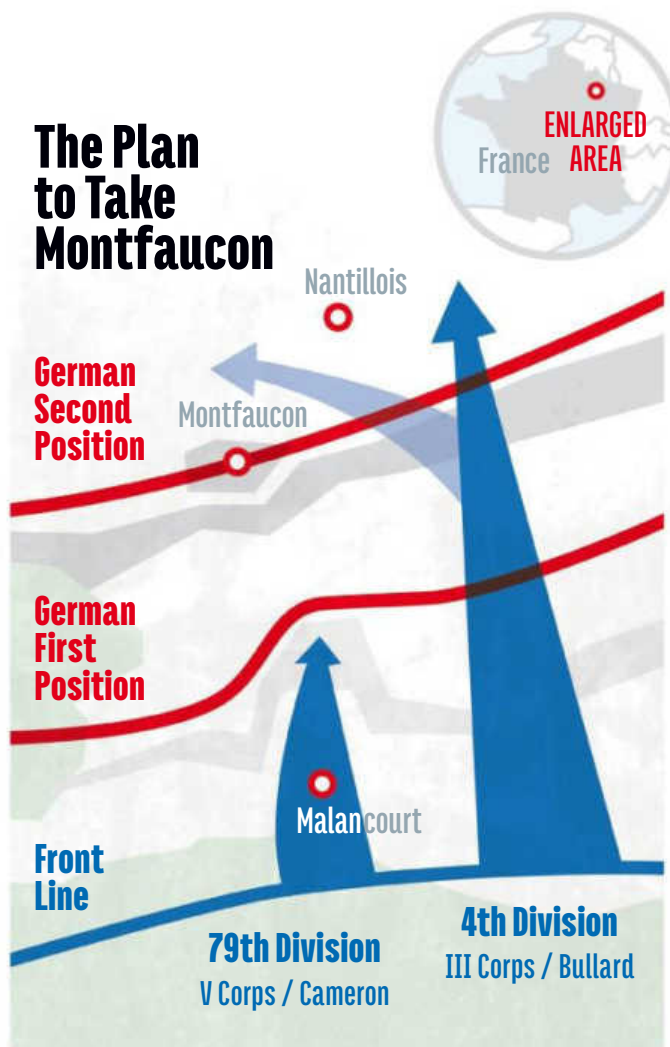
The son of a Confederate veteran from Alabama, Bullard was a West Point graduate who at an early age had persuaded his parents to change his name from William to Robert E. Lee Bullard. In keeping with his lineage, Bullard opposed the idea of using African-American troops in combat. "The Negro division seems in a fair way to be a failure," he wrote in his diary after inheriting command of the predominantly black 92nd Division. "It is in a quiet sector, yet can hardly take care of itself, while to take any offensive action seems wholly beyond its power.... They are really inferior soldiers. There is no denying it."

Bullard also resented those trying to modernize army planning and operations. Convinced that the hell-bent-for-leather charges he had used in pursuit of Apache chief Geronimo incorporated all the tactical subtlety needed for effective warfare, Bullard knew only one direction (forward) and only one speed (fast). As the new "professional officers" educated at Fort Leavenworth began to fill many of the staff positions in the American Expeditionary Force—including those in Pershing's headquarters—Bullard rankled under their innovative thinking. He decried intricate planning as "Leavenworthitis" and scorned operations involving envelopments and other fancy maneuvers. The crusty commander believed in the principle of simplicity—namely, that "somebody has to take the enemy head-on."

When handed complex orders, Bullard usually followed his own instincts. After retiring from the military he bragged that he had disobeyed orders six times during his career and proudly asserted that events had proven him right in every instance.

As the First Army approached battle in the Meuse-Argonne, Bullard's irascibility was inflamed by ambition. An opportunity for advancement had arisen, and Bullard was determined to seize it. At that point in the war, Pershing was "dual-hatting"—commanding the massive AEF while also leading the First Army in battle. The weight of this responsibility was beginning to wear on Pershing, and so he had decided to make some changes in command once he got the offensive off to a good start.

## The Plan to Take Montfaucon



*The two assault divisions charged by the First Army's planners with taking Montfaucon had different commanders. The 79th Division was in Major General George H. Cameron's V Corps; the 4th Division was in Major General Robert Lee Bullard's III Corps. The two generals were a study in contrast: Cameron (left) was laconic and reserved; Bullard (right) was blustery and hard driving.*



Pershing's plan was to divide his troops into two armies, designate commanders, and "kick himself upstairs" to supervise the entire American force. The prime candidates for advancement were the corps commanders who would lead the offensive: Bullard, Cameron, and Hunter Liggett, whose lengthy experience and friendship with Pershing made him a shoo-in to lead the First Army. This left two men contending for promotion to lead the prospective Second Army. Pershing let it be known that he would make his decision based on the performance of the candidates in the upcoming operation, a challenge that encouraged competition rather than cooperation.

Bullard was well prepared for the test. He had proven especially adept at eliminating rivals. The most notable victim was Major General William L. Sibert, who commanded the 1st Division during its early months in France. Sibert had spent most of his career commanding engineering troops and was promoted to flag rank for outstanding service during the construction of the Panama Canal. When he was named to lead the army's most prestigious fighting division, envious officers from the combat arms—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—predicted disaster; one of them set out to ensure that result.

After the Americans arrived in France in 1917, Bullard first served as a brigade commander under Sibert but was soon reassigned to supervise U.S. Army schools, one of Pershing's pet projects. Bullard reported to Pershing that Sibert was complaining about his officers being withdrawn from his units to attend school, a fact that Sibert unwisely underscored in a letter of complaint to Pershing. When Pershing inspected the 1st Division, Bullard was invited to go along and stepped in to conduct the review when Sibert took ill; on another occasion, Pershing severely reprimanded Sibert for misstating the infantry doctrine taught at Bullard's schools. Carefully reading the tea leaves, Bullard brought the matter to a head by sharing his conviction that engineering officers were not fit to command combat troops. When Pershing's ax inevitably fell, Bullard was conveniently close at hand, and in December 1917 he was promoted to major general in command of the 1st Division.

It would not take long for Bullard to start gunning for Cameron, his rival for command of the new army. Indeed, Bullard was already collecting incriminating evidence; his journal notes that Pershing praised two generals who had participated in the St. Mihiel operation but had not mentioned Cameron. A whisper campaign blamed Cameron's slow advance for enabling most of the German troops to escape the closing salient.

As planning for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive continued, Bullard bided his time, looking for appropriate opportunities to distinguish himself or to demean Cameron. One such opportunity soon arose when First Army orders were distributed a few days before the attack. As usual, Bullard's chief of staff, Brigadier General A. W. Bjornstad, convened a conference of the divisional staffs to explain the orders and to coordinate plans. The turning maneuver quickly emerged as a topic of discussion.

"Does the maneuver call for an envelopment of Montfaucon or an attack on the butte's flank?" asked one officer.

Without hesitation, Bjornstad replied, "An envelopment." As a Leavenworth-trained officer, the burly Minnesotan immediately understood what the order specified and took steps to ensure that it would be put into effect. The responsibility for planning the envelopment fell directly on Colonel Christian A. Bach, the 4th Division's chief of staff. Bach quickly returned to his headquarters and drafted orders that were sent up the chain of command to make sure that they conformed to the original First Army directions.

After Bach's divisional orders reached corps headquarters, Bjornstad took the next step prescribed by army regulations: briefing his commanding officer, whose approval was normally pro forma. It was at this point, however, that Bjornstad had one of the strangest conversations of his military career.

As Bjornstad began to explain the order for the III Corps to envelop Little Gibraltar, Bullard interrupted to propose a different—and, ultimately, deadly—interpretation. According to Bjornstad's recollection, Bullard argued that the order "did not necessarily mean 'to penetrate promptly the hostile second position and be in position to turn Montfaucon, etc., and to do so if necessary,' but it might mean merely that 'if the Third Corps promptly penetrated the hostile second position, [then] Montfaucon, etc., will automatically be turned, and the 79th Division will thereby be assisted, etc.'"

Bullard framed his interpretation on a deliberate twisting of the initial phrase of the First Army order: "*By promptly penetrating the hostile second position* it [III Corps] will turn Montfaucon..." Grammarians would acknowledge that the pesky prepositional phrase provides opportunity for mischief. Someone with the requisite verbal agility and a desire to obfuscate could use the phrase to misconstrue the order. Apparently Bullard was a wizard of grammatical gymnastics. The upshot of his argument was that III Corps did not have to envelop Montfaucon to turn the butte; all that was required was to penetrate the second line of defense and keep charging to the north.

To justify his interpretation, Bullard had to ignore the rest of the sentence in the First Army order, which clarifies the matter. After penetrating the second position, III Corps was to cross the corps border into "the section of the hostile second position *within the zone of action of the V Corps*." Proceeding farther away from its own sector, III Corps was to assist "the capture of the hostile second position *west of Montfaucon*." These phrases made the order clear: Bullard's corps was to encircle the rear of Montfaucon from the north and east and march around the butte to capture positions on the far side of the promontory.

Bjornstad had already ordered the 4th to undertake this mission, and Bach's orders to that effect had been sent to III Corps Headquarters for review. The senior officers of III Corps as well

**Bullard  
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## LITTLE GIBALTAR

as of its divisions had heard the initial discussion of the matter and knew what Bjornstad had ordered. The interpretation of the order was a matter of record. Nevertheless, Bullard ordered Bach's order to be rewritten to reflect the following concept: "The Fourth Division will push its attack vigorously, regardless of the advance of the divisions on its right and left.... The Division will assist (if necessary) the Division [on] its left by turning MONTFAUCON; not by advance into the areas of the division on its left but by steady progression to the front and energetic action by the left combat liaison group or by reserves, against hostile detachments on the left flank." Emphatically, the 4th Division was not to cross the corps boundary; it could only direct fire into the 79th's zone of action.

Bullard had foreseen that if he followed the original orders, his rival for command of the Second Army—Cameron—would win credit for capturing the most famous position on the Western Front. Attention would be directed to the 79th Division attack on the front of the butte and not on Bullard and his III Corps in a supporting role beyond the ridge. Bullard was determined to prevent that, and according to Bach, "The paragraph [about enveloping Little Gibraltar] was disapproved at Corps Headquarters and the Divisional Commander was directed to operate only in his own divisional area and to rewrite the order to show this fact."

The amended order was sent back to III Corps and then forwarded to First Army Headquarters for review. Unfortunately, the responsible officer on Pershing's staff did not catch Bullard's dramatic change.

To ensure that the officers in his corps understood the revised order, Bullard said, "I called together my division commanders and told them that in every fight in which I had thus far taken part I had heard division, brigade, and regimental commanders excuse their failures to continue the advance by blaming the units on their right or left for failing to come forward with them. 'I shall take no such excuse on the occasion,' I added. 'Each of your divisions maintains its reserve for the very purpose of protecting your flanks.' That was enough."

Indeed, that *was* enough. With Bullard's stern injunction ringing in their ears, the 4th Division's commanders knew that they would face severe punishment should they try to aid neighboring divisions. The fate of the 79th was sealed.

After a furious six-hour barrage mounted by 2,775 artillery pieces, the American ground attack was launched at 5:30 a.m. on September 26. A smokescreen intensified by ground fog obscured vision, and persistent rain made footing nearly impossible. The men of the 79th, like other doughboys in the nine assault divisions, had difficulty clambering over blasted tree trunks, through muddy shell holes, and across swollen Forges Brook, which marked the center of no man's land. The flooded area

slowed the Americans, making them ideal targets for German snipers. Many would fall in the 79th's frontal, go-it-alone attack on Little Gibraltar.

As the men pushed on toward Montfaucon, they were stopped in their tracks by two fortifications. To the left, at least 119 heavy and 50 light machine guns were arrayed in echelon on and around the Redoute du Golfe so that all could fire at the same time. Lurking in the surrounding trenches were fearsome new weapons: flamethrowers. Time after time, the men of the 313th Regiment attacked across the open gulf; those who weren't shot immediately were immolated by burning oil spewing 25 yards from the German lines. "The slaughter," as Colonel Barber later put it, "was indescribable."

The situation on the right side of the sector was no less frightful. North of Malancourt, the soldiers of the 314th Regiment entered a valley that progressively narrowed as it approached the ridge across the sector. Patrols were sent out, and one led by Captain Arthur Joel moved briskly to clear a knoll. "Then, as if by prearranged signal, enemy machine guns, automatics, and snipers located in trees, gullies, and bushes ahead and on the flanks opened with a hot fusillade which filled the air with snaps, cracks, and whines of flying lead," Joel later recalled. "Cut weeds, flying gravel, and the harsh cracks of the bullets were proof enough that the patrol had located the resistance—and were in a bad trap."

Around the hillsides and from the closed end of the valley, German snipers, machine gunners, and the crew of an emplaced 77mm cannon blasted the doughboys, who sprawled on the bare floor of the valley. As the hours wore on, hundreds of khaki-clad bodies dotted the broad valley, which had become a bloody killing zone.

The German defenses stalled the 79th for most of the afternoon as artillery directed from Montfaucon pummeled Americans all along the 24-mile-wide front. More important, the observatory gave the Germans time to rush reinforcements from other areas along the Western Front to strengthen their existing defensive lines in the Meuse-Argonne.

Meanwhile, the 4th Division was blazing a trail of glory through its lightly fortified sector, a drive that inspired an enthusiastic *New York Times* reporter to write: "Bullard's Troops Did It." The division's advance was little more than a "dangerous hike," in the words of Bullard's biographer, and the assault brigade reported only a single casualty during the morning. Later that day, however, Bullard's charge to glory was smothered by an influx of German reinforcements.

In keeping with Bullard's last-minute instructions to his division commanders, the 4th Division was forced to forego two opportunities to help capture Montfaucon on the initial day of battle. The first came at about 10 a.m., as a battalion under the command of Major Roy Winton drew even with the butte and

*Clockwise from top left: The heart of Montfaucon's secret observatory was a telescopic periscope similar to this one; U.S. infantrymen run for cover under German fire during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive; Americans on the roof of the observatory use ranging instruments to bombard the retreating Germans; U.S. soldiers fire an M1916 37mm cannon at an enemy position.*







discovered an unmanned trench leading right up the slope into the fortress. Winton believed that his troops could easily have captured Little Gibraltar with what he called a “grandstand play,” but in line with Bullard’s orders, he recalled his men from the trench and directed them forward.

The other opportunity arose that afternoon as the 4th’s reserve brigade under Brigadier General Ewing E. Booth neared the butte. Booth heard the sounds of heavy fighting from the 79th’s attack on Montfaucon, and he suggested to the 4th Division’s commander, Major General John L. Hines, that his veteran reserve troops could envelop Little Gibraltar to relieve the pressure on the green division. Hines doubted that Bullard would approve the maneuver, given his earlier decision, but when Hines called III Corps headquarters he got a lucky break: Bullard was touring the front, and Bjornstad was in command. After considering the maneuver for several hours, Bjornstad gave his assent. By then it

**“I’m not going to help George Cameron win any battle laurels.”**

was approaching nightfall. As Booth was preparing his men for the maneuver, the order for the envelopment was suddenly rescinded without explanation. The files of the III Corps do not contain a written order cancelling Booth’s move, as regulations required, but a chaplain later reported that Bullard had learned of the ma-

neuver on returning to headquarters. Angry, he bellowed, “I’m not going to help George Cameron win any battle laurels.”

That statement stands as Bullard’s malicious benediction on Little Gibraltar and the men of the 79th Division. Because of his refusal to follow orders and to help Americans in trouble on the battlefield, some 1,500 to 2,000 casualties were suffered in the attack by the green division, which single-handedly captured the butte near noon on September 27. The delayed capture enabled the German observatory to operate for a full 24 hours longer than planned. In the meantime, the enemy used the powerful instrument to direct artillery on the nine American divisions trying to crack the Kriemhilde Stellung, so that none of the units met their initial objectives.

Max von Gallwitz, the German general commanding the Meuse-Argonne region, used this time to bring fresh troops forward. By midnight, he was able to hoist a glass of champagne and announce to Berlin that the danger of a breakthrough had been averted. Slowed for the initial hours of the campaign, the First Army was forced into a brutal slog through the mud of the Meuse-Argonne, one that ultimately cost 26,277 American lives and the wounding of 95,786 additional doughboys. Many of these must be attributed to the debacle at Montfaucon.

A few days after the initial phase of the battle, Chief of Staff Hugh Drum examined the divisional attack orders and discovered the change demanded by Bullard. “I was greatly surprised and much disturbed at the time as I realized the

opportunity that had been lost,” he later wrote to Hines. “My investigation gave me definite knowledge as to the cause of the failure and I can assure you that I realized the predicament that you and your division were placed in by III Corps orders.”

As a result of his investigation, Drum demoted the First Army’s operations and planning chief who had failed to detect the misconstrued order. He also prepared orders for the second phase of the offensive that reflected his diagnosis of the cause of the Montfaucon debacle. Signed by Pershing, the new plan contained this key sentence: “Corps Commanders within their own corps and by mutual agreement with adjacent Corps Commanders will insure cooperative flanking maneuvers between adjacent divisions and brigades.” Although this imperative applied to all three corps commanders, it actually was intended for only one: Bullard.


Surprisingly, Drum’s discovery of Bullard’s role in the debacle did not protect Cameron. The 79th had failed to take Montfaucon on schedule, and there were suspicions that the soft-spoken Cameron had not pushed his commanders strenuously enough. He was relieved on October 12 and sent home on a slow boat to disgrace. Shortly thereafter, Bullard was promoted to lieutenant general in command of the Second Army.

The perversity of battlefield fortune is seldom clear, but the unfair destinies of the two flag officers may have been based on Bullard’s self-proclaimed toughness, his determination to drive his troops forward, and, perhaps, the fact that his promotion would protect the reputation of a regular army division, while a third-tier division of draftees would catch the blame if Cameron became the fall guy.

In all likelihood, the decision to demote Cameron was based on Pershing’s desire to cover up the Montfaucon disaster. In the years following the armistice, Pershing prepared reports that avoided the topic, provided briefing points for his friends to use to refute the army’s failures, and even obscured the facts of the assault on Little Gibraltar in his memoir. Responsibility for drafting chapters of the two-volume memoir was parceled out among staff officers, and the young Dwight D. Eisenhower was assigned the section on the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Eisenhower wrote forthrightly about the debacle, but his draft chapter in the Library of Congress shows that Pershing struck out a candid explanation of the matter and substituted language claiming that the 4th Division’s failure to support the 79th arose from a “misinterpretation of orders.”

