

# ARMY HISTORY

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## Shaking the Iron Fist

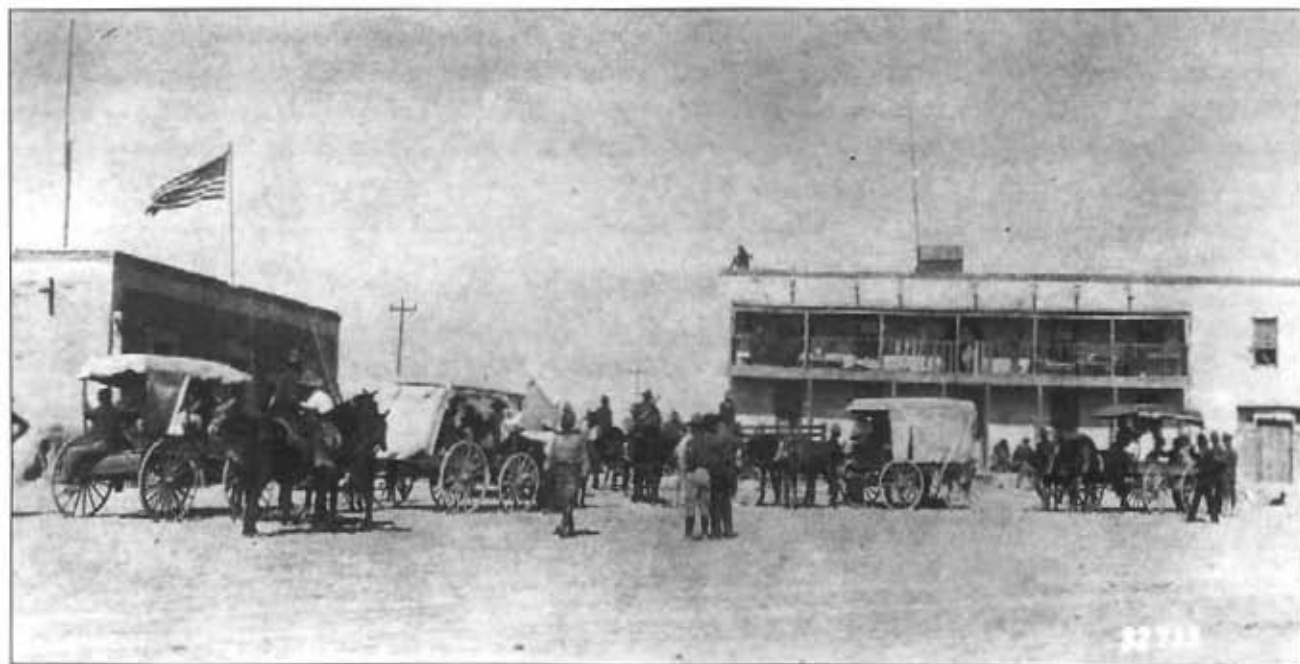
### The Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1919

By Roger D. Cunningham

After the United States and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, intermittent hostilities involving Indians, outlaws, and revolutionaries continued to plague their common border until well into the twentieth century. Most of these incidents provoked a U.S. military response, the most famous being the Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1916-17 in which forces commanded by Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing unsuccessfully attempted to capture the Mexican revolutionary commander Francisco "Pancho" Villa, after his bloody raid on Columbus, New Mexico. Less famous, but perhaps more dramatic, was a much smaller punitive expedition that was launched in 1919 from the upper Big Bend region of western Texas. This six-day invasion of the Mexican state of Chihuahua helped to end a decade of depredations by Mexican bandits, but

it also ruined the career of its commander, who was court-martialed for his actions during and after the operation. The expedition exemplified an era when the hallmark of American diplomacy was action rather than words, especially as far as Mexico was concerned.

Over half of the southern border of the United States is formed by the Rio Grande. After flowing about 275 miles southwest from El Paso, Texas, the great river meets an impervious ridge at the southern tip of the Rocky Mountains and turns to the northeast for almost sixty miles, creating a "big bend," before resuming its southwesterly course to the Gulf of Mexico. No terrain along the entire U.S.-Mexican border is more rugged than that found in this Big Bend region. A newspaperman describing it in 1916 said that "The country isn't bad. It's just worse. Worse the moment



*The border town of Presidio, Texas, in November 1917 (Signal Corps photograph)*

you set foot from the train, and then, after that, just worsen and worsen." Four years later, while providing a more professional description of the area to a Senate foreign relations subcommittee chaired by Senator Albert B. Fall of New Mexico, Col. George T. Langhorne of the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry noted that the Rio Grande's great distance in the region from the nearest railroad created the opportunity "for an unsettled country and disorder rather than order."<sup>1</sup>