In retirement, Pershing continued to try to conceal the debacle during his term as the chairman of the American Battlefield Monuments Commission, a powerful government organization that designed and built memorials in Europe. Pershing refused to authorize a monument to the 79th on Montfaucon, tried to eliminate a plaque citing the role of one of the division’s regiments in the battle, and sought to have the French government destroy a memorial to another regiment of the 79th that had been built on private land with funds collected from veterans and their families. Finally, Pershing hid





**"An army man must keep fit  
- reach for a Lucky  
instead of a sweet"**

*Robert Lee Bullard,*  
Lieutenant General  
Robert Lee Bullard

"General de Brann, one of Napoleon's greatest cavalry leaders, said: 'Smoke yourself and teach your men to smoke. It will comfort you and them under the greatest strain.' One hundred years after de Brann, one million Americans fighting at the front in France and smoking Lucky Strikes found it to be true. Of course, I say reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet. An army man must besides keep fit and not be overweight."

The modern common sense way—reach for a Lucky instead of a fattening sweet. Everyone is doing it—men keep healthy and fit, women retain a trim figure.

Lucky Strike, the finest tobacco, skillfully blended, then toasted to develop a flavor which is a delightful alternative for that craving for fattening sweets.

Toasting frees Lucky Strike from impurities. 20,679 physicians recognize this when they say Luckies are less irritating than other cigarettes. Athletes, who must keep fit, testify that Luckies do not harm their wind nor physical condition. That's why Luckies have always been the favorite of those men who want to keep in tip-top shape and realize the danger of overweight. That's why folks say "It's good to smoke Luckies."

A reasonable proportion of sugar in the diet is recommended, but the authorities are overwhelming that too many such are eaten by the American people. So, for moderation's sake we say—

**"REACH FOR A LUCKY  
INSTEAD OF A SWEET."**

**"It's toasted"**  
No Throat Irritation—No Cough.

© 1928, The American Tobacco Co., Manufacturer

Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet.



Top: Bullard's oversize ego nettled his old commander, Pershing, who called attention to his appearing "in all his glory" in a magazine ad for Lucky Strike cigarettes—an action that incurred the scorn of his fellow officers and brought him an admonishment from the War Department. Bottom: Bullard is made a blood brother of the Arapaho tribe of Indians in 1924.

the debacle by placing the principal memorial to AEF troops on the ruins of Little Gibraltar. The 225-foot Doric column that towers over the area scarcely acknowledges the 79th division.

Despite these efforts, the assault on Montfaucon and the cause of its failure continued to crop up during the 1920s and 1930s. In newspaper articles, books, recollections of other generals, and a lengthy investigation of the matter by Booth, the debacle surrounding Little Gibraltar threatened to rise to public attention. Some of these came close to revealing the truth.

In 1928 Thomas M. Johnson, a prominent war correspondent, posed probing questions about the first day of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in his book *Without Censor*: "Was the plan of attack, however ambitious, not utterly impossible of realization? More, did the door to such a victory stand for a brief space just a little ajar, then before we could slip through, slam in our face? Was there, in short, ever a chance of a miracle? The answer seems to be: Well possibly—if—"

Johnson concluded: "The great 'if' of the first day of our greatest battle stands out clearly ten years later as 'If we had taken Montfaucon.' That ruin-crowned height was the key to the situation. Had we got it as planned, early enough in the day, we might have reached the Kriemhilde Line before the Germans reinforced their none too strong front and were ready to defend it."

Brigadier General Hugh Drum had no doubt about what happened at Montfaucon. Speaking on the lessons of the Great War to a class of future army leaders at Fort Leavenworth shortly after the armistice, he declared, "If the III Corps had assisted V Corps, the First Army would have enjoyed a much more glorious victory in the Meuse-Argonne."

The man who precluded that "glorious victory" and a speedy end to the war was hailed as a hero when he returned from France, one of only two lieutenant generals in the American Expeditionary Forces. Protected by Pershing's cover-up, Robert Bullard spent the last years of his army service at Governor's Island, a short boat ride from the vibrant parties and celebratory dinners of New York City, events he relished while wearing his dress uniform with colorful sashes and sparkling medals from Britain, France, Belgium, and the United States.

Shortly after his retirement in 1924, Bullard became the president of the National Security League, which advocated increased spending for the military. With his booming voice, Bullard became a regular on the radio as he demanded deportation of communists, purges of internationalist professors, protection from Mexican radicals, and appropriations for an armed National Volunteer Security Corps to guard against invasion.

Bullard died in 1947. He was buried high above the Hudson River at West Point, an ocean away from the graves of thousands of doughboys he had betrayed at Montfaucon. MHQ

WILLIAM WALKER is an educator and writer. This article is based partly on his book, *Betrayal at Little Gibraltar: A German Fortress, a Treacherous American General, and the Battle to End World War I* (Scribner, 2016).







# ALEXANDER HAMILTON, SOLDIER

*War, he thought, tested a man.  
Maybe that's why he first made  
a name for himself in the military.  
By David Silbey*

*In 1791 artist Charles Willson Peale made a portrait of Alexander Hamilton to display in his museum in Philadelphia (the painting now hangs in Independence Hall). The unidentified artist of this portrait, in the collection of the New-York Historical Society, copied Peale's likeness of Hamilton but dropped his civilian clothing in favor of a military uniform.*



*"I condemn the grovelling condition of a clerk or the like....  
I wish there was a war."*—Alexander Hamilton, 1869

**H**e was, by one account, "a youth, a mere stripling, small, slender, almost delicate in frame, marching, with a cocked hat pulled down over his eyes, apparently lost in thought, with his hand resting on a cannon, and every now and then patting it, as if it were a favorite horse or a pet plaything." By another, he had reddish-brown hair, deep blue—"almost violet"—eyes, and "a good chin." He was Alexander Hamilton, an officer in the rebellious Continental Army, a young man at war.

Today, Hamilton's face is on the \$10 bill because he was a founding father, the first secretary of the treasury, and the creator of the Federalist Party. He is also, currently, the subject of an award-winning, astonishingly successful Broadway musical. But clearly there is more to Hamilton than politics and economics: In fact, he was also one of the most experienced soldiers among the founding fathers, a man who served closely with George Washington, who led a decisive charge at Yorktown, and who fought from the beginning to almost the end of the Revolutionary War. Hamilton the soldier has a claim on our attention, but his military career has, inexplicably, rather faded from view.

That day in 1776, patting his cannon, Alexander Hamilton was merely a junior officer—the commander of an artillery unit that had lost most of its guns in a disastrous retreat from New York. His fame would come later.

Alexander Hamilton's military efforts started when he was a student at King's College (now Columbia University) in New York City. Sometime in early 1775, he joined a militia company known as "The Corsicans." Its members wore short green coats and leather caps with the motto "Liberty or Death." That summer they greeted George Washington on his visit to New York.

By late 1775 the company had renamed itself "Hearts of Oak." Its 50-plus members trained and drilled every morning. Hamilton was "constant in his attendance and very ambitious of improvement," a friend later remembered, and he so impressed his superiors that they suggested he be made an officer should New York raise an army. The unit's first major military operation was the hijacking of British artillery at a battery on the southern tip of Manhattan, carried out by a group of regulars and militia on August 23, 1775. Taking fire from a British 64-gun ship of the line as well as from redcoats in a patrol boat,

Hamilton and the others managed to get away with 21 of the battery's 24 cannons. Hamilton proved cool under fire, returning alone to the battery to retrieve his musket, which a compatriot, Hercules Mulligan, had mislaid.

With general war looming, Hamilton decided to deepen his engagement with the Revolution. "I am going into the army and perhaps, ere long, may be destined to seal with my blood the sentiments defended by my pen," a "Gentleman in New York" wrote on February 18, 1776, in a letter published by Hamilton's home newspaper a month later. The "Gentleman" seems likely to have been Hamilton. In early 1776 the New York Provincial Congress had voted to raise a company of artillery and had appointed Hamilton captain. One of his first major acts was to buy buckskin breeches for all of his men. He then set about training them with "a degree of zeal and diligence," Mulligan recalled, "which soon made his Company conspicuous for their appearance and the regularity of their movements." Even as he trained them, Hamilton continued his studies, writing notes on economics, government, and classics in the margins of the company pay book.

Hamilton's early experiences as a soldier were almost all difficult. The colonials' attempt to defend New York City went badly; the British swept them off Manhattan Island with almost contemptuous ease. George Washington himself barely avoided capture. Hamilton's unit was part of the rear guard, and he narrowly escaped from a position on Harlem Heights.

After fleeing New York, Hamilton's unit, with the rest of the Continentals, began the arduous task of rebuilding in the relative safety of Pennsylvania. But Washington, who knew the army urgently needed a victory, began planning a surprise attack across the Delaware River on Christmas Day, 1776, aimed at the Hessian mercenary troops quartered at Trenton. Hamilton, serving under the command of Colonel Henry Knox, Washington's head artillerist, had the daunting task of getting artillery pieces across the river at night in freezing weather. His unit succeeded, dodging the floating ice, and the following day, Hamilton supported Major General Nathaniel Greene's attack during a raging snowstorm. The artillery fire of the Continentals was one of the main reasons for the Hessians' prompt surrender. Knox was so impressed by Hamilton's efforts that he commended the young man to Washington directly. So began a working relationship that would dominate much of the rest of Hamilton's life.

Washington, recognizing Hamilton's talent, made him an aide-de-camp on March 1, 1777. Here, Hamilton's intelligence, quick thinking, and hard work stood both men in good stead.



*Hamilton, who fought from the beginning to almost the end of the Revolutionary War, was a 22-year-old artillery officer when General George Washington tapped him to join his staff as an aide-de-camp.*





Hamilton was able to relieve Washington of an enormous amount of the organizational and staff work that went into creating, training, and running the rebellious colonies' first army. Being part of the general's staff was in many ways like being part of a family, and Hamilton referred to it that way. This was the military center of things, where the critical effort of the Revolution was being made; Washington was the only man who "could have lost the war in an afternoon," as Winston Churchill once said of Admiral John Jellicoe during the First World War. The tight-knit group around Washington knew that and understood the pressure it put on the general.

Comprehensive organization was required to supply food, ammunition, gunpowder, clothes, shelter, and more to thousands of soldiers as well as thousands of so-called camp followers, from launderers and wheelwrights to teamsters and prostitutes. When hospitals were set up to care for the wounded, the organizing officers were told to gather as many "women of the army as can be prevailed upon to serve as nurses for the sick, who will be paid the regular price." This organizational work gave Hamilton an unromantic view of the army. "You know my way of thinking about our army," he once said. "I am not apt to flatter it."

As with most everything he applied himself to, Hamilton was excellent at his job, working long hours into the night to keep the army going. He also ranged over the colonies carrying messages for Washington and scouting the terrain and enemy forces. He was present at Benedict Arnold's unmasking and chased the traitor as he fled toward British lines. On one scouting mission, the British ambushed Hamilton and shot his horse from under him. He escaped by swimming the Schuylkill River, arriving back at Washington's headquarters unharmed—shortly after a letter announcing his death had been delivered.

Hamilton knew the importance of his work, and Washington treasured his efforts. But Hamilton hoped always for more field command, believing that only in combat could he truly make a name for himself. "I explained to you candidly my feelings with respect to military reputation," he wrote to Washington, "and how much it was my object to act a conspicuous part in some enterprise that might raise my character as a soldier above mediocrity." He dreamed of, and agitated for, the battlefield. Washington refused him, recognizing that Hamilton did more good helping him run the war than as one more colonel on the front line. It was a tough judgment and one that Hamilton resented. But it proved to be the right choice.

Hamilton's perceived misfortune is history's luck, for it meant that he—a sharp, insightful, and often caustic observer—worked alongside Washington during most of the Revolution and wrote of what he saw. Hamilton spared no one in his comments. After the Battle of Monmouth in 1778, a victory that was nearly a defeat because of the mishandling of troops by Major General Charles Lee, Hamilton wrote to a friend: "The finest opportunity America ever possessed [has] been fooled away by a man, in whom she has placed a large share of the most ill-judged confidence. You will have heard enough to know that I



*In 1780 Hamilton wooed and won Elizabeth Schuyler, the daughter of Philip Schuyler, a wealthy New York patriot.*

mean General Lee. This man is either a driveler in the business of soldiership or some thing much worse." Lee's conduct, Hamilton said, was "monstrous and unpardonable."

During his time as Washington's aide, Hamilton also thought through his ideas on government and the Constitution. While holed up at Valley Forge, suffering and training along with the rest of the Continental Army, Hamilton found time to read four volumes of *Plutarch's Lives* and make notes of his observations, paying particular attention to the stories of founders and lawgivers like Romulus and Lycurgus. Surprisingly, Hamilton did not pay particular attention to Plutarch's comments on war and soldiering, but instead focused on politics. Plutarch was a popular intellectual resource at the time, read by the likes of Benjamin Franklin and John Adams. The pseudonym "Publius," used by Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison for the *Federalist Papers*, came from Plutarch. So even as Hamilton took part in building the national army of the revolutionary colonies, he was reading to understand and join in the political foundations of that same revolution. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that of all the founding fathers, Hamilton best understood the full breadth of the Revolution—from war to politics to organization.

Most of Hamilton's time and energy was devoted to helping





*As George Washington began planning his surprise attack across the Delaware River, Hamilton had the daunting task of getting artillery pieces across the river at night in freezing weather.*

Washington run the army and the war. After the initial excitement and desperation of the first years, the war settled into a grinding stalemate. If the British could never quite suppress the revolution, neither could the revolutionaries overcome the resources and power of the British Empire. By 1779 the military situation of the colonies was dire: Finances were lacking, people were disaffected after years of hardship and stress, and the European powers had grown apathetic. They were still, Hamilton thought, the last best hope of the American revolutionaries. "The idea of Peace fascinates The Continent and has plunged it into a lethargy from which nothing but destruction will rouse it," he wrote. "Our affairs are in a bad way; but I hope they will end well. Europe will save us in spite of ourselves." This was a far cry from the fierce and optimistic Hamilton of three years earlier, but the hard hand of soldiering had its way of wearing down even the most vigorous.

This is not to say that Hamilton was all study and work. It was during this time that he wooed and won Elizabeth Schuyler, the daughter of Philip Schuyler, a wealthy New York patriot. Their eventual marriage was a major step for Hamilton, one that locked him solidly into elite society. He loved Eliza and wrote to her regularly and with passion. "You engross my thoughts too entirely to allow me to think of any thing else. You

not only employ my mind all day; but you intrude upon my sleep. I meet you in every dream and when I wake I cannot close my eyes again for ruminating on your sweetesses. 'Tis a pretty story indeed that I am to be thus monopolized, by a little nut-brown maid like you, and from a statesman and a soldier metamorphosed into a puny lover." His letters to her also echoed the common themes of wartime correspondence; not just the emotional side but the physical one. Hamilton spoke to Eliza of the "delicious caresses which love inspires and marriage sanctifies." He also complained, "You do not write to me often enough. I ought at least to hear from you by every post."

Nevertheless, soldiering suited Hamilton. It was adventure and action and discomfort in service of something larger. It gave him the chance to show his courage, publicly and repeatedly, even at risk of his own life. Had he not loved soldiering so much, "he would have been a better actuarial risk," as historian Richard Morris put it, "but a less colorful human being."

By 1781, however, Hamilton had had enough. The stress of the war was apparently wearing on him, as it was on Washington, and a minor encounter blew up into a much bigger argument. In April, Washington upbraided him for being late to a meeting. Hamilton raged back at the general and then went off and sulked.





*In 1781, after Hamilton led his elite battalion of Continental soldiers in assaulting Redoubt No. 10, the British stronghold protecting Yorktown, Virginia, he was hailed as a battlefield hero.*

When Washington sent Hamilton a note within the hour of the scolding, telling him that he had “great confidence” in him and wished to “heal a difference which could not have happened but in a moment of passion,” Hamilton not only rejected the proffered hand but also sent an extended response—in five parts. It was something of a childish tantrum, and Hamilton was still a young man. He resigned as Washington’s aide-de-camp and went home to his “nut-brown maid.”

Hamilton found a house for himself and Eliza across the Hudson River from Washington’s headquarters, and from there he badgered the general for a field command. In July 1781, after much lobbying, Washington gave Hamilton—who still held his officer’s commission—the command of a battalion of light infantry. It was an elite unit, “accustomed,” as one observer put it, “to difficult things.” Hamilton would lead them to Yorktown as part of Washington’s secret movement of the army to besiege Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis, who was encamped there to launch a campaign in Virginia.

The first siege line around Yorktown was finished in early October. On October 7 Hamilton led his light infantry into the

lines to assault the British redoubts. He did so with a defiant flourish, taking the opportunity to theatrically show not only his own courage but also his men’s. As one of his officers remembered: “Immediately upon our arrival the colors were planted on the parapet with the motto: *Manus Haec inimica Tyrannis* (*This Hand Hates Tyrants*). Our next maneuver was rather extraordinary. We were ordered to mount the bank and front the enemy and there by word of command go through all the ceremony of soldiering, ordering and grounding our arms.”

It was an unusual scene, with Hamilton’s soldiers standing in full view of the British, doing close-order drill. Perhaps stunned, perhaps respectful, the British did not fire on the easy target, and Hamilton’s men returned without harm to their trenches. His officer, though, was not impressed. “Although I esteem [Colonel Hamilton as] one of the first officers in the American army, [I] must beg leave in this instance to think he wantonly exposed the lives of his men.”

Hamilton’s battalion was part of the division that occupied the right of the American line, a place of honor. Washington chose it to make the critical next assault. On October 14 Hamilton led them in the storming of Redoubt No. 10, one of the



most important of the British outer works protecting Yorktown. The Continental soldiers went in that evening with muskets unloaded and bayonets fixed. Hamilton, again showing his courage, managed to be first into the redoubt, using the back of one of his men as a stepping stool. A vicious close-quarter fight with the British defenders ensued, but after a few minutes, they surrendered the redoubt to the Americans. Washington is reputed to have observed, “The work is done, and done well.”

With the capture of Redoubt No. 10, the Americans could move their siege artillery to point-blank range, making Cornwallis’s situation untenable. The British general soon capitulated in what later would be seen as perhaps the most famous surrender in American history. It spelled the end of the war, though peace was still formally years away. It was also the great climax to Hamilton’s military career. He was a battlefield hero,

honored disciple of Washington, married into a great New York family—all while still in his early 20s.

The time, Hamilton decided, was ripe for him to convert that prestige into political power, and in 1782 he was appointed as a delegate from New York to the Continental Congress.

Despite leaving the army, Hamilton remained deeply involved in it. In 1783 discontent

within the army had crested, caused by greatly delayed pay, and a spreading rumor that Congress would dissolve the army before settling the debts. The discontent rose to the level of active plotting against Congress, an extreme danger in a new nation just beginning to find its way. If Congress didn’t do something, the officers at the encampment in New York warned in a petition, “any further experiments on [our] patience may have fatal effects.”

Hamilton thought to use the situation to his political advantage. He and other politicians in Congress believed that the new national government lacked the powers it needed, but a solid bloc of others jealously guarded the powers of the states. Could the threat from the army be used to break that resistance, so as to raise money, pay the officers, and—not incidentally—accrue more powers to the central government?

Hamilton, and a few others, decided on a risky move: to leverage the discontent to get the changes they wanted in Congress. Then Hamilton reached out to Washington to ensure that matters didn’t get out of hand. Washington, whose rectitude was beyond reproach, would be the moderating influence to prevent any actual uprising. “Your Excellency should preserve the confidence of the army without losing that of the people,” Hamilton wrote. “This will enable you in case of extremity to guide the torrent, and to bring order, perhaps even good, out of confusion.” He subtly hinted that Washington, too, should

leverage the threat of the army to gain the national government the powers that Hamilton thought it needed.

Washington, who was too upright and too wise to get involved in that kind of maneuvering, acted quickly to shut down the incipient mutiny. Calling a meeting for March 15, 1783, the general confronted his officers, blistering them in a prepared speech. Afterward, he began to read a letter he had brought, when, pausing for a moment, he fumbled in his pocket and produced a pair of glasses. “I have gone gray in service of my country,” Washington said, “and now I am almost blind.” Remembering the sacrifice they and the general had shared over the years of revolution, the assembled officers were overwhelmed. Some burst into tears. And with that bit of theater, the revolt stopped. News of the preliminary articles of peace between the British and the Americans arrived several weeks later, effectively ending the war and, with it, the martial effort that had consumed so many years of Hamilton’s life.

Hamilton’s whole world had changed while he was a soldier. The fighting shaped him, and it is perhaps not too much to suggest that afterward he saw all life as war. The combative nature of his political career suggested exactly that, as did the way he died, in a duel with Aaron Burr. Burr, like Hamilton, was a veteran of the Revolution, noted for his bravery. But if they had similar experiences in war, they became bitter political rivals afterward, culminating in a disagreement over Burr’s failed bid to become governor of New York. The disagreement led to a duel on July 11, 1804—perhaps one last time for both to show off their bravery. The night before, Hamilton had dinner with some fellow veterans (including Burr), and he sang a soldier’s song:

*Why, soldiers, why  
Should we be melancholy, boys?  
Why, soldiers, why?  
Whose business ’tis to die!  
....  
’Tis but in vain;  
For soldiers to complain;  
Should next campaign  
Send us to Him who made us, boys,  
We’re free from pain;  
But should we remain,  
A bottle and kind landlady;  
Cures all again.*

For Hamilton, the “next campaign” was always in front of him, the next fight, the next battle, the next duel. That was how he lived, as soldier and politician, and that was how he died, killed, ironically, by a man who understood better than most the military experience they had shared. **MHQ**

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## Alexander Hamilton’s whole world had changed while he was a soldier.



# THE DAY WASHINGTON WOKE UP

*In the nation's capital, news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was greeted at first with disbelief—and then with white-hot anger.*

*By James Lacey*

*A pensive crowd gathers around the White House the night after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.*







**T**he first wave of Japanese planes swept over Pearl Harbor at 7:48 a.m. A second wave filled the skies over Hawaii little more than an hour later. Then, their mission complete, the six Japanese aircraft carriers that had brought them across the northern Pacific turned for home. The two waves of attacking aircraft had left a shattered U.S. Pacific Fleet and 3,500 Americans dead or wounded. Eighteen ships were sunk, severely damaged, or run aground, including what many in 1941 considered the backbone of American Pacific power: five of the eight battleships in port at Pearl Harbor. But while the Japanese attack appeared to be a major tactical victory, it was, from a strategic standpoint, an epic mistake, as it brought a fully committed United States into World War II. Americans had been, at best, lukewarm toward the prospect of entering the war. But as December 7, 1941, ended, most surely sympathized with Admiral William F. Halsey, who on arriving at Pearl Harbor aboard the carrier USS *Enterprise*, said, “Before we’re through with them, the Japanese language will be spoken only in hell.”

Though it was not apparent in the immediate aftermath, the attack soon proved a tactical failure as well. In a pattern that would recur throughout the war, the Japanese, after conceiving and executing a bold strike, typically shied away from the audacious coup de grâce. In this case, with his ships running short of fuel, bothered by the losses suffered by his second wave of attackers, and fearing a counterstrike, Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, the Japanese commander, decided against a third wave and turned for home. This fateful decision left the repair dockyards and fuel storage depots at Pearl Harbor untouched. If they had been

## An hour after the initial attacks, the president was still without details.

lost, the U.S. Pacific Fleet would most likely have had to retreat to ports on the West Coast. In fact, Admiral Chester Nimitz, the man who would soon command the Pacific Fleet, estimated that the loss of these crucial repair and resupply assets would have lengthened the war by at least a year. Just as crucial, when the Japanese struck, the fleet’s three aircraft carriers in the Pacific were all at sea. As a result, the true backbone of American naval power survived to fight another day.

In the nation’s capital, where it was already Sunday afternoon, word of the attack quickly began spreading among senior government officials and military officers. The news was greeted with disbelief, which soon turned to consternation and then to white-hot anger. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had just finished having lunch with Harry Hopkins, his chief aide and ad-

viser, when Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox called to say that a radio message was reporting that Pearl Harbor was under attack. Hopkins told FDR that he didn’t believe the report. Roosevelt, after a moment’s reflection, told Hopkins that he thought the report was probably correct, saying it was just the kind of thing the Japanese would do, talking about peace in the Pacific at the very time they were plotting war.

Roosevelt then called Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who was about to meet with Japanese diplomats. He ordered Hull not to let on that he knew of the attack and to remain cool and formal with them. Hopkins later reported that Hull, ignoring FDR’s instructions, lost his temper during the meeting, using some “rich Tennessee mountain language.” Hull denied this and maintained that after calling the Japanese liars, he dismissed them with a mere hand motion and a nod toward the door. “No ‘cussing out,’” he later wrote, “could have made it any stronger.”

By 2:30 p.m.—an hour after the initial attacks—the president was still without details, though Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Harold Rainsford Stark had called to inform him that losses were severe. Roosevelt, growing increasingly frustrated, ordered his key advisers—Hull, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, Knox, Stark, and Army Chief of Staff George Marshall—to come to the White House. By 3 p.m. they began to arrive in FDR’s office.

Throughout the meeting Roosevelt personally handled many phone calls from harried officers trying to forward the latest updates, but the meeting was calm and focused on the big picture. The question of whether the United States was now in the war was never raised. Rather, the discussion revolved around how to win it. Everyone agreed it would be a long war. Rather remarkably, even though it was Japan that had attacked the United States, everyone at the meeting also agreed that Germany remained the primary enemy.

Many have wondered about the meeting’s almost surreal calmness. Some have gone so far as to cite it as evidence that Roosevelt and probably others in the room had advance knowledge of the Japanese strike at Pearl Harbor. In truth, the calmness reflected the fact that everyone in the room had known for a long time that the United States would eventually enter the war, and they were awed by the task they could clearly see ahead of them.

In the midst of the meeting FDR accepted a phone call from England. Prime Minister Winston Churchill had been dining with several guests, including U.S. Ambassador John Winant and W. Averell Harriman, FDR’s special envoy to Europe. According to Harriman, Churchill seemed listless and depressed all through dinner, spending much of their time together with his head in his hands and not speaking or apparently listening. At 9 o’clock a radio was brought in so that Churchill could listen to BBC news. Its first report—on the fighting around Tobruk, Libya—did nothing to lift Churchill’s spirits. But what followed made everyone sit up. The BBC reported that Pearl





*Top: Minutes after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a massive cloud of black smoke rises from the USS Arizona. Bottom: Japanese diplomats smile as they leave a brief meeting with Secretary of State Cordell Hull on the afternoon of December 7.*



Harbor had been attacked, but the reception was so staticky that it wasn't clear exactly what the announcer had said. Harri-man claimed that he had definitely heard the words Pearl Har-bor. But Churchill's naval aide, Tommy Thompson, thought he had heard Pearl River (in China). As the two men argued, Churchill's butler came back into the room and confirmed that the BBC announcer had mentioned Pearl Harbor.

Churchill, jumping from his seat, exclaimed that he would declare war on Japan within the hour. But Winant advised Chur-

**Now, Churchill thought, the United States was "up to the neck and in it to the death."**

chill to get official confirma-tion from his own military before doing anything rash and irrevocable. Churchill paused just long enough to take a call from his own Ad-miralty confirming the attack. Two minutes later he was on the telephone with Roosevelt.

"Mr. President, what's this about Japan?"

"They have attacked us at Pearl Harbor," Roosevelt re-

plied. "We are all in the same boat now."

Churchill soon signed off. He went to bed pondering the fact that "the United States was in the war, up to the neck and in it to the death."

Roosevelt, turning back to his meeting, issued a series of immediate instructions before releasing most of the attendees. He then called in Grace Tully, his secretary, and dictated the first draft of a message to Congress. Hopkins then advised FDR to hold two conferences before calling it a day: one with the cabinet and the other with select members of Congress.

Across the country, Americans were learning of the attack at approximately the same time as Churchill, most of them from radio reports. In that twinkling moment a seemingly distant conflict changed from Britain's war to "our war." At the White House, Ruthjane Rumelt, an aide to press secretary Stephen T. Early, was handing out snippets of news to reporters. At Wash-ington's Griffith Stadium the Redskins beat the Philadelphia Eagles, 20-14, in the last game of the season, despite loud-speakers continually interrupting with orders for various ad-mirals and generals to report to their offices immediately. The Redskins management refused to make an official announce-ment of the attack. One woman, driven frantic at home by the calls from her husband's newspaper office, sent the following telegram to the stadium: DELIVER TO SECTION P, TOP ROW, SEAT

27, OPPOSITE 25-YARD LINE, EAST SIDE GRIFFITH STADIUM. WAR WITH JAPAN: GET TO OFFICE.

By early evening thousands of Washingtonians had con-verged for a silent vigil at the White House. There they saw members of FDR's Cabinet and then the barons of Capitol Hill arriving to meet with the president. At 8:30 p.m. the full Cabinet sat silent, waiting for Roosevelt to open the meeting. FDR had not spoken to anyone entering the office. "He was very serious," Labor Secretary Frances Perkins later recalled. "His face and lips were pulled down, looking quite grey." According to Perkins, Roosevelt could hardly bring himself to describe the devastation. Twice he turned to Knox and barked, "Find out, for God's sake, why the ships were tied up in rows." FDR finally began to brief the members of his Cabinet on the extent of destruction relayed in the early reports from Pearl Harbor. He then read them the message he intended to deliver to Congress the next day. The only dissenting note came from Hull, who wanted him to detail the history of the American-Japanese relationship. Roosevelt re-fused. He wanted his message to be short, crisp, and to the point.

At about 10 p.m. the congressional leaders who had been assembling in the hallway joined the meeting. Roosevelt briefed them as to what he knew. He concluded by telling them that most of the U.S. planes at Pearl Harbor had been parked wingtip to wingtip. "They caught our planes on the ground, by God, on the ground," he said as he pounded the table. Accord-ing to Stimson, the Capitol Hill lawmakers "sat in dead silence, and even after the recital was over they had very few words." Finally, Democratic Senator Tom Connally of Texas, his face purple, pounded the table, too, and shouted what they were all thinking: "How did it happen that our warships were caught like tame ducks in Pearl Harbor? How did they catch us with our pants down? Where were our patrols?"

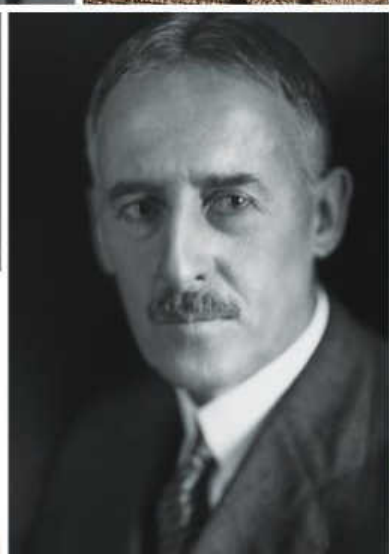
"I don't know, Tom, I just don't know," Roosevelt replied. De-spite their pleas, Roosevelt refused to tell them what he was go-ing to say the next day, even whether he was going to ask for a declaration of war. (They all assumed that he would.) The meet-ing ended when Roosevelt was told that Congress would be ready to welcome him on Capitol Hill at 1:30 the next afternoon.

With the meetings concluded, Roosevelt and Hopkins talked and looked at new messages from Hawaii until a little after mid-night, when FDR took his last meeting of the day. Journalist Ed-ward R. Murrow and his wife had been invited to the White House as the Roosevelts' dinner guest, an occasion for which Eleanor had even gone to the trouble of personally preparing her specialty meal—scrambled eggs and sausage. Despite all that was going on, Eleanor, eager to meet Murrow, insisted that the din-

*Clockwise, from top: Democratic Senator Tom Connally of Texas, photographed through a White House window on the day of the Pearl Harbor attack; Admiral William F. Halsey; President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the declaration of war against Japan; Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson; Admiral Ernest J. King; Admiral Harold Rainsford Stark, chief of naval operations; General George C. Marshall; and, at center, Harry Hopkins, FDR's friend and closest adviser.*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: THOMAS D. MCARDY/THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES; BOB LEAVITT/THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES; BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES; BACHACH/GETTY IMAGES; NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND; LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; DAVID E. SCHERMAN/THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES; GEORGE SKADDING/THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES







ner go forward, regardless of whether the president could attend. During the dinner White House usher Harold Crim asked Murrow to remain for a late-night meeting with the president. While Murrow never reported on his meeting with FDR, his wife later said that he was deeply troubled by what he had heard, and he paced their hotel room, chain-smoking, all night.

As Roosevelt went to bed, most of the thousands of Americans who had gathered around the White House during the day remained there. From time to time they would start sing-

ing “God Bless America” or “America the Beautiful.”

**Hull, Stimson wrote, “is very certain the Japs are planning some devilry.”**

The next day Roosevelt rode in an open car to Capitol Hill. As he slowly and painfully made his way down the aisle, assisted by his son James, he was greeted by sustained, thunderous applause. His speech was only 25 sentences long. It began, “Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of

America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan,” and ended, “I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.”

By bringing a nation together behind a single guiding principle—revenge—Roosevelt’s words did exactly what he desired.

Before the Senate could vote on the war declaration, Republican Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan, an arch-isolationist, rose to speak. Connally, who had just introduced the joint resolution declaring war, tried to fend him off, but Vandenberg persisted. Finally Connally relented, saying, “Of course the senator has the right to speak if he insists.” A hush came over the chamber as Vandenberg’s colleagues leaned forward to hear him. “I have fought every trend which I thought would lead to a useless war,” Vandenberg said, “but when war comes to us—and particularly when it comes like a thug in the night—I stand with my commander in chief for the swiftest and most invincible reply of which our total strength may be capable.”

The resolution passed the Senate, 82–0, and the House of Representatives, 388–1. The lone no vote in the House came from Republican Representative Jeanette Rankin of Montana, a dedicated pacifist who had also voted against going to war with Germany in 1917. After casting her vote, Rankin ran off to an anteroom, where she sat in a phone booth crying until police arrived to escort her home. The escort was considered necessary for her safety.

Historians writing about Pearl Harbor have been dogged by two questions. Did FDR know the attack was coming and hide that knowledge from military commanders in Hawaii as well as

the American people? And if he didn’t know, how could he and the nation have been so easily surprised?

While there is absolutely no evidence that FDR knew the Japanese were going to strike at Pearl Harbor, there is no doubt that he knew the Japanese were preparing to strike somewhere. Moreover, thanks to U.S. code breakers who told Roosevelt that the Japanese ambassador had been ordered to deliver his final message by 1 p.m. (notifying the War Department that Japan was breaking off diplomatic relations with the United States), he also knew the time of the attack. As a result of this intelligence, a series of warnings had been issued to American commanders in the Pacific in the days leading up to the Japanese attack, but none of them mentioned Pearl Harbor as a possible target.

In fact, at 10:30 on the morning of the attack, Stimson had brought Hull and Knox together in the Munitions Building for a meeting. As he wrote in his diary: “Hull is very certain the Japs are planning some devilry, and we are all wondering where the blow will strike.” After listening to the others’ opinions, Stimson asked them to outline what they thought was going on and how the United States should react. It is clear, judging from the contemporaneous record, that neither man had any inkling that Pearl Harbor would be a target. In fact, neither of them discussed any American possession or base as a possible target. Rather, they assumed that the Japanese would attack British and Dutch targets in the Southern Pacific.

The meeting broke up at noon, as Hull had to return to the State Department for his 1 p.m. meeting with the Japanese envoys. Knox returned to the Navy Department; Stimson went home for lunch. All three men were keenly aware that war was imminent. But they remained unsure of where the first blow would land and whether it would even hit American forces.

As the three Cabinet members were meeting, Admiral Stark was in his office examining alternatives for moving ships from the quiet Pacific to the heating-up conflict in the Atlantic. Obviously this was not something he would have done had he any notion that Pearl Harbor was about to come under attack.