Border security worsened after the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, as the fighting "tended to overrun the border and to produce in southern Texas and New Mexico conditions similar to those that existed in Mexico itself." In 1911 much of the Regular Army was deployed to the Southwest as a show of force. It left shortly thereafter, but conflict among the revolutionary forces in succeeding years led the United States to bring many troops back to patrol the border from the mouth of the Rio Grande almost to the Pacific. As internal conditions in Mexico deteriorated, the untamed nature of the Big Bend attracted scores of bandits.<sup>2</sup>

In March 1916 a renegade force led by Pancho Villa raided the border town of Columbus, New Mexico, causing two dozen American casualties. President Woodrow Wilson immediately ordered Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing to take a punitive expedition into northern Mexico and to capture Villa. The departure of Pershing's 6,700-man force, however, reduced the Regular Army's presence on the border, and in May other Mexican raiders struck at Glenn Springs, Texas, in the Big Bend. Realizing that the Army was stretched too thinly along the border, Wilson federalized about

5,600 National Guardsmen from Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. A June raid on San Ygnacio, Texas, south of Laredo, convinced the president that even more men were needed, so he ordered most of the country's remaining National Guard units to mobilize and deploy to the Southwest. The number of Guardsmen on border duty peaked at almost 112,000 in August. None of these citizen-soldiers engaged Villistas during their mobilization, but almost 300 of them died, primarily from disease or accidents. Unable to capture Villa, Pershing's punitive expedition returned to the United States in February 1917. Shortly thereafter, the National Guard units still on active duty were sent home, but when the United States declared war on Germany in April, 67,000 Guardsmen remained in federal service.<sup>3</sup>

During World War I the border was divided into several military districts. The Big Bend District took in most of the West Texas borderlands, extending by the start of 1919 some 300 miles down the Rio Grande from Arroyo Mocho in Hudspeth County, some 75 miles downriver from El Paso, to just west of Mofeta in Terrell County, Texas. Beginning in November 1917 Colonel Langhorne commanded this vast district, as well as the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, from his headquarters at Marfa, the Presidio County seat. Born in Kentucky in 1867, Langhorne had attended the Virginia Military Institute for two years before becoming a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy, from which he graduated in 1889. He had served initially in the West and had been an aide to Brig. Gen. Frank Wheaton in 1893-97, when Wheaton was commander successively of the Departments of Texas and the Colorado. After an assignment as a military attaché in Belgium (1897-98),

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Langhorne served in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War and was cited for "gallantry and coolness under fire" during the battle of Yauco Road, the Army's first engagement with Spanish troops on the island. He commanded a battalion of the 39<sup>th</sup> U.S. Volunteer Infantry during the Philippine Insurrection, was an aide to Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood in the Philippines and Europe (1903–09), attended the Army War College (1912–13), and served as a military attaché in Berlin (1913–15), before being assigned to the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry.<sup>4</sup>

With an authorized strength of about 1,000 officers and men, Langhorne's regiment comprised a headquarters troop, supply troop, machine gun troop, and twelve lettered troops, which in 1919 were organized into two squadrons. Each of these troops was stationed at Marfa except for five deployed on or near the Rio Grande: Troop A at Glenn Springs, B at Hester's Ranch, F at Lajitas, K at Candelaria, and the Machine Gun Troop at Presidio. The 8<sup>th</sup> had been protecting the border since its return from the Philippines in 1915, and its men had adapted well to their monotonous duty in a harsh environment. In June 1919 War Department inspector Col. Thomas A. Roberts, a cavalry officer, found the regiment's "appearance and general morale" to be "so remarkably good" that he submitted a special report saying, "I have never seen such a perfectly appointed command before in my service, the condition and appearance of the horses, equipment, and men of the Cavalry, of mules, harness, wagons, and carts of the trains and of the pack train was such as to make a profound impression. . . . The spirit of the officers and men is splendid, as would be expected from a command in which so much attention is given to detail."<sup>5</sup>

The 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry's readiness was frequently tested, as Mexican bandits regularly raided ranches in the Big



*Modern Distinctive Unit Insignia  
of the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry*

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

ERIC K. SHINSEKI  
*General, United States Army*  
*Chief of Staff*

Official:

JOEL B. HUDSON  
*Administrative Assistant to the  
Secretary of the Army*

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Bend region and were in turn pursued. From 1915 to 1919 elements of the regiment crossed into Mexico ten times in pursuit of cross-border raiders, rendering service that "was marked by long arduous marches, extreme heat and shortage of rations and forage." Some sixty bandits raided the settlement of Glenn Springs in May 1916, killing four soldiers and a civilian boy, destroying buildings, and looting a store. The raid resulted in a sixteen-day punitive expedition conducted by two troops of the 8<sup>th</sup> under the command of then-Major Langhorne. This force traveled more than 550 miles in the Mexican state of Coahuila and, in the view of one historian, "was in many ways more successful than General Pershing's more widely publicized pursuit of Villa." The raid on Brite's Ranch, located a dozen miles from the Rio Grande, on Christmas Day 1917 led a company of Texas Rangers to strike the border town of Pilares, Mexico, a reported outlaw hang-out, and two troops of 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalrymen repeated this operation in March 1918 after two civilians were killed in the Nevill's Ranch raid. While seeking to punish Mexican raiders and demanding full compensation for injured ranchers, Colonel Langhorne tied some of the cattle-thieving to severe hunger in the adjacent area of Mexico and observed that Mexican troops on the border sometimes had to kill their burros for food.<sup>6</sup>

In mid-June 1919 Pancho Villa attacked President Venustiano Carranza's forces in the border city of Juárez, across the Rio Grande from El Paso. After stray shots fired from Juárez killed or wounded several American soldiers and civilians in Texas, about 3,600 U.S. troops from Fort Bliss crossed the river to assist the struggling Carrancistas in driving Villa's forces away from the border. The Villistas "scattered like quail" before the Americans, and although time would prove that their leader was finished as a serious threat to the region, this was not obvious at the time. Thus, Brig. Gen. Charles T. Menoher, the director of the Army's Air Service, ordered aircraft from Kelly Field (San Antonio) and Ellington Field (Houston) to the newly established Fort Bliss Air Terminal to form part of the new Army Border Air Patrol. The War Department initiated this air patrol to provide ground forces with aerial intelligence that would enable them to respond quickly to any further Mexican incursions. The Army's chief of staff noted in his annual report that "While it was not practicable to maintain a con-

tinuous guard along the entire border, the border troops were distributed in such a way that information concerning raids might be acted upon with sufficient promptness to minimize the dangers therefrom."<sup>7</sup>

The Border Air Patrol's daily flights, which were prohibited from crossing the border, soon led to a reduction in bandit activities in Texas. Second Lt. Stacy C. Hinkle, who flew in the Big Bend region, later recalled that his flight instructions were to "search for bands of men along the border, flying low to observe what they were doing, how many were in the band, the number of horses and cattle, and the location and direction of movement. A report and sketch of the location were to be made and dropped at the nearest of our cavalry outposts." Hinkle also noted that local citizens called him and his fellow aviators "River Flyers," while dusty cavalrymen referred to their planes as "Big Chickens."<sup>8</sup>

There was no scheduled night flying due to the lack of lights both on the ground and on the planes—British-designed DeHavilland Four daytime bombers, or DH-4s, that had been built in the United States by licensed manufacturers. American pilots in France had nicknamed the planes "Flaming Fours," because their fragile spruce-wood and linen-fabric frames tended to burst into flames if any tracer rounds penetrated their unprotected fuel tanks. The plane was armed with twin .30-cal. Marlin machine guns, synchronized to fire through the propeller, and also carried a .30-cal. Lewis machine gun mounted in the rear cockpit. A ninety-gallon fuel tank provided the DH-4 with a maximum flying time of about four hours, but the oil in its V12 Liberty engine would often burn out, causing the plane to go down unexpectedly.<sup>9</sup>

The incident that caused the 1919 punitive expedition began on the morning of 10 August. Two "River Flyers" from the 11<sup>th</sup> Aero Squadron's Flight A—Lts. Harold G. Peterson, pilot, and Paul H. Davis, observer-gunner—set out on a routine patrol from the Marfa Airdrome, which was little more than a pasture and some tents on the east side of town. The aviators were supposed to fly their DH-4 south to Lajitas on the Rio Grande and from there proceed up the Rio Grande past Presidio to El Paso. A few miles west of Presidio, however, the Rio Conchos flowed into the Rio Grande from Mexico, and because it appeared to be the dominant source of water, the lieutenants mistook the former

for the latter and began flying into the Mexican state of Chihuahua. Shortly after noon, engine problems forced them to land on rough terrain south of Coyame not far from Falomir Station, where the Chihuahua and Pacific Railroad crossed the Rio Conchos. Peterson deliberately set down north of the river, thinking that this would place them on American soil, but the aviators were actually about fifty-five miles southwest of the border.<sup>10</sup>