As for Marshall, he had been on his regular Sunday-morning horseback ride in Virginia. Only after returning did he learn that the full text of Japan’s latest diplomatic cable was waiting for him at his office. When Marshall arrived there, his staff failed to direct him to the last and most important section of the cable—where the time by which the document must be delivered was specified. Rather, they waited until Marshall laboriously read through all 14 parts of the message. When he got to the end, he asked a staff officer, “What is the significance of a one o’clock delivery time?” The man explained that he and the rest of the staff thought it was linked to a Japanese attack somewhere in the Pacific. Marshall quickly composed a message to army commands in the Pacific alerting them to the 1 o’clock deadline and ordering them to “be on the alert accordingly.” He then called Admiral Stark and asked if he wanted the navy’s Pacific commands alerted as well. Stark told him that he considered the November 27 war warning sufficient but called back moments





*Top: A crowd gathers around a radio in front of the U.S. Capitol to hear President Franklin D. Roosevelt ask Congress for a declaration of war against Japan. Above: People pause in New York's Times Square to listen raptly to FDR's speech.*

later to ask Marshall to add the navy to the recipient list. He even offered to let Marshall use the navy's communications systems; Marshall declined. That was a mistake. Unknown to Marshall, the army signal system to Hawaii was broken, forcing the signal staff to use a commercial telegraph company to send the message. Given a low priority by communications personnel unaware of its urgency, Marshall's warning was finally heading to Lieutenant General Walter C. Short's residence in Honolulu just as the first bombs rained down on Pearl Harbor.

How could the United States have been so surprised? U.S. intelligence had been reading the Japanese diplomatic codes—dubbed “Magic”—since September 1940 and knew an ultimatum was on its way even before Japanese diplomats were aware of it. Moreover, the U.S. Navy was tracking what it assumed was a Japanese invasion force heading toward the southern Pacific. But what they didn't see, because they weren't looking, was the Japanese strike fleet heading toward Pearl Harbor. The simplest, and likely the most accurate, explanation for this failure is institutional racism, which saw all Asians as mentally and even physically inferior. For everyone knew that Pearl Harbor was vulnerable.

Admiral Ernest J. King, soon to replace Stark as chief of naval operations, had proved as much in 1936, when in war games he had launched a mock carrier strike on Pearl Harbor, which was assessed to have caused severe damage. If a war game was not sufficient evidence of vulnerability, the navy had only to look to the Battle of Taranto, where on November 11 and 12, 1940, the British had launched a carrier strike on Italy's main naval base, using obsolescent biplanes, that knocked out fully half of Italy's capital ships. Despite the British success in attacking a strongly defended harbor, no one in the U.S. military believed that Japan was capable of replicating such a daring and precise assault. Such blissful underestimation of the foe was behind the refusal of Pearl Harbor's naval commander, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, to take the elementary step of having torpedo nets placed in the harbor, as they might impede the fleet from conducting a rapid sortie.

In the final analysis, FDR, the members of his Cabinet, and senior military leaders all suffered from a failure of imagination. The staff all knew that the Japanese were planning an attack. What they never expected was that the Japanese were capable of striking Pearl Harbor. It was a serious miscalculation that cost the Pacific Fleet dearly. Still, as grievous as the damage was, it was not devastating. The carriers had survived, and a great wartime battle fleet was already more than halfway completed in the many shipyards along the Pacific, Atlantic, and Gulf coasts.

A terrible lesson had been learned. America would never again underestimate the Japanese. When, in 1944, the army and marines began their final island-hopping blitzkrieg across the Pacific, they were escorted by the most powerful naval armada in the history of the world. No one was taking any chances on further Japanese surprises. *MHQ*

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# SHOWDOWN IN THE ALEUTIANS

*A real-life World War II story from the  
master of hard-boiled detective fiction  
By Dashiell Hammett*

*American soldiers in a gun emplacement cover their ears  
after firing shells from a 105mm howitzer at Japanese  
troops positioned in the mountains of Attu in Alaska's  
Aleutian Islands in 1943.*







## THE ALEUTIANS

*Dashiell Hammett was nearly 50 when he landed in the Aleutian Islands in the late summer of 1943. Already famous as a writer—The Maltese Falcon and The Thin Man, blockbusters both in print and on the big screen, had established him as the dean of the school of hard-boiled detective fiction—Hammett was financially well off, too, mostly. But now Hammett, a disabled World War I veteran (he'd contracted tuberculosis while serving in the Motor Ambulance Corps), had decided to do his part in the fight against Nazi Germany and fascism. In the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor he'd tried to enlist in the U.S. Army but was rejected as too old. As the war wore on and the rules were eased, though, he finally made it into the army, into Signal Corps training, and, eventually, into the remote Aleutian outposts he would come to love.*

*Sam, as he was called by his fellow enlisted men, would further distinguish himself as the founder, publisher, and editor of The Adakian, which many have called the best military service newspaper produced during World War II. He also wrote training manuals, gave lectures and radio broadcasts on the progress of the war, and delivered evening lectures on current events. But his first assignment was to produce a 24-page illustrated booklet, The Battle of the Aleutians, finished in October 1943, whose purpose was to boost morale among the 50,000 troops stationed there. This article is adapted from that booklet.*

*Ironically, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, alarmed by rumors that a known Communist Party sympathizer had somehow made his way into the U.S. military, tried to get the U.S. Army's General Staff to track Hammett down. But Hoover, for better or worse, never got his man.*

*Hammett left the military in August 1945, just before the war officially ended. He would be dogged by ill health until lung cancer killed him in 1961, at age 66.*

*Hammett, who once said that enlisting in the army in World War II was "the happiest day in my life," was buried with full military honors in Section 12 of Arlington National Cemetery.*

**O**n August 30, 1942, U.S. forces landed on Adak. The first landing boat hit the beach at daylight, 7 o'clock in the morning. It was quiet. The men had embarked prepared for almost any kind of trouble, but, 12 hours before they landed, news had come that there were no Japanese on the island. They had won their race. They had gotten there first.

And then trouble came, a williwaw, the sudden wild wind of the Aleutians. Nobody knows how hard the wind can blow along these islands where the Bering meets the Pacific. Later there was a gauge to measure the wind on Adak, but it only measured up to 110 miles an hour, and that was not always enough. The wind sometimes blew it over the top.

That first morning the wind stopped landing operations with only a portion of our force ashore and, by noon, had piled many

of the landing boats on the beach. The men ashore had no tents, no shelters of any kind. They dug holes in the ground and crawled into them for protection against wind and rain and cold.

When the wind had quieted enough to let the others come ashore, they too dug holes and lived like that while the cold, wet, and backbreaking work of unloading ships by means of small boats went on.

And they did what they had come to do. They built an airfield. They built an airfield in 12 days. Engineers, infantrymen, artillerymen alike, they drained and leveled a tidewater flat and a creek bed, and by September 12 planes were taking off. On September 14 Adak bombers scored hits on three large cargo vessels at Kiska, sank two mine-sweepers, and strafed three midget submarines and a four-motored flying boat. Hundreds of miles had been lopped off our roundtrip distance to Kiska and Attu and back—and to Paramushiru, the northern Japanese stronghold.

On September 20, an army task force occupied the island of Atka, 60 miles east of Adak. There, too, airfields, docks, and military facilities were constructed. Atka became another link in our chain of Aleutian bases.

The Japanese retaliated with token bombings of Adak on October 2 and 3. The men on the island called the enemy flier Good Time Charlie because he came over around 3 o'clock in the morning. Good Time Charlie did not worry them very much. They had built their airfield. Their job was now to maintain and protect it. They built docks and roads, and they moved from their holes to tents, and then into Quonsets and Pacific huts. They had more fuel now—and could cook food instead of living on C rations.

We had run our race for an island and won.

Our airfield on Adak was a little more than 200 miles from the Japanese on Kiska and nearly twice that distance from Attu. Planes left Adak to strike at the Japanese every day that the weather let them. But there was another island on which planes could be based only 70 miles from Kiska. This was Amchitka, one of the flattest of the Aleutians.

Scouting parties on Amchitka hid while Japanese reconnaissance planes circled overhead. In December our scouts reported that Japanese patrols had dug test holes on Amchitka, hunting for suitable airfield sites. Another race for an Aleutian island was on.

On January 12, 1943, U.S. forces landed on Amchitka. They came ashore as they had come ashore at Adak—wading through icy surf. They came ashore from jam-packed freighters and transports and barges that had sailed and been towed through long days and nights of fog and storm.

Again bad weather had no favorites. It kept the Japanese planes home at their bases and played havoc with our shipping. Not until 12 days later were our Amchitka forces attacked from the air. And they made good use of those 12 days.

It was the story of Adak over again. Men toiling without rest





*A supply truck manned by American sailors drives off the back of a landing craft tank docked on the Attu shoreline in 1943.*

in winter rain and wind, in the bitter cold surf of Constantine Harbor, through black Aleutian mud, over hard rock and heavy tundra. Unloading, carrying ashore, storing, protecting arms, ammunition, food, equipment, fuel even to the smallest kindling. No one who has not seen it can have any conception of

**And these men did what they had come to do. They built their airfield.**

the tremendous quantity of supplies and equipment that must be moved from ship to shore. And, once ashore, all this vast mountain of material had to be transported by hand. Vehicles were of little use in those all-important early days of the occupation.

And these men did what they had come to do. They built their airfield. From January 24 on, Japanese planes

scouted and bombed Amchitka whenever weather permitted. But by February 18 a new fighter strip was ready for Warhawks and Lightnings. The Japanese bombers came over no more.

The occupation of Amchitka, like the occupation of Adak five months before, let us still further increase the pressure on the Japanese at Attu and Kiska. Within two months our reconnaissance and bombing missions had forced the enemy to give up attempts to bring reinforcements and supplies to Attu and Kiska by surface vessels.

Aerial photographs taken on January 19 had revealed the beginnings of an enemy fighter strip south of Salmon Lagoon, on Kiska. This strip—and another strip begun at about the same time as Attu—were the targets for constant attacks throughout the spring. As a result of these constant attacks, and of our success in keeping supply ships from bringing adequate machinery to the islands, the Japanese failed to finish either airfield.

With the occupation of Amchitka, the stage was set for a new phase in the Aleutian campaign. We had been racing the Japanese for island bases. Now we were next door to the Japanese-held base of Kiska. Attu, the only other base the Japanese held in the Aleutians, was nearly 200 miles farther away. Either island would have to be taken by force. And Kiska was the more important of the two, as well as the more accessible.

It was decided to bypass Kiska and take Attu first. For this there were two reasons: (1) The Japanese were expecting us to attack Kiska, and (2) with Attu in our hands we would have the Japs on Kiska—not surrounded, for with the weather as violent as it is in the Aleutians no island can ever be kept surrounded—but pinched between our bases.

The Japanese had occupied Attu in June 1942. In mid-September a Jap infantry battalion moved from Attu to Kiska. Our air reconnaissance first reported this movement on September 22. It is probable that the Japanese either evacuated Attu completely or withdrew most of their forces at that time.

In late October a reoccupation force from Japan reached Attu. Beach defenses were immediately constructed in both arms of Holtz Bay, and the Japanese garrison was reinforced from time to time until March 1943. By then there were about 2,200 men in the garrison.

The most important mission of the Japanese garrison on Attu—aside from defense of the island—was the construction of an airfield at the East Arm of Holtz Bay. Thanks to Adak and Amchitka, our mastery of the air kept them from accomplishing that mission.

Attu is about 40 miles long, 20 wide, and its highest peak rises more than 3,000 feet above the sea.

On May 11, 1943, after being delayed four days by bad weather, U.S. forces landed on the island.

From the very beginning the Japanese were on the defensive and made the most of the terrain for that purpose.

The occupied portion of Attu was divided by the Japanese into two main defense sectors: the Holtz Bay sector, and the Chichagof sector, which included Massacre Bay and Sarana Bay.

Although they must have expected a landing at Massacre Bay, the Japanese had not organized beach defenses in that area. Instead they chose to defend the high ground at the northern end of Massacre Bay, 3,000 or 4,000 yards inland, and the valleys leading to Chichagof Harbor.

The beaches of Chichagof Harbor and Holtz Bay were strongly defended against frontal attacks, but no protection was given to the area immediately north of Holtz Bay, and some of our forces landed there unopposed. In general, the enemy used the same tactics he had used in the Southwest Pacific. Though he lacked foliage and tropical growth, he prepared excellent camouflaged positions, and dotted the terrain with fox holes, two-man caves, and light machine gun and mortar positions.

Enemy rifle fire was generally inaccurate, and the sniping, though annoying, was never a serious hindrance to our progress. But, in the early stages of the fight, small groups of Japanese with light machine guns and the so-called knee mortar often had our troops hugging the ground, unable to advance.

The constant use of “small group” tactics forced us to search thoroughly every square foot of area to our rear as well as on our flanks. Japanese would lie motionless for hours at a time. Their rifles and machine guns gave out no flash, no smoke, to betray their positions.

The enemy on repeated occasions counterattacked against superior numbers in daylight, though it has been said that the Japanese attack only at night.

The much-discussed fanatically reckless fighting spirit was shown by the small number of prisoners we took, by their killing their wounded rather than letting them fall into our hands, and by such desperate kill-or-be-killed assaults as that of May 29, in which every Japanese who could walk took part, some armed only with bayonets tied on the end of sticks.

A last attempt to aid the Attu garrison by a formation of 16 Japanese bombers was blocked by Eleventh Air Force fighters.





*A 40mm gun and crew aboard the USS Casco, a small seaplane tender, off Attu in July 1943. Below: An aerial reconnaissance photograph of the Japanese airfield under construction on Attu (left); Corporal Dashiell Hammett.*



Only four of the enemy planes escaped destruction. They fled in the fog.

The annihilation of the Japanese at Chichagof Harbor was completed on Memorial Day, May 30, 1943.

On July 10 U.S. planes took off from Attu—to bomb Paramushiru.

With Attu in our hands the Japanese occupation of Kiska was doomed. And the Japanese knew it as well as we did.

Kiska was first occupied on June 5, 1942, by a special landing party of 500 Japanese marines. At the same time some 20 Japanese ships, including four transports, moved into Kiska Harbor.

In September the Kiska garrison was reinforced by about 2,000 additional personnel, and, at about this time, was placed under the command of Rear Admiral Monzo Akiyama. Shortly afterward an infantry battalion was moved to Kiska from Attu. In December 1942 and January 1943 additional antiaircraft units, engineers, and infantry arrived at Kiska, and in the

spring of 1943 the tactical command was transferred from the Imperial Navy to Lieutenant General Motoya Higuchi, commanding general of the Northern Army.

Japanese fighter and reconnaissance plane replenishments, boxed and crated, came to the island on the decks of small plane transports carrying seven to nine planes each trip. By air com-

bat and by strafing planes on the ground, the Eleventh Air Force whittled the Japanese air strength down as fast as new planes could be brought in. At no time during the enemy occupation of Kiska did he have more than 14 effective planes on hand.

March and April 1943 saw increasingly severe bombing attacks on Kiska. On March 26 a light U.S. naval force engaged a heavier enemy fleet and foiled an effort to run supply ships into Attu or Kiska. This was probably the last known Japanese attempt to supply either island by large surface vessels. Enemy submarine activity in the waters around Kiska increased in late spring and early summer but was unsuccessful. A number of subs were sunk by our naval forces.

Bad weather and our concentration on Attu gave Kiska some rest in May. But after Attu fell we went to work on Kiska in earnest. Throughout June and July the intensity of our attack increased almost daily.

During the first six months of 1943 the Eleventh Air Force dropped more than 3,000,000 pounds of bombs on the enemy installations. After the fall of Attu this deadly power was concentrated on Kiska. Nearly 900,000 pounds of bombs were dropped on that island in July.

Demolition, general purpose, incendiary, and parachute

fragmentation bombs were released from high level, medium level, deck level, and dive approaches. Fuzes ranged from instantaneous to long delay. Liberators, Mitchells, Dauntless dive-bombers, Lightnings, and Warhawks swooped over Kiska in coordinated and determined attacks. Kiska Island was to be made untenable.

The first indication of a possible Japanese attempt at evacuation came on July 10, when a navy PBY spotted four small cargo vessels between Kiska and Japan. Mitchells and Liberators sank one, left one sinking, and damaged the other two.

In aerial photographs taken over Kiska from June 22 on, other evidence of what might be preparations for evacuation were seen. This evidence included the destruction of some barracks, the removal of some guns, and unusual activity among barges in Kiska Harbor. On July 28 the Kiska radio went off the air. Later aerial photos showed trucks parked in the same position day after day. Naval shelling of Japanese installations drew no answering fire, and Eleventh Air Force units had only small-arms fire to contend with.

Presumably the main body of Japanese troops had finished its evacuation of Kiska during the night of July 28, going by barge to waiting surface ships or submarines.

At daylight of August 15, 1943, U.S. and Canadian troops occupied Kiska. Even those enemy detachments responsible for the small-arms fire reported by planes over the island after July 28 had cleared out.

Major General Eugene M. Landrum commanded the ground force that occupied Adak. Later, he led the American troops to victory on Attu.

The Aleutian Islands are the tops of submerged mountain peaks—a 1,000-mile westward extension of the high volcanic ranges of the Alaska Peninsula. Some of these submerged peaks rise more than four miles from the ocean bed; there are few places where the ocean is deeper than here. Once upon a time, long ago, this now sunken range may have been a land-bridge from Asia to America over which America's prehistoric inhabitants slowly made their way east to this new land.

Now we have made of these islands a road over which we may swiftly make our way to Asia.

The Eleventh Air Force—with many strong bases on the Aleutians—is now the northern arm of a gigantic many-armed air force pincer closing on the Japanese Empire: the Seventh Air Force in the Hawaiian Islands, the Thirteenth Air Force in the Solomon Islands, the Fifth Air Force in New Guinea, the Tenth Air Force in India, the Fourteenth Air Force in China.

Elements of the Eleventh Air Force have already struck at the strong Japanese military and naval installations on Paramushiru and Shimushu. On July 10, 1943, and again on July 18, August 11 and (only a few days before this account was written) on September 11, B-24 and B-25 planes made bombing runs, dropping about 115,000 pounds of bombs on these Japanese targets.

The story of the Aleutians in this war is not yet finished. **MHQ**

**With Attu in our hands the Japanese occupation of Kiska was doomed.**





*Top: American soldiers landing at Holtz Bay find a downed Nakajima A6M2-N floatplane fighter—a victim of Army Air Corps marksmanship. Bottom: An advance reconnaissance patrol on Kiska Island cautiously approaches the mouth of a 200-foot tunnel dug by the Japanese.*





# PISTOL ENVY

*These ultra-rare German sidearms pay tribute to the gunmaker's craft.*

**I**s it possible to lust after a weapon? The anonymous bidder who paid \$1.26 million at auction last year for an 1886 Winchester rifle—setting a world record for the most expensive firearm ever sold—most certainly did. Collectors also covet unusual and one-of-a-kind pistols, like those on the pages that follow and others assembled by Hermann Hampe and Jean Varret for their *Deadly Beauties: Rare German Handguns* (Schiffer, 2016), a lavishly illustrated presentation in two volumes. From a purely functional standpoint, the sidearms showcased in the books (spanning the years 1871 through 1945) all have the capacity to inflict death or serious physical injury, but they also have varying degrees of allure as objects of art, often evoking not only the original owner's prominence, wealth, or social standing but also the craftsmanship of the maker.





### **Short-Barreled and Engraved Mauser C96**

Mauser, the preeminent German arms manufacturer of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, began producing its trademark C96, a semiautomatic pistol with a long barrel and high-velocity cartridge, in 1896. (Winston Churchill was fond of the Mauser C96 and used one at the 1898 Battle of Omdurman and during the Second Boer War.) In 1919, when the Treaty of Versailles imposed restrictions on the barrel lengths and calibers of German-made pistols, Mauser was forced to make a short-barreled C96, including this elaborately engraved model, produced in 1921.



### **Prototype Self-Loading Bergmann Pistol**

In 1892 Otto Brauswetter, a Hungarian watchmaker, was awarded a patent for a self-loading pistol of his own design. Brauswetter sold his patent rights to the Gaggenau-based Theodor Bergmann Company, which made this one-of-a-kind prototype. The pistol, constructed in steel and brass, features a custom cleaning rod held in place under the barrel.



### **DWM Luger With Folding Stock**

Over the years many unusual accessories were developed for the Parabellum—the famous toggle-locked semiautomatic pistol patented by Georg J. Luger in 1898 and introduced by the German arms manufacturer DWM in 1900. One of these curiosities was the Benke-Thiemann folding shoulder stock; its spring-loaded latch could lock the device in either the folded or the extended position. With the stock folded, the Luger could still be fired—though somewhat awkwardly.







### **Mauser C06-08 Automatic**

This very rare experimental pistol, introduced in 1906, represented Mauser's unsuccessful attempt to undermine the German War Ministry's intense interest in the Luger Parabellum pistol, which it ultimately adopted in 1908. Mauser's pistol, a derivative of its self-loading rifle, used detachable box magazines of 6, 10, or 15 rounds. Only about a hundred were made.





### **Mannlicher M1901 Pistol, Presentation Model**

In 1901 Heinrich Ehrhardt acquired the German arms manufacturer Waffenfabrik von Dreyse, which had been founded some 60 years earlier to manufacture the famous Dreyse needle gun for the Prussian army. At the time, its Mannlicher M1901 pistol was in competitive trials with the German army against the Luger and Mauser C96 pistols. This presentation pistol—skillfully hand engraved, partly gilded, and featuring a wooden grip embellished with the German imperial eagle and inlaid-ivory ornamentation—undoubtedly represented Ehrhardt's attempt to curry favor with Kaiser Wilhelm II, a swaggering militarist.



### Ortgies Semiautomatic Pistol

Heinrich Ortgies developed this elegant, hammerless pistol while working in Belgium during World War I. After the war he moved to Erfurt, Germany, where in 1919 he began manufacturing the pistol in his own factory. Ortgies died later that year, and production of his pistol passed to Deutsche Werke AG, a shipbuilding company based in Berlin. John Dillinger, the notorious gangster and bank robber, is said to have carried an Ortgies.







### Mauser M1878 Zig-Zag Revolver

Mauser's first revolver was a success from the moment it was introduced in 1878. Nicknamed the "Zig-Zag" after the shape of the grooves on its cylinder (which function as an actuating mechanism as well as a cylinder lock), it was the first German military sidearm to fire modern brass cartridges. This nickel-plated specimen was presented as a gift to John D. Hill of Carthage, Indiana, on March 6, 1880. In 1896 the Zig-Zag was replaced by the Mauser C96 semiautomatic, but many of the older single-action revolvers remained in use until after World War I.



# McNAMARA'S BOYS

*In 1966 the U.S. military desperately needed more troops in Vietnam. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara had a plan to get them.*  
*By Hamilton Gregory*











**I**n 1966, with American involvement in the Vietnam War rapidly escalating, President Lyndon B. Johnson faced a big problem: How could the U.S. military round up enough men to send to war? Johnson could have moved to revoke student deferments, but in so doing he would have heaped lots of political misery on himself and put his administration at sharp odds with powerful lawmakers, who were writing a new Selective Service statute that would continue to guarantee 2-S deferments to undergraduate college students in good standing. He could also have chosen to draw on the million or so men and women in the National Guard and Reserves. But LBJ and his advisers knew that this course of action would be just as unpopular politically.

Johnson's secretary of defense, Robert McNamara, had another idea: to dramatically widen the pool of draft-eligible Americans by lowering the standards for entry into the armed forces. There were plenty of young people out there who weren't protected by student deferments but had flunked the military's entrance exam, the Armed Forces Qualification Test. If the standards for passing the test could be lowered, McNamara argued, tens of thousands of previously "unqualified" young men and women would suddenly be available for military service.

In August 1966 McNamara went before the annual convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars to unveil his plan, promising

that it would "salvage" some 40,000 draft rejects and substandard volunteers—most of them from "poverty-encrusted backgrounds"—in the ensuing 10 months. "Currently," McNamara noted, "the military rejects 600,000 young men a year for failure to meet minimum standards."

In his VFW speech at the New York Hilton Hotel, McNamara framed the plan as a compassionate rescue mission. Disadvantaged youths—many from urban slums and rural backwaters—would, he said, be lifted out of poverty and ignorance. They would be taught basic skills, including reading and arithmetic. Though the men may have failed these subjects in school, they wouldn't fail now because the military was, as he put it, "the world's greatest educator of skilled manpower." It knew how to motivate men and deploy an impressive array of pedagogical gadgetry.

McNamara had made a name for himself as one of the "Whiz Kids" who helped to rebuild Ford Motor Company after World War II. He believed that the military could raise the intelligence of those it might otherwise reject through the use of videotapes and closed-circuit TV lessons. "A low-aptitude student," he said, "can use videotapes as an aid to his formal instruction and end by becoming as proficient as a high-aptitude student."

McNamara's announcement apparently caught the Pentagon by surprise, as the plan was clearly a dramatically expanded version of a proposed three-year, \$16.4 million experiment—





*From left: Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, with White House Press Secretary George Christian at his side, talks to reporters in 1967 after telling President Lyndon B. Johnson that more U.S. troops would be needed in Vietnam; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the spiritual father of Project 100,000; McNamara goes before the annual convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to unveil the plan.*

the Special Training Enlistment Program (STEP)—that Congress had killed the previous year. Nonetheless, Project 100,000—named for its target first-fiscal-year recruitment level—was officially launched on October 1, 1966. By the end of the war, it would bring 354,000 “second-class fellows”—as President Johnson had referred to its recruits in private—into the armed forces.

In announcing Project 100,000, McNamara didn’t say anything about combat duty. He said the participants would gain valuable skills and self-confidence, which would help them get good-paying civilian jobs when they got out of the service. To hear him describe it, one would have thought the men were going off to school, not to war.

From nearly the beginning of Project 100,000, McNamara’s critics accused him of disguising its true objective: using the poor instead of the middle class for combat in Vietnam. The truth was more complex. McNamara had proposed Project 100,000 two years earlier, seeing it as a way to contribute to the Johnson administration’s War on Poverty. In fact, the idea had been kicking around Washington before McNamara arrived on the scene.

Its leading advocate was Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a sociologist who in 1976 would be elected to the U.S. Senate from New York. The best way to alleviate poverty in America, Moynihan’s

argument went, would be to draft the hundreds of thousands of young men and women being rejected annually as unfit for military service. Take these young men—mostly inner-city blacks and poor, rural whites—and put them into uniform. Instill discipline. Train them to bathe daily, salute, and take orders. Teach them a marketable skill. After a couple of years, lazy, unmotivated slackers would be transformed into hard-working, law-abiding citizens. Moreover, the new generation of military recruits could then teach their children to be solid middle-class citizens, thus breaking the generation-to-generation continuity of poverty.

Johnson and McNamara embraced Moynihan’s concept in 1964, two years before Project 100,000 was launched. Secret White House recordings captured a conversation in which Johnson said that he wished the military could be persuaded to take the “second-class fellow,” adding: “We’ll...teach him to get up at daylight and work till dark and shave and bathe....And when we turn him out, we’ll have him prepared at least to drive a truck or bakery wagon or stand at a gate [as a guard].”

McNamara told LBJ that uniformed officers in the Defense Department were opposed to drafting such men because “they don’t want to be in the business of dealing with ‘morons.’ They call these ‘moron camps’ now, inside the [Pentagon]. The army doesn’t want to be thought of as a rehabilitation agency.”



*Infantry trainees at Fort Polk, Louisiana, in 1966 wait for a mock ambush. More soldiers were shipped to Vietnam from Fort Polk than from any other American training base.*

In 1964 and 1965 Johnson and McNamara had tried repeatedly to lower the bar for military service, only to be stymied by higher-ups at the Pentagon and their allies in Congress. Democrat Richard Russell of Georgia, the powerful chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and LBJ's mentor on Capitol Hill, accused McNamara of trying to set up a "moron corps." The Department of the Army was more temperate in its criticism, saying only that it wanted to "fight with the highest caliber of men available."

By 1966, however, the top brass, desperate for manpower, had to capitulate: If Johnson and McNamara weren't willing to draft more middle-class Americans, then "second-class" servicemen would have to suffice. With bitter disappointment and grave doubts, military leaders went along with the decision of their civilian bosses, and Project 100,000 became a reality.

Military recruiters, backed by an aggressive public relations campaign (one army ad in *Hot Rod Magazine* proclaimed, "Vietnam: Hot, Wet, and Muddy—Here's the Place to Make a Man!"), had great success persuading men from poor urban neighborhoods to join Project 100,000. Glossy brochures with exotic locations and glamorous jobs portrayed the military—even with a war going at full tilt—as a good career choice. The

pressure on recruiters to sign up more "volunteers" for the program was intense. Many resorted to using "ringers" to take tests to gain a passing score for enough recruits to meet quotas.

Typically, military recruiters would get the names of low-scoring men who were now acceptable to the armed forces and visit them to steer them toward three-year hitches. The recruiters would tell them that if they waited for the draft, they would serve only two years but almost certainly end up in an infantry platoon in Vietnam. But if they signed up for three years, they would be assigned to a noncombat job. There was, however, an important catch: The military didn't have to honor any oral promise made by a recruiter. A recruiter might promise prospects a job like helicopter maintenance, but after basic training—when it was time to go to a specialized school—the military could decide that their test scores weren't high enough to qualify for helicopter maintenance. Or if they did qualify but flunked the training, they could be transferred to infantry. Thousands of three-year Project 100,000 "volunteers" ended up in infantry this way.

Project 100,000 recruits—"New Standards" men, they were called—were assigned to all major branches of the armed forces: 71 percent to the army, 10 percent to the marine corps, 10 percent to the navy, and 9 percent to the air force.





*President Lyndon B. Johnson reacts to news of heightened problems in Vietnam while hosting Defense Secretary Robert McNamara (right) at the LBJ Ranch in Stonewall, Texas.*

Most of the 354,000 men and women brought into military service through Project 100,000 went to Vietnam, and about half of those who went to Vietnam were assigned to combat units. All told, 5,478 of them died while in the military, most of them in combat. Their fatality rate was three times that of other GIs.

Project 100,000 men had to complete basic training, and, in some cases, undergo additional training. Novelist Larry Heinemann, who had served with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam, recalled in a 2005 memoir that in his basic training barracks at Fort Polk, Louisiana, he would look across the street and watch McNamara's Boys in a special training company. "These were the guys who could not hack it during regular basic training," he wrote. "It was painful to watch....Some of them could not even get the hang of so simple a thing as standing at attention, and otherwise seemed severely unsuited for military life."

"The young men of Project 100,000 couldn't read," Joseph Galloway, a war correspondent who was awarded a Bronze Star with Valor in Vietnam for carrying wounded men to safety in the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley, later recalled. "They had to be taught to tie their boots. They often failed [basic training] and were recycled over and over until they finally reached some low

standard and were declared trained and ready. They could not be taught any more demanding job than trigger-pulling, [so most of them] went straight into combat, where the learning curve is steep and deadly."

One veteran who had good reason to be dismayed by the deaths of Project 100,000 men in Vietnam was Leslie John Shellhase, who had been wounded in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II and had served as a lieutenant colonel under McNamara on a planning team at the Pentagon in the 1960s. "We resisted Project 100,000 because we knew that wars are not won by using marginal manpower as cannon fodder, but rather by risking, and sometimes losing, the flower of a nation's youth." He and other Pentagon planners tried to persuade McNamara to drop Project 100,000. When that failed, they proposed altering the program so that military commanders would be barred from sending low-apptitude men into danger zones. "We never envisioned that these men would be used in combat," he said. "Instead, we intended for them to be used in service and support areas, where their mental limitations would not cause them to be killed." Unfortunately, Shellhase and his fellow officers failed in their effort to keep Project 100,000 men off the battlefield.

Barry Romo saw a lot of combat in Vietnam as an infantry platoon leader in 1967–1968, receiving a Bronze Star for his courage on the battlefield. During his tour, he learned that his nephew Robert, just a month younger than him, had been drafted and was being trained at Fort Lewis, Washington, to be an infantryman, destined for Vietnam. Barry was alarmed because he knew that Robert had failed the army's mental test. But Project 100,000 had lowered the standards, making him eligible to serve. A host of people—his relatives, his comrades at Fort Lewis, his sergeants, his officers—wrote to the commanding general at Fort Lewis, asking that Robert not be sent into combat because, as one relative put it, “he would die.”

But the general turned down the request, and when Robert arrived in Vietnam he was sent to an infantry unit near the border of North Vietnam—one of the most dangerous combat areas. During a patrol, he was shot in the neck while trying to help a wounded friend and died.

In a speech delivered 42 years later, Barry Romo said that the family had never recovered from losing Robert. “His death,” he said, “almost destroyed us with anger and sorrow.”

Military leaders—from William Westmoreland, the commanding general in Vietnam, to lieutenants and sergeants at the platoon level—viewed McNamara's program as a disaster. Project 100,000 men were typically slow learners, so they had difficulty

absorbing training. And because many of them were incompetent in combat, they endangered not only themselves but their comrades as well.

“Project 100,000 was implemented to produce more grunts for the killing fields of Vietnam,” wrote Colonel David Hackworth, who fought in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars and became one of the most highly decorated warriors in American

history. “It took unfit recruits from the bottom of the barrel and rushed them to Vietnam. The result was human applesauce.”

McNamara's intentions to use video instruction to raise the intelligence levels of Project 100,000 may have been sincere, but few men actually received it. There was a bloody war raging, and army and marine units in Vietnam desperately needed replacements. Training centers were under great pressure to get troops to Vietnam as quickly as possible. There was no time for remedial reading and arithmetic.

Westmoreland estimated that, in fact, only about 10 percent of McNamara's Boys could be molded into real soldiers. Although some Project 100,000 men did well in the service—passing basic training and going on to productive military assignments—large numbers of them had trouble coping with the demands of military life. They were often hazed, ridiculed,

and demeaned. Ironically, McNamara, in one of his speeches extolling Project 100,000, had said, “I have directed that these men shall never be singled out or stigmatized in any manner.”

When it was time for Project 100,000 men to leave the military, many of them received a heavy blow. Slightly over half of them—180,000—were separated with discharges “under conditions other than honorable,” a stigma that made it hard to get good jobs because many employers would not hire veterans who failed to produce a certificate of honorable discharge. They were often barred from veterans' benefits such as health care, housing assistance, and employment counseling. Some of them became chronically homeless and troubled.

Although some “bad-paper” vets had been guilty of serious offenses, most had been accused of minor offenses related to the stresses of military life and combat: AWOL, missing duty, abusing alcohol or drugs, or talking back to a superior. David Addlestone, the director of the National Veterans Law Center from its founding in 1978 until his retirement in 2005, said that one of the leading reasons that the military gave for bad-paper discharges for Project 100,000 men was “unsuitability.” Little wonder: Many of the men were obviously unsuitable to be drafted in the first place.

In their 1978 book, *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation*, Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, who were senior officials on President Gerald Ford's Clemency Board, told of Gus Peters, who “came from a broken home, dropped out of school after the eighth grade, and was unemployed for most of his teenage years. His IQ was only 62... His physical condition was no better.” Drafted under Project 100,000, Peters was ridiculed by other soldiers, and he failed basic training. Unable to cope with military life, he went AWOL and was eventually given an undesirable discharge. Baskir and Strauss concluded that Peters was worse off when he left the service than when he had entered it. “He still had no skills and no useful job experience,” they wrote, “and he now was officially branded a misfit.”

There was a cruel irony in the less-than-honorable discharges. Millions of men who beat the draft through deferments and exemptions suffered nothing. In fact, they held an advantage over men who served: They got first crack at jobs and compiled seniority and experience. Even the draft dodgers who fled to Canada and Sweden got an amnesty. But not McNamara's bad-paper vets. They had no one to lobby for them.

In his starry-eyed belief that videotapes could dramatically transform slow learners, McNamara revealed the same blind faith that deluded him into thinking that he could defeat the enemy in Vietnam by using computers, statistical analyses, and advanced technology. As biographer Deborah Shapley put it, McNamara was “a naive believer in technological miracles.”

At the beginning of his program, McNamara had predicted that after returning to civilian life, Project 100,000 men would have an earning capacity “two to three times what it would have been

**The men of Project 100,000 were often hazed, ridiculed, and demeaned.**





*Caskets containing the bodies of U.S. servicemen killed in Vietnam are unloaded from an air force transport plane following its return to the United States.*

if there had been no such program.” But a follow-up study on Project 100,000 men showed that in the 1986–1987 labor market, they were “either no better off or actually worse off” than nonveterans of similar aptitude.

Many veterans of Project 100,000 were psychologically devastated by the war. John Wilson, a psychologist at Cleveland State University who spent several years studying Vietnam veterans’ emotional problems, estimated that thousands of Project 100,000 men who had served in Southeast Asia were so “severely messed up” that they couldn’t function in society—hold jobs, raise families, and cope with day-to-day living.

Historians have also rendered harsh verdicts of Project 100,000. In his 1993 book, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam*, Christian G. Appy of the University of Massachusetts wrote that while the program “was instituted with high-minded rhetoric about offering the poor an opportunity to serve,” its result “was to send many poor, terribly confused, and woefully undereducated boys to risk death in Vietnam.” Anni P. Baker, a history professor at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, has branded Project 100,000 “a disaster, benefiting neither the men nor the Armed Forces.” In 1993 Jacob Heilbrunn, then a fellow at Georgetown University, wrote in the *New Republic* that “McNamara’s experiment in social engineering had the most awful results,” including ridicule in training camps and death in Vietnam. And the late Samuel F. Yette, a professor at Howard University, said that instead of preparing impoverished young men with skills for a better life, Project 100,000 was “little more than an express vehicle to Vietnam.”

Toward the end of his life, McNamara issued a series of candid mea culpas for misjudgments about Vietnam that were made during his tenure at the Pentagon (1961 to 1968), especially his delay in acting on growing doubts that the war could be won. “I’m very sorry that in the process of accomplishing things, I’ve made errors,” McNamara told filmmaker Errol Morris for *The Fog of War*, Morris’s Oscar-winning 2003 documentary.

While he never issued a formal apology for his role in the Vietnam quagmire, McNamara, who died in July 2009 at age 93, made clear he was haunted by the blunders made under his watch that cost the lives of thousands of U.S. troops. “People don’t want to admit they made mistakes,” he explained in 2003 to a reporter for the *New York Times*. “This is true of the Catholic Church, it’s true of companies, it’s true of nongovernmental organizations, and it’s certainly true of political bodies.”

Conspicuously absent from McNamara’s apologies was Project 100,000, which officially ended on December 31, 1971. To the very end of his life, McNamara refused to acknowledge the many accounts of abuse, suffering, and death associated with Project 100,000. Selectively looking at the success stories of some Project 100,000 men who did well, he insisted that the program had been beneficial. He was resentful of the term “McNamara’s Moron Corps,” which he had heard for years.

Nonetheless, Project 100,000 and other Vietnam-era failures wrecked McNamara’s reputation. “At first admired for his intelligence and analytical prowess, he later became one of the most hated men in America by the officers and enlisted personnel he had led,” Thomas Sticht wrote of McNamara in the 2012 anthology, *Scraping the Barrel: The Military Use of Substandard Manpower, 1860–1960*. One officer even confronted McNamara in public. As McNamara touted the virtues of Project 100,000 at a Washington conference, an army psychologist who was treating psychologically afflicted Vietnam veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center stood up and spoke out. Although he was a “mere” captain, Dr. Walter P. Knake told McNamara, “What you are doing is wrong!”

Regardless of culpability, the results of the project—not its intentions—doomed McNamara’s Boys, who were, on average, just 20 years old and disproportionately black. “They never got the training that military service seemed to promise,” Baskir and Strauss concluded. “They were the last to be promoted and the first to be sent to Vietnam. They saw more than their share of combat and got more than their share of bad discharges. Many ended up with greater difficulties in civilian society than when they started. For them, it was an ironic and tragic conclusion to a program that promised special treatment and a brighter future, and denied both.” MHQ

HAMILTON GREGORY, who served in Army Intelligence in Vietnam in 1968–1969, is the author of *McNamara’s Folly: The Use of Low-IQ Troops in the Vietnam War*.

# CHURCHILL'S IMPROBABLE ARMY

*In 1914 Winston Churchill created the Royal Naval Division, whose men would fight as infantry in some of the fiercest battles of World War I.  
By John A. Haymond*

*Winston Churchill was Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. He immediately set about creating a hybrid military unit of Royal Marines and sailors—an idea that was highly controversial from the get-go.*







# ROYAL NAVAL DIVISION

## HANDYMEN TO FIGHT ON LAND & SEA

### 1<sup>ST</sup> BRIGADE

**BATTALIONS:**  
**"BENBOW"**  
**"COLLINGWOOD"**  
**"HAWKE"**  
**"DRAKE"**

### RECRUITS WANTED

### 2<sup>ND</sup> BRIGADE

**BATTALIONS:**  
**"HOWE"**  
**"HOOD"**  
**"ANSON"**  
**"NELSON"**

### RECRUITS WANTED

**VACANCIES FOR RECRUITS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 38**  
 CHEST MEASUREMENT, 34". HEIGHT, 5'11.31".  
**PAYMENT FROM 1/3 PER DAY. FAMILY ALLOWANCES.**  
 Besides serving in the above Battalions and for the Transport and Engineer Sections attached,

## MEN WANTED

who are suitable for training as Wireless Operators, Signalmen, and other Service with the Fleet.  
 Apply to the Recruiting Office, 112, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

**A**fter the virtual decimation of the regular British Army at the Marne and Ypres in 1914, necessity quickly ushered in the creation of army formations the likes of which the British military establishment had never seen and probably never imagined. Among them were the famous Pals Battalions, the Bantam Battalions of undersized men, the Artists' Rifles, and units formed of law students from the Inns of Court. But perhaps the most unusual unit was the Royal Naval Division, a hybrid formation of sailors, Royal Marines, and soldiers. From 1914 to 1918 its men fought as infantry in some of the fiercest battles of World War I.

The Royal Naval Division was controversial from the moment of its creation. According to its official history, the RND was the brainchild of the Committee of Imperial Defence, an ad hoc military planning unit, which before the war had devised an idea for a force of Royal Marines to seize or defend temporary naval bases for fleet operations. Within the Royal Navy, however, some believed that Winston Churchill, in his role as First Lord of the Admiralty, was aiming to create the equivalent of his own personal army.

On August 16, 1914, just after war broke out, Churchill issued an Admiralty directive proposing the creation of a unit made up of one brigade of Royal Marines and two brigades of

sailors. These men, he said, would be available for service at sea if needed, "but in the meanwhile they will be organized for land service." Fierce argument immediately ensued in both the army and the navy—the navy doubted this was the best use of its sailors, and the army resented what it saw as a trespass into its sphere of operations.

As Churchill directed, the sailors assigned to the RND were mostly surplus reservists; men for whom there were at the time no available berths with the navy afloat. Whether naval reservists were actually suited to be used as infantrymen did not seem to factor into Churchill's thinking, but serious problems with the scheme were apparent right from the beginning. "The officers with permanent commissions in the RNVR [Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve] were, of course, as uninstructed in land war as the newest joined civilian," the RND's historian conceded. A senior naval officer wrote in his diary at the time: "These are men who are thus to be employed in soldiering who know nothing about the business. They are all amateurs....The whole thing is so wicked that Churchill ought to be hanged before he should be allowed to do such a thing."

After the initial German offensive was halted at the Marne and the Aisne in September 1914, the Allied and German armies began the maneuvering remembered as "the race to the sea." The objective was the Belgian port of Antwerp—the Allies





*From left: Winston Churchill (center) with other British military officers in Belgium in 1914; a recruitment poster for the Royal Naval Division; an undated studio portrait of new recruits.*

aiming to hold it, the Germans to take it. Antwerp was much too important a position for its reinforcement to be left to an untried division of naval reservists, but in the crisis of the moment there was simply no one else to send. As an infantry force, the RND was a poor option; it was, its historian candidly admitted, “a slender asset from a military point of view.”

Once ashore, the naval reservists discovered just how unprepared they were for their new role as infantrymen. Their weapons were practically obsolete—they had been issued old Charger-Loading Lee-Enfield rifles from mothballed navy stocks instead of the newer Short Magazine Lee-Enfields used by the army—and they carried their ammunition, which had been issued loose, in their pockets, since they had no bandoliers. Officers who had studied maritime navigation had no idea how to deploy or maneuver their men, and the men had no experience in constructing fieldworks and no training in rifle marksmanship. It was chaos and confusion at all levels. Their first positions were found to be in full view of German artillery observers; when the British withdrew across the Scheldt River, no one thought to notify the 1st Naval Brigade until the bridges were already being demolished.

The men of the RND also had no dedicated transport, no cavalry support, no supply train, no attached engineers, and no divisional artillery. They did not even have the support of the

Royal Navy’s heavy guns, since terrain ashore hid them from the fleet’s gunnery observers. In a moment of quixotic adventurism, Churchill went to Belgium to assume personal command of the Antwerp defenses, but he was soon compelled to return to his office at the Admiralty. In the end, the arrival of the British reinforcements only delayed the inevitable. The Germans took Antwerp on October 11, with the RND withdrawing in some confusion not long before the city fell.

The division’s casualties in its first campaign were 60 killed, 138 wounded, and 936 captured. In a tragicomic twist, an additional 1,479 men were lost when they crossed into neutral Holland during the chaos of the withdrawal. The Dutch, maintaining their neutrality in the face of the war engulfing their neighbors, interned these British troops for the rest of the war.

The outcry in Britain was immediate. Churchill never lacked for political enemies, and the Antwerp debacle gave his opponents one more grievance to add to an already long list. “It is a tragedy that the Navy should be in such lunatic hands,” a naval officer wrote. Despite mounting criticism, however, the Admiralty decided to keep using the RND in infantry operations; the war had by this time spread beyond Europe, and the need for men was still great.

In February 1915 the RND shipped out for the Mediterra-

nean, with orders for “an unknown Eastern destination.” The sailors and marines in the ranks did not yet know it, but they were bound for the Dardanelles. En route they lost one of their most famous enlistees, the poet Rupert Brooke, a sublieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Brooke died of sepsis from an infected mosquito bite on April 23 and was buried on the Greek island of Skyros. Had he lived two days longer, he would have witnessed the opening of the Gallipoli campaign.

On April 25 a combined force of British, Commonwealth, and French troops landed at several points on the southern end of the Gallipoli peninsula. Within days, an offensive originally envisioned as a fast-moving thrust got stalled in a slugging match of attrition. The fighting was savage—artillery bombardments, incessant sniping, repeated massed attacks by both sides against each other's trenches—and living conditions in the static positions quickly passed from bad to worse. Dysentery and an especially virulent form of diarrhea dubbed the “Gallipoli Gallop” were rampant. Swarming flies covered open latrine pits and thousands of unburied, decomposing bodies; the trenches quickly became foul with maggots breeding on the corpses. “The dead...are lying buried and half-buried in

### Churchill was stripped of his position and demoted to a minor post in the Cabinet.

the trench-bottom, in the sides of the trench, and built into the parapet,” one soldier wrote. “They have made the sandbags all greasy....A dead man's boots have been dripping on my overcoat, and the coat will stink forever.”

The RND was held in reserve for the first month of the Gallipoli campaign, but it was a brief respite. Its first major action came in an assault against

Turkish positions on June 4, and it was nothing short of a disaster. Of 64 officers who went into the attack, 55 were lost, and more than 1,300 others were killed or wounded. The division's Collingwood Battalion, in particular, was decimated, sustaining over 500 casualties (more than two-thirds of its strength). Normally in such a situation the battalion would have been pulled out of the lines long enough to replace its losses and refit, but at Gallipoli that was impossible. On June 8 the remnants of the Collingwood were broken up and its survivors reassigned to other battalions within the division.

The Allies finally abandoned the Dardanelles campaign in January 1916. Strategically and politically, Gallipoli was a failure, and the repercussions were far reaching. To keep his government intact, British Prime Minister H. H. Asquith was forced to accept a coalition with his rivals in the Conservative Party, and the Conservatives refused to cooperate if Churchill remained First Lord of the Admiralty. Churchill was stripped of his position as First Lord and demoted to a minor post in the Cabinet.

The men of the RND lost much more. In just one month,

July 1915, the division lost 79 officers and more than 2,000 men; by the middle of the month it could only muster 129 officers and 5,038 men. “Not 10 percent would have been considered fit in France for duty in the quietest part of the line,” the divisional history said of the survivors. “In Gallipoli at this time all the officers and men who could actually walk to the trenches were reckoned as fit.” Reflecting on the wretched experience of Gallipoli, one soldier wrote, “Of all the bastards of places, this is the greatest bastard in the world.” Wrote another: “No matter where we go now, it will never be as bad as Gallipoli.”

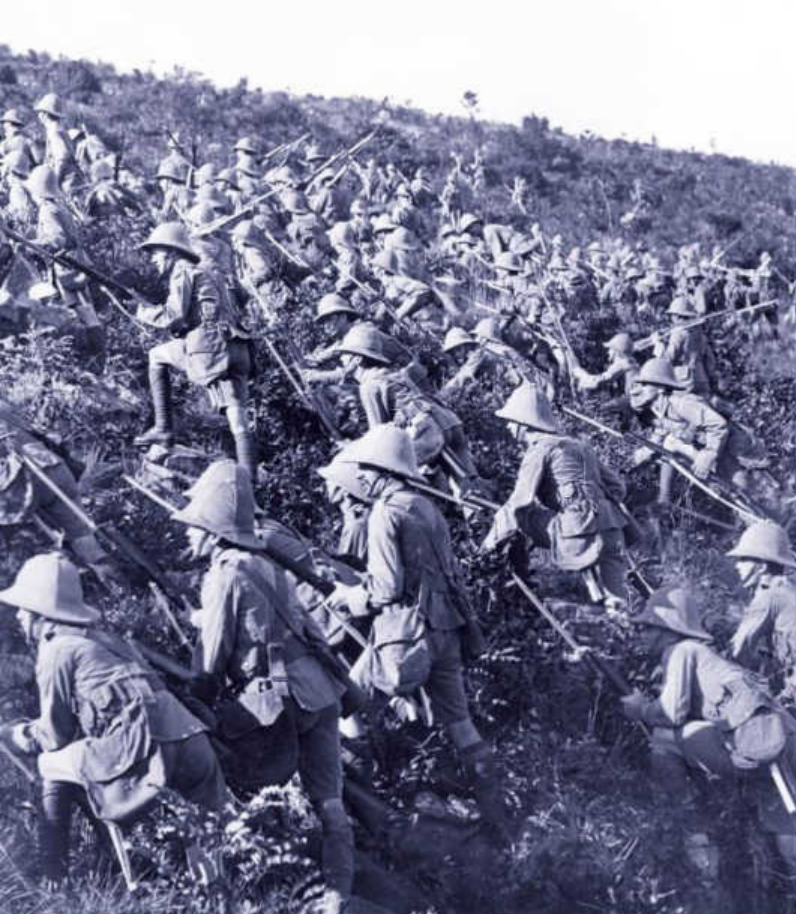
In the aftermath of the Dardanelles, the Royal Naval Division's future was once again in doubt. From its inception it had always been an oddity, and the military mind abhors the unusual. Conventionalists in the regular army continued to be rankled by the RND's very existence. Officials of the War Ministry finally decided to keep the division intact, but they did not allow it to stay as it was. To make it fall more in line with standard army organization, it was redesignated the 63rd Division (Royal Navy).

Nonetheless, the division stubbornly clung to its naval traditions as part of its unique esprit de corps. Its sailors and marines served as regular infantrymen, and most of its battles were fought far from the sea. But it was still a naval division and refused to be anything else. The RND stubbornly clung to its naval traditions, identifying its noncommissioned officers as petty officers rather than sergeants, using naval terms rather than army language in its daily business, using ships' bells to signal the time, and even going so far as to look conspicuously different (parading “credible beards in the faces of a clean-shinned Army,” as the RND's historian put it).

Essentially, the RND was reconstituted as a mix of Royal Marine, Royal Navy, and British Army units. The marines and sailors were in two brigades, and the third brigade was made up of the army battalions.

Baptized at Antwerp and severely blooded at Gallipoli, the RND's next test came in the Ancre Valley, in northern France, in November 1916. After being held as a corps reserve during the cataclysmic Battle of the Somme, the division was given the mission of taking the German-held town of Beaucourt as part of a three-corps offensive along the Ancre lines. Although the operation went badly, overall the division acquitted itself extremely well. The Hood and Drake Battalions distinguished themselves by capturing all their assigned objectives despite heavy casualties, earning a Victoria Cross in the process. The division earned six Victoria Crosses in all and hundreds of other decorations for individual acts of valor, but its newly won reputation as a solid fighting unit came at a high price. In a month of sustained combat, it lost more than 1,700 men killed and 2,537 wounded. Most of the casualties were from the two naval brigades, which bore the brunt of the hardest fighting. “In the face of such losses,” the RND's historian wrote, “congratulatory messages had an empty ring.”





*From top: Churchill commissioned the Gallipoli Campaign, an eight-month-long battle that ended in disaster; earthwork defenses and bombproof shelters built by British marines and naval reservists to help defend Antwerp, Belgium, in 1914; British marines stop for lunch on the Antwerp-Lierre road.*



In April 1917 the British launched a major attack along a broad front near the city of Arras in support of a simultaneous French offensive in the Aisne sector. In a battle overlooked by many histories of the war, the RND mounted a series of assaults on strongly constructed, fiercely defended German positions around the village of Gavrelle, a small village in Nord-Pas-de-Calais, the northernmost region of France, just a few miles from the Belgian border. The sailors and marines of the RND took their objectives in several days of heavy fighting, but at a fearsome cost. After just one day's fighting around the Gavrelle Windmill on April 28, the 1st Battalion Royal Marines, as the division's historian put it, "virtually ceased to exist."

Casualties among the sailors of the naval battalions at Gavrelle were also high. From the time the RND went into action on April 15 until it was relieved on April 29, the division lost 170 officers and 3,624 other ranks, of whom more than 1,000 were killed. Men who had survived the ferocity of Gallipoli and Beaucourt fell at Gavrelle, and the ranks had to be filled anew.

As the fourth winter of the war drew on, the reconstituted RND was sent into the muddy horror of Passchendaele. Passchendaele had been fought over since 1914, and three years of battle had turned the terrain into a moonscape of shell craters. The massive concentrations of artillery fire in the 1917 offensive transformed the battlefield into a swamp of death: ground that was too saturated to dig trenches, stinking mud that contaminated food and fouled weapons, and standing pools of water putrid with rotting corpses.

There was mud, and then there was the Passchendaele mud. The fighting had destroyed the centuries-old drainage systems that diverted the heavy annual rains away from the low Flemish plain, only adding to the difficulties and dangers of trench warfare. Without the drainage, the fields flooded, and men actually drowned in the muck. A soldier whose battalion lost 16 men to the mud in just one month later remembered, "Their graves, it seemed, just dug themselves and pulled them down."

Even being wounded at Passchendaele offered no chance of reprieve. "You could either get through or die, because if you were wounded and slipped off the duckboards you just sank into the mud," a sergeant major in the Hood Battalion recalled. "At each side was a sea of mud, and if you stumbled you would go in up to the waist and literally every pool was full of the decomposed bodies of humans and mules."

The RND, minus its artillery units, finally came out of the mire at Passchendaele on November 6—its gunners had to fight on for a full month longer.

The RND was due to go back into the lines at Passchendaele in January 1918, but the massive German spring offensive in





*In 1917 the Royal Naval Division was sent into the muddy horror of Passchendaele, which had been fought over since 1914. Three years of battle had turned the terrain into a moonscape of shell craters.*

the south changed everything. The final year of the war opened with the division engaged in the fierce fighting at Cambrai and Welsh Ridge. In the following months its men fought at Canal du Nord and again on the St. Quentin Canal; by the time the war ended on November 11, the division had even retraced its path to Antwerp, the scene of its battlefield initiation.

The three brigades of the RND were demobilized in France in April 1919 after a final review by the Prince of Wales. In June the division's veterans marched in one last parade in England before the most unusual unit in the British Army was officially disbanded. Four years of fighting in two theaters of the war had taken a heavy toll, with total combat losses nearly three times greater than the number of men originally recruited for the unit in 1914. The division's total casualties for the entire war—killed, wounded, missing, and captured—came to more than 45,000.

When it was created in 1914, the RND was formed of marines and sailors who enlisted for service with the fleet and never expected to find themselves fighting as infantry far from the sea. Their hopes of sea service never came true, as Churchill noted in his introduction to the division history: "Others were forthcoming when the time came to take their places in the Navy, but the original elements of the Royal Naval Division, who certainly had the first claim to the coveted service afloat, were by that time locked in the heart of the land grapple." Indeed, by that time most of the division's original men were already gone, fallen along the way in places like Gallipoli, Beaucourt, Gavrelle, and Passchendaele.

Churchill's motivations for creating the Royal Naval Division, which his detractors derisively branded "Winston's Little Army," may have had something to do with grandiose dreams of personal glory, but his scheme did put available men in the field when the country desperately needed them. In four years of service the RND fought in some of the fiercest combat engagements of the First World War, an experience that changed it from a hodgepodge of misused naval personnel into a veteran combat division.

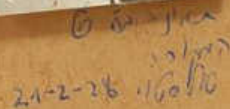
During its short existence the division was always something of an orphan—a naval unit far from the sea, fighting as part of an army that always regarded it as an aberration—and it had no prewar history or lineage to protect it from being so perfunctorily and permanently disbanded in 1919. Also, its exemplary service in epic battles was often overshadowed by other stories. Its men fought at Gallipoli, but that campaign is now most often remembered as an Australian experience. Its participation in the Arras offensive was eclipsed by the Canadians' struggle in the Battle of Vimy Ridge. And its heroic endurance in the misery of Passchendaele was overlooked in the histories of older, more famous regiments that remained in the British Army after the war. Nonetheless, the Royal Naval Division proved itself to be a first-rate fighting unit and, if only for that reason, deserves a secure place in history. *MHQ*

JOHN A. HAYMOND, a conflict historian, is the author of *The Infamous Dakota War Trials of 1862: Revenge, Military Law, and the Judgment of History* (McFarland & Company, 2016).



10/10/19

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# CLASSIC DISPATCHES A PICTURE OF WAR

By *Januarius Aloysius MacGahan*

*Januarius Aloysius MacGahan was born on a farm in Pigeon Roost Ridge, Ohio, in 1844, and went on to become one of the most famous and influential war correspondents in history. Starting out as a Civil War reporter for the St. Louis Democrat, MacGahan, at the suggestion of Union major general Philip Sheridan, sailed to Europe in 1868 to learn Latin, French, and German. Once there he talked his way into a job with the New York Herald, and his vivid articles from the front lines of the Franco-Prussian War attracted wide attention in the United States and Europe. When France surrendered in 1871, MacGahan reported on the resulting anarchy in Paris and was arrested as a communist and nearly executed. Later that year he was*

**“The entire country was on fire,” MacGahan wrote. “It was a sad, sad sight.”**

*assigned to be the Herald’s correspondent in St. Petersburg, where he learned Russian and met his future wife, Varvara Elagina.*

*In 1873 MacGahan gained international notoriety by unofficially embedding himself with the Russian army as it crossed the Kyzylum Desert and attacked Muslim forces in what is now Kazakhstan and*

*Uzbekistan. In 1876 the Daily News of London hired MacGahan to investigate reports of large-scale atrocities committed by the Turkish army after a failed uprising by Bulgarian nationalists. MacGahan’s horrific accounts (“Skeletons of men with the clothing and flesh still hanging to and rotting together; skulls of women, with the hair dragging in the dust; bones of children and infants everywhere”) triggered widespread public outrage against Turkey and caused Britain to abandon the Ottoman Empire, leading to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and eventually to the establishment of Bulgaria as an independent country. MacGahan died in Constantinople in 1878 after contracting typhoid fever from a friend—an American army officer he was trying to nurse back to health. He is buried near the Ohio farm where he was born under a tombstone that reads: *Liberator of Bulgaria*. Years later Archibald Forbes, the legendary British reporter, wrote: “Of all the men who have gained reputation as war correspondents, I regard MacGahan as the most brilliant.”*

*The following account is from MacGahan’s first book, *Campaigning on the Oxus and the Fall of Khiva*, which was published in 1874.*

The Yomuds, whom Kaufman [Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman, Russia’s first governor-general of Turkestan] had decided to attack, are by far the most numerous and powerful tribe of Turcomans. They number 11,000 kubitkas [tents], as many as the five other tribes together.

On the 19th of July, five weeks after the fall of Khiva, a force, under Major General Golovatchoff, composed of 8 companies of infantry, 8 sotnias [companies] of Cossacks, 10 guns—including 2 mitrailleurs [machine guns]—and a battery of rockets, was advanced from Khiva to Hazavat, where the Yomud country commences.

The houses were all deserted. Not a single piece of furniture was left in the rooms, and the farm-yards were equally bare; not a chick nor a child was to be seen. In some of the houses the fires were still smouldering—clear proof that the flight of the inhabitants was very recent.

At this point the general halted the vanguard, and waited until the whole army got up. The Cossacks separated from the rest of the troops, and scattered themselves all over the country, while the infantry continued its march along the road. Soon, and unexpectedly, the meaning of this movement was revealed to me.

I was still musing on the quietness and desolation of the scene, when all at once I was startled by a sharp crackling sound behind me. Looking round, I beheld a long tongue of flame darting upward from the roof of the house into which I had just been peering, and another from the stack of nicely-gathered unthreshed wheat near it. The dry straw-thatched roof flashed up like powder, and the ripe wheat-straw burned almost as readily. Huge volumes of dense black smoke rose out of the trees in every direction, and rolled overhead in dark ominous-looking clouds, colored by the fiery glare from the flames below. I spurred my horse to the top of a little eminence, and gazed about me. It was a strange, wild spectacle. In an incredibly short space of time flames and smoke had spread on either side to the horizon, and, advancing steadily forward in the direction of our course, slowly enveloped everything. Through this scene moved the Cossacks like spectres. Torch in hand, they dashed swiftly across the country, leaping ditches and flying over walls like very demons, and leaving behind them a trail of flame and smoke. They rarely dismounted, but simply rode up to the houses, applied their blazing torches to the projecting eaves of thatch, and the stacks of unthreshed grain, and then galloped on. Five minutes afterwards, sheets of seething flame and darkling smoke showed how well they had done their work. The entire country was on fire.





*Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin, a Russian military officer, painter, and writer, painted this scene of Russian troops crossing the “death sands” of the Adam-Krylgan Desert en route to Khiva.*

It was a sad, sad sight—a terrible spectacle of war at its destructive work, strangely in keeping with this strange wild land! We moved slowly along the narrow winding road, the flames and smoke accompanying us on either flank, until about noon, when the vanguard reported the flying inhabitants in sight; a body of men on horseback had halted to parley with the advance-guard. When asked what they wanted, they replied that they wished to know why the Russians were invading their country.

They had never made war on the Russians; why were the Russians making war on them?

The guard invited them to go to General Golovatchoff, who would listen to their complaints; but, declining this offer, they launched forth into a torrent of threats. “We are,” they said, “many thousands, and if the Russians overrun our country, severe shall be their punishment.” And they were, they said, determined to fight. As this was all the Russians wanted, there was nothing more to be said, and they galloped off to rejoin their flying companions.

The Russian cavalry was only too eager to give chase. Several times the officer in command of the advance-guard sent back a messenger asking for permission to begin the attack. General Golovatchoff hesitated a long time, however, before issuing the order, with the motive, as it appeared to me, of giving the Turcomans a chance to escape. Among them were women and children in great numbers, and these he would, I think, have gladly spared.

At length they were reported turning off into the desert, where they might laugh at our pursuit; and if the attack was to

be made, it must be done instantly. The order was at last given for the Cossacks to pursue the fugitives. As soon as I heard the order, I galloped forward to the head of the column. The troops were just on the edge of the desert, drawn up in double lines, each sotnia with its colors flying in the wind: horses and men alike were eager for the fray. About two miles away to the south, just disappearing over the summit of a long, high, sandy ridge, were the flying Turcomans, an undistinguishable mass of men, women, and children, horses, camels, sheep, goats, and cattle, all rushing forward in wild frightened confusion. There are two or three thousand, perhaps, in all—merely a detachment of laggards from the main body, which is a few miles farther on. In two or three minutes they had disappeared over the brow of the hill, and were lost to view.

Six sotnias of Cossacks were selected to pursue the enemy. Riding along in front of their line, I catch sight of Prince Eugene, who welcomes me to the front with a hearty shake of the hand, and kindly puts me in one of his squadrons.

The order to advance is passed along the line, and in another moment we are dashing over the desert at a gallop. Ten minutes bring us to the summit of the hill, over which we had seen the fugitives disappear; and we perceive them a mile farther on, crossing another low ridge. Already the body has ceased to be compact. Sheep and goats scatter themselves unheeded in every direction; the ground is strewn with the effects that have been abandoned in the hurried flight—bundles thrown from the backs of camels, carts from which the horses have been cut

loose, and crowds of stragglers struggling wearily along, separated from friends, and rapidly closed in upon by foes.

Down the little descent we plunge, our horses sinking to their knees in the yielding sand, and across the plain we sweep like a tornado.

Then there are shouts and cries, a scattering discharge of firearms, and our lines are broken by the abandoned carts, and our progress impeded by the cattle and sheep that are running wildly about over the plain. It is a scene of the wildest confusion. I halt a moment to look about me. Here is a Turcoman

**“I am at first shocked at the number of Turcomans I see lying motionless.”**

lying in the sand, with a bullet through his head; a little farther on, a Cossack stretched out on the ground, with a horrible sabre cut on the face; then two women, with three or four children, sitting down in the sand, crying and sobbing piteously, and begging for their lives; to these I shout “Aman, Aman” (“Peace, peace”) as I gallop by, to allay their fears. A little farther on, more arbas

(carts), carpets, and bed coverlets, scattered about with sacks full of grain, and huge bags and bundles, cooking utensils, and all kinds of household goods.

I am at first shocked at the number of Turcomans I see lying motionless. I can’t help thinking that if all these be killed, there are no such deadly marksmen as the Cossacks. After a while, however, the mystery is explained; for I perceive one of the apparently dead Turcomans cautiously lift his head, and immediately after resume his perfectly motionless position. Many of them are feigning death, and well it is for them the Cossacks have not discovered the trick.

Delayed somewhat by the contemplation of these scenes, I perceive that I am left behind, and again hurry forward. Crossing a little ridge, I behold my sotnia galloping along the edge of a narrow marsh, and discharging their arms at the Turcomans, who are already on the other side, hurriedly ascending another gentle slope. I follow down to the marsh, passing two or three dead bodies on the way. In the marsh are 20 or 30 women and children, up to their necks in water, trying to hide among the weeds and grass, begging for their lives, and screaming in the most pitiful manner. The Cossacks have already passed, paying no attention to them. One villainous-looking brute, however, had dropped out of the ranks, and levelling his piece as he sat on his horse, deliberately took aim at the screaming group, and before I could stop him pulled the trigger. Fortunately the gun missed fire, and before he could renew the cap, I rode up, and cutting him across the face with my riding-whip, ordered him to his sotnia. He obeyed instantly, without a murmur; and shouting “Aman” to the poor demented creatures in the water, I followed him.

A few yards farther on there are four Cossacks around a Turcoman. He has already been beaten to his knees, and weapon he has none. To the four sabres that are hacking at him he can offer only the resistance of his arms; but he utters no word of entreaty. It is terrible. Blow after blow they shower down on his head without avail, as though their sabres were tin. Will they never have done? Is there no pith in their arms? At last, after what seems an age to me, he falls prone in the water, with a terrible wound in the neck, and the Cossacks gallop on. A moment later I come upon a woman, sitting by the side of the water, silently weeping over the dead body of her husband. Suddenly, my horse gives a leap that almost unseats me, my ears stunned with a sharp, shrieking, rushing noise, and, looking up, I behold a streak of fire darting across the sky, which explodes at last among the fugitives. It is only a rocket, but it is followed by another, and another; and, mingled with the shrieks of women and children, the hoarse shout of the Cossacks, bleating of sheep and goats, and howling of cattle running wildly over the plain, made up a very pandemonium of terror. This lasted a few minutes.

Then the Turcomans gradually disappeared over another ridge, some in this direction, and some in that, and bugle-call sounds the signal for the reassembling of the troops. As we withdrew, I looked in vain for the women and children I had seen in the water. They had all disappeared; and as I saw them nowhere in the vicinity, I am afraid that, frightened by the rockets, they threw themselves into the water, and were drowned. It was all the more pitiable, as, with the exception of the case I have mentioned, there was no violence offered to women and children. I even saw a young Cossack officer punishing one of his own men with his sword for having tried to kill a woman.

The roll having been called, search was made for the wounded, and the doctors immediately attended to the injuries of those who were found. A boy, 13 or 14 years of age, was picked up with a dangerous sabre cut in the head. He was accompanied by his mother, who was distracted with grief, and watched the doctor dressing the wound with wild, eager eyes. To her primitive ideas, it was scarcely credible that the same people should first try to kill, and then try to cure her son. When the wound had been carefully dressed, and the doctor had assured her that the child would not die, she seized his hand and kissed it with a burst of grateful tears.

For awhile we rested our horses; then detaching a number of Cossacks to drive in the captured sheep and cattle, some 2,000 in number, we started off for the camp. Many a look we cast behind, for there stood in the midst of the vast desert a sight that our eyes unwillingly lost sight of. It was this mother, who sat watching with her daughter over the wounded boy. Around her lay the wreck of all her worldly wealth; possibly not far away the dead body of her husband; and disappearing in the far distance were the routed ranks of her nation. So she stood a picture of ruin and despair. **MHQ**



# ARTISTS HELL ON THE RIVER KWAI

*Ronald Searle spent three years in a Japanese prison camp during World War II. He sketched lots of what he saw there.*

*By Pamela D. Toler*

After the fall of Singapore in 1942, the Japanese used thousands of British prisoners of war as slave labor to build a railroad from southwestern Thailand to southern Burma (now Myanmar), an episode in history made infamous by David Lean's 1957 film, *Bridge on the River Kwai*. They laid 258 miles of track in six months. More than 100,000 Allied prisoners and Asian laborers died in the effort.

Among the survivors was English artist Ronald Searle, who would become one of the most famous cartoonists—he preferred to describe himself as a “graphic satirist”—of the post-war world. Early in his captivity, Searle decided his mission was “to emerge from the various camps, jungles, and finally prison, with a ‘significant’ pictorial record that would reveal to the world something of what happened during those lost and more or less unphotographed years.” Despite the odds, he succeeded. Searle returned to England in 1945 with some 400 drawings of life in Changi prison and on the River Kwai, created in the prison camp on scrounged scraps of paper and hidden from Japanese guards with the help of his companions.

Ronald William Fordham Searle was born into a working-class family in Cambridge, England, on March 3, 1920. He decided to be an artist at an early age. “Quite suddenly, I began to draw,” he wrote in a memoir. “I had been scribbling forever. Now it took shape and I became, first fascinated, then obsessed with what it was possible to do with pen and pencil.”

When Searle was 14, his family could no longer afford for him to stay in school. He got a job as a clerk in a solicitor's office but was fired for “scribbling” on legal documents. He went on to pack boxes for the Cambridge Cooperative Society. Somehow he found the money for evening classes at the Cambridge Art School. In 1935, when the cartoonist for the *Cambridge Daily News* left the paper, the 15-year-old Searle applied for the position, slipping a sample cartoon with a letter in the editor's mail slot, and was hired. Over the next three years, Searle began to build a career as an artist. He produced weekly cartoons as the resident cartoonist at the *Daily News* and was a regular contributor of satirical drawings and illustrations to *Granta*, the premier student newspaper at Cambridge University.

By April 1939 it was clear that war with Germany was on the horizon. Searle and his friends began to consider enlistment as a way to control what unit they served in. In August, Searle enlisted in the Royal Engineers. When Germany invaded Po-



*Ronald Searle in 1950, five years after his release from captivity. Searle embellished his oath (“I will not, under any circumstances, attempt escape”), which he signed in the Changi prison camp in 1942, with a drawing of two Japanese guards—one of them wielding a samurai sword.*



*From left: Three Japanese guards force a loincloth-clad prisoner to stand holding a large rock above his head; a Chinese prisoner bound to a tree is beaten by his captors; the severed heads of executed civilians, mounted on bamboo poles to be displayed on a Singapore street.*

land on September 1, Sapper R. W. F. Searle was mobilized with the rest of Britain's Territorial Army.

Equipped with a standard-issue rifle and a new sketchbook, Searle spent the first two years of the war in Britain. In his spare time, he drew pen-and-ink sketches of his fellow soldiers—receiving a regulation haircut, peeling potatoes, on night maneuvers, or staggering back from a shooting accident—making the transformation from cartooning to reportage that would inform his prison camp drawings.

On October 29, 1941, Searle and the rest of the 53rd Brigade (18th Division) set sail from Scotland for an undisclosed destination. While they were in transit, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The 53rd Brigade was diverted to Malaya, where the Japanese advanced toward the British at Singapore.

The men disembarked at Singapore on January 13, 1942. Described by Searle as “unfit, unacclimatized, unenthusiastic, and untrained in jungle warfare,” they were sent to the front at Johore, where British and Australian forces struggled to hold a defensive line against the Japanese. Searle's time at the front was brief. By the end of January, the British had abandoned the Malayan mainland and retreated to Singapore Island.

On February 15 the British surrendered Singapore to the Japanese. Two days later, more than 52,000 disarmed British soldiers, including Searle, were marched 14 miles to Changi, a military base on the eastern end of Singapore Island that the Japanese had turned into a prison camp.

Determined to record the conditions under which they were held, Searle scrounged for drawing materials. In his sketches from this period, prisoners stand in line for rice rations, cook food scraps over small fires, lie around in crowded wooden huts, and suffer abuse at the hands of their guards.

Searle would soon look back at Changi with nostalgia. On May 8, 1943, after 14 months at Changi Barracks, he was shipped to Siam (now Thailand) to help build the railway from Ban Pong to Burma. Two-thirds of the group he traveled with would die by the end of the year.

The forced labor crews worked 18 hours a day, cutting through granite mountains and dense jungle using tools that would have been familiar to the crews that built the Egyptian pyramids. They were tortured by insects and their Japanese guards. They suffered from exhaustion and exposure, from malaria, beriberi, cholera, and ulcerating wounds that ate their flesh to the bone. Food was scarce, even for the guards. “Most of us were little more than rotting bags of bones,” Searle later recalled. “Only the irrational and pigheaded desire to survive made it possible for us to drag ourselves forward into another day.”

## Two-thirds of the group he traveled with would die by the end of the year.

Searle's own desire to survive was linked to his self-appointed role as “unwilling participator-recorder.” He drew at first light, before the day's labor began. He coaxed paper out of his guards in exchange for pornographic pictures. Men dying of cholera hid his sketches in their bedding—the one place the Japanese never searched. He buried others in bamboo tubes. He often sketched a fellow prisoner at dawn and found him dead by nightfall. At times Searle thought drawing to be a waste of his limited energy.





From left: The Japanese commander of Changi Gaol, a prison in Singapore; a Japanese soldier in full uniform, carrying a rifle with a fixed bayonet; the “cholera lines” at a prison camp on the Thai–Burma Railway, with cloth-wrapped corpses laid out on stretchers on the ground.

And yet he continued to draw. His fellow prisoner, Australian writer Russell Braddon, described Searle’s dedication: “If you can imagine something that weighs six stone [84 pounds] or so, is on the point of death, and has no qualities of the human condition that aren’t revolting, calmly lying there with a pencil and a scrap of paper, drawing, you have some idea of the difference of temperament that this man had from the ordinary human being.”

At Changi, Searle created generic portraits of prisoners and guards. At the labor camp, his sketches became sharp and specific, drawn with the “stammering” line made up of dozens of quick, halting strokes that would become his trademark. Drawings of Japanese guards hover between caricature and representational portraits. Spare, poignant sketches show men dying of cholera, the outline of their skeletons clearly visible beneath the skin. Emaciated prisoners perform hard labor under the gaze of brutish overseers.

In his 1986 illustrated memoir, *To the Kwai—and Back*, Searle underscores what his drawings make clear: “There were no heroes. Merely killers and survivors.”

The railroad was completed in October 1943. The surviving prisoners returned to their final prison in Singapore: Changi Gaol, a stone, concrete, and steel structure that the British built as a prison in 1936. Ten thousand men were crowded into a facility built to hold 600. Their treatment did not change for the better. Ill and undernourished, the prisoners were still used as forced labor. The lucky ones were assigned to work on the docks or at the Singapore railroad station, where at least they had a chance to scavenge for food. By the end of 1944, they had so little to eat that it was impossible to think of anything except

food. Searle claimed that it was still better than the isolation of the jungle.

Ten days after the Japanese surrendered on September 2, 1945, the relieving forces released the prisoners of war from Changi Gaol. Two weeks later, Searle and the other surviving soldiers of the 18th Division sailed for home. Against all odds, he carried with him some 400 sketches, which, he noted, had been “drawn with sweat, fear and, at the outset at least, wide-eyed noble intent.”

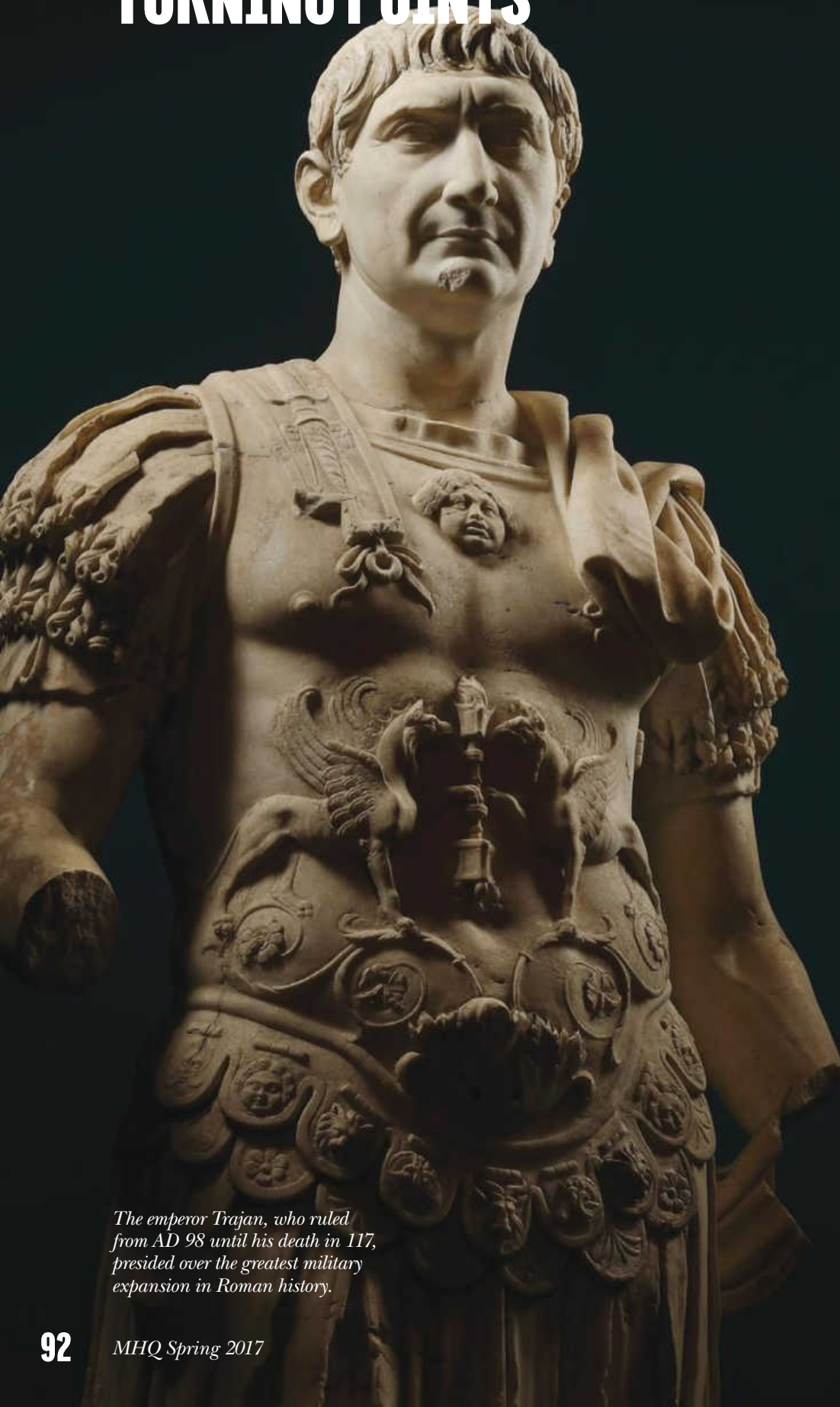
Several months after Searle returned home, the Cambridge Art School mounted an exhibition of his work titled “Life as a Prisoner in Japanese Hands.” The catalog for the exhibition described the effect of his drawings as “horror, and boredom, and beauty flowering in strange places, held in the compelling unity of one man’s vision.” This was an accurate description of Searle’s work, but Britain was tired of the horror of war. It would be another 40 years before Searle’s wartime sketches would receive serious attention.

Searle went on to achieve international fame as a cartoonist, known for his pure line, his mordant satire, and his sharp eye for the ridiculous. He later said that his work was rooted in his days of captivity, where he learned “to get the experiences on paper as dispassionately, as authentically, not to mention as rapidly as possible.”

Searle died on December 30, 2011, at age 91. Today his war drawings are in the collection of the Imperial War Museum in London. **MHQ**

PAMELA D. TOLER writes frequently about history and the arts. She is the author of *Heroines of Mercy Street: The Real Nurses of the Civil War* (Little, Brown and Company, 2016).

# REVIEWS TURNING POINTS



*The emperor Trajan, who ruled from AD 98 until his death in 117, presided over the greatest military expansion in Roman history.*

## **Pax Romana** **War, Peace, and** **Conquest in the** **Roman World**

*By Adrian Goldsworthy.  
528 pages.  
Yale University Press,  
2016. \$32.50.  
Reviewed by  
James Lacey*

Every year, historians deluge the market with “definitive” histories of ancient Rome, promising to paint a new and evocative picture of its rise to global mastery and its eventual decline and collapse. Unfortunately, they typically have nothing new to say. To write about the Punic Wars, for example, one must retell the tales of Polybius and Livy. To explain how Rome governed its provinces, one is forced to rely almost entirely on Pliny. To get the perspective of those who rebelled against Roman domination, one’s only major source is Josephus.

The works of Edward Gibbon and Theodor Mommsen are still read today, not just for their erudition but because they are still relevant. Modern historians have the benefit of more recent archeological discoveries, but all the primary written sources on which they rely were thoroughly explored by their predecessors a century or two ago.



Consequently, with a new work, all a reader can hope for is a competent examination of well-trod ground, the possibility of gaining new insights, and—at best—some masterful writing and storytelling. On all of these counts Adrian Goldsworthy's *Pax Romana* succeeds brilliantly.

Since the collapse of Europe's colonial empires, the very concept of empire has fallen into disrepute. Many historians have painted the Romans as overly aggressive, intent on creating an empire for the purpose of robbing their subject peoples. Goldsworthy presents a much-needed corrective to that view, demonstrating that Rome was no more violent or warlike than any of its neighbors. What differentiated the Romans from the various other warlike tribes and protostates dotting the Mediterranean was that they were very good at war. Indeed, they had the resolve to see fights through to the finish that their enemies often lacked.

Goldsworthy also reminds the readers that the *Pax Romana*, which stabilized and enriched most of the Western world, did not grow out of a Roman commitment to peacekeeping. Rather, Rome was particularly adept at "peace making." Rome made "peace" first by crushing its enemies and then by keeping its forces around long enough to integrate the newly conquered territories into the empire, forcibly or otherwise.

It says much for Rome's capacity to govern that, except for the Jews, no conquered province ever rebelled with the intent of leaving the empire.

Goldsworthy also offers a welcome discussion of the purpose, maintenance, and defense of the empire's frontiers, which goes a long way toward restoring some historical balance to a debate in which many leading Roman historians have gone astray. In the currently accepted formulation, the Romans did not have enough grasp of geography to understand their own frontiers, which, therefore, were never defensive lines. Hence, one is left to wonder how and why Rome lined its legions behind fortifications that stretched the length of this "unknown" frontier. Goldsworthy tactfully destroys this and many other such mythic interpretations that have gained modern currency only because many historians have aimed to reinterpret the ancient sources. It is good to have a historian of Goldsworthy's capacity and stature countering much of the absurd revisionism that reigns today.

*Pax Romana* may not offer any fresh history. But it does provide a dazzling and vivid retelling of a familiar story, and it rewards the reader with deeply ponderable insights on almost every page.

JAMES LACEY is professor of strategic studies at the Marine Corps War College.

## Scars of Independence America's Violent Birth

By Holger Hoock.  
576 pages.

Crown Publishers,  
2017. \$30.

Reviewed by  
Michael W. Robbins

A case can be made that the United States is, among established Western democracies, a comparatively violent society. This theme has been the subject of many sociological, psychological, and political studies—one of the most compelling being *American Violence: A Documentary History* (Knopf, 1970), an anthology edited by historians Richard Hofstadter and Michael Wallace. Its focus is less on America's wars and other military actions than on civil violence, and the scope of its accounts reached from the earliest European settlements in North America to the 1970s. Hofstadter noted that "we have a remarkable lack of memory where violence is concerned," with much of our violence consigned to what he called "our buried history."

By contrast, America's wars have been exhaustively researched and interpreted. Indeed, books on our military history appear to be an exceptionally robust segment of today's publishing industry.

That said, one important part of America's first major war—the struggle for independence from Britain, 1775–1783—has often been ignored, forgotten, "buried," or else romanticized beyond recognition. That aspect of the Revolutionary War, which is most accurately described as a *civil war*, is the subject of Holger Hoock's deeply researched account of America's violent birth and its scarifying effects, which have shaped our society for generations.

While the many romantic and sanitized versions of the American Revolution present it as a just and idealistic war between sturdy middle- and upper-class patriots battling Britain's brutal redcoats and their "Hessian" mercenaries, Hoock presents a much more complex and nuanced story of American-on-American violence. Some 25 to 30 percent of the colonies' population favored loyalty to the British Crown; about 10,000 loyalists left America during the war, and 19,000 men enlisted in loyalist corps to fight against the patriots. In some states, loyalist militias actually outnumbered the men under arms who favored independence and fought under General George Washington. Moreover, the patriots were fighting not only the British army and government but also their Tory neighbors, whole Native American tribes, former slaves, and German mercenaries.

Most major and transformative revolutions are messy, bloody, complicated, and as often tragic as triumphant, and the American Revolution, as portrayed in the vivid detail and comprehensive understanding in Hoock's important and corrective account, was no exception.

## Lincoln's Greatest Journey Sixteen Days That Changed a Presidency, March 24–April 8, 1865

By Noah Andre Trudeau. 360 pages.  
Savas Beatie, 2016.  
\$32.95.

Reviewed by Ron Soodalter

Historians and academics who feared that the passing of the sesquicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's assassination would signal an end to new works on our favorite president can take heart. Such worthy Lincoln scholars as James Conroy, Rodney Davis, Allen C. Guelzo, and Douglas Wilson have published new titles. One of the more intriguing books to emerge is *Lincoln's Greatest Journey*, by Noah Andre Trudeau.

Trudeau, a skilled storyteller whose books include *Gettysburg: A Testing of Courage*, *Southern Storm: Sherman's March to the Sea*, and *Robert E. Lee: Lessons in*

*Leadership*, herein focuses on President Lincoln's 16-day, 130-mile journey near war's end to City Point, Virginia, the site of Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant's headquarters. The trip, which Lincoln took with his wife Mary and son, Tad, came about as the result of a warm invitation from Grant: "Can you not visit City Point for a day or two? I would very much like to see you, and I think the rest would do you good."

Trudeau bases his richly detailed, day-by-day chronicle on the premise that Lincoln's two-week "break" from the pressures of the White House and the countless dismal distractions of Washington, D.C., was both a life- and a game-changer for the war-weary president. According to Trudeau, the trip not only served to restore Lincoln's flagging vigor but also instilled in him a fresh-sprung empathy for the ravaged South, inspiring him to develop a benevolent plan to carry the nation forward into a time of peace. Lincoln, as Trudeau sees it, metamorphosed from a president who had been admittedly "reactive" for most of his time in office—driven and controlled by the all-consuming details of a war that, as he told Harriet Beecher Stowe, "is killing me"—into a forward-thinking optimist, looking to the future to heal the nation's wounds.

Given the war's relentless impact on Lincoln's melancholic disposition, it might seem a bit of a stretch to assume that a brief hiatus,

during which Lincoln witnessed firsthand the devastation of war, personally greeted thousands of veterans, and occupied himself in the minutiae of Grant's military plans, could so dramatically improve his mental well-being as well as his outlook for the future. It is to Trudeau's credit that he makes his case convincingly, using an admirably well-researched compendium of primary sources.

Ultimately, the question arises: In the overall scheme of things, what possible difference could any of this have made? After all, Lincoln was killed less than a week after his return to the nation's capital, and his plans for a compassionate Reconstruction tragically came to naught. Trudeau maintains that it matters for several reasons: It "signals that the man had changed," shines a light on Lincoln's determination to guide the recently fractured nation with a benevolent hand, and "offers tantalizing clues to...what might have been." And, Trudeau writes, it "adds a new piece to the eternally fascinating puzzle that is Abraham Lincoln."

RON SOODALTER a frequent contributor to *MHQ*, has written for the *New York Times*, *Military History*, *Smithsonian*, and other publications.



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## DRAWN & QUARTERED

### EVIL EYE

*In 1942 this stylized caricature of a Nazi officer won Karl Koehler and Victor Ancona, two young graphic artists from New York City, top honors in the National War Poster Competition. The contest, sponsored by the newly formed Artists for Victory and the Museum of Modern Art, drew 2,224 entries; 216 were exhibited at MoMA and nine prizewinners—including this one, for which Ancona and Koehler each earned a \$300 war bond—were distributed by the Office of Civilian Defense.*

KOEHLER  
ANCONA

# This is the Enemy

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**“BEFORE WE’RE  
THROUGH  
WITH THEM,  
THE JAPANESE  
LANGUAGE  
WILL BE  
SPOKEN  
ONLY IN  
HELL.”**

*—Admiral  
William F.  
Halsey, on  
arriving at  
Pearl Harbor on  
December 7, 1941*

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