The next day, search flights took off from Fort Bliss and Marfa. Retracing in reverse a portion of the lost plane's intended route, Lt. Frank S. Estill correctly deduced what had happened to Peterson and Davis: "When I reached the junction of the Rio Grande and the Rio Conchos, a few miles up river from Presidio, the old Rio Grande looked like a small tributary flowing into the main river. They merge at a very small angle, giving the appearance of both flowing from the same general direction." Estill landed on the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry parade ground at Presidio and informed Fort Bliss that he was certain the lieutenants had mistakenly flown into Mexico. This prompted an American request for permission to send search flights into Chihuahua. Mexican authorities granted the request on 11 August and soon began their own search for the aviators, deploying troops from both Chihuahua City and Ojinaga.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, still believing that they had landed on American soil, Peterson and Davis buried their machine guns and ammunition and, after much walking and some swimming, they arrived at the small village of Cuchillo Parado on 13 August. There, they purchased some food and hired a man to take them on burros to Candelaria, Texas, where Troop K of the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was stationed. En route, they were intercepted by a group of armed Mexicans, who forced them to accompany them to another village to meet Jesús Rentería, their leader. Rentería made a living rustling horses and had quite an unsavory reputation in the Big Bend. Missing both an arm and part of a leg, he was known to Mexicans as "El Gancho" for the steel hook in his artificial arm, while Americans called him "The Fiend," after he reportedly slit the throat of a Texas mail driver during the Brite's Ranch raid. Having formerly worked in Kansas, Rentería spoke English, and on 15 August he directed the lieutenants to write a message explaining that he was holding them for

\$15,000 ransom and that they would be killed if he was not paid by midnight on 18 August. Rentería also allowed them to write telegrams to their parents and several military officials.<sup>12</sup>

Two days later a courier with the ransom note and telegrams was intercepted at Candelaria and his papers were delivered to the aggressive commander of Troop K, Capt. Leonard F. Matlack. Born in Kentucky, Matlack was a seasoned veteran who had begun his military career as an eighteen-year-old musician in the 1<sup>st</sup> Kentucky Volunteer Infantry during the Spanish-American War, seeing service in Puerto Rico. After returning home and serving as a Kentucky National Guard officer, Matlack enlisted in 1903 in the Regular Army, rose through the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry's ranks to become a first sergeant, and in 1917 secured an emergency commission as a second lieutenant. Later that year he led a successful pursuit of a large group of Mexican bandits to recover a kidnapped American rancher and his herd of stolen cattle, demonstrating courage under fire in the process. In April 1919 he again led his troop into Mexico in pursuit of bandits. Two months later, he threatened to destroy the Mexican town across the river from Candelaria if its residents did not stop selling sotol—a strong liquor made from juice drawn from a spiny desert plant of the same name—to his cavalrymen. Although an automobile accident the year before had badly injured Matlack's shoulder and deprived him of the full use of his right arm, Colonel Langhorne kept him in command, because he had "rendered excellent service and ha[d] one of the best trained troops."<sup>13</sup>

As Rentería's payment deadline rapidly approached, Dawkins Kilpatrick, a Candelaria storekeeper, guaranteed the courier that the ransom would be paid but asked for more time to raise it. Captain Matlack telephoned Colonel Langhorne to inform him of the aviators' kidnapping, and Langhorne immediately sent word up his chain of command to Maj. Gen. Joseph T. Dickman at Southern Department headquarters at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. Dickman, who had recently returned from commanding American occupation forces in Germany, informed the War Department, where Secretary of War Newton D. Baker directed that the ransom should be paid and a force organized to take up the "hot trail of the bandits."<sup>14</sup>

The aviators' ransom money was raised in record time thanks to what could almost be termed divine intervention. A group of local ranchers learned of the kidnapping while they were attending an annual open-air church revival known as the Bloys Camp Meeting. Established in 1890 by William Bloys, a Presbyterian minister, the gathering at Skillman's Grove in the Davis Mountains near Marfa brought widely separated ranch families of several denominations together for five days. Indebted to the Army for protecting them and assuming that the U.S. government would later reimburse them, the ranchers immediately instructed the Marfa National Bank to transfer \$15,000 to Colonel Langhorne, who in turn directed one of his officers to escort a bank official bearing the money to Captain Matlack at Candelaria. Langhorne also sent a letter along with

them, informing Matlack that the money had "been advanced through the Marfa National Bank by the prominent ranchmen and citizens of this and surrounding counties." On 18 August, as the midnight deadline approached, Matlack warned Renteria that if the two officers were harmed, he would hold every Mexican living in three nearby villages responsible.<sup>15</sup>

By this time, news of the kidnapping had generated front-page headlines across the country. "MEXICAN BANDITS HOLD AMERICAN AVIATORS FOR RANSOM" was blazoned across the 18 August *New York Times*, while the *Chicago Daily Tribune* announced: "U.S. FLIERS HELD; MEXICANS ASK \$15,000 RANSOM." The *San Antonio Evening News* saw the incident as proof of President Carranza's lack of control over many sections of Mexico and observed



*Captain Matlack leading troopers of the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry near Candelaria, Texas, in 1918*  
Photo by W. D. Smithers. (Photography Collection  
Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin)

that "the emphasis the incident gives to the outlawry in Northern Mexico is expected to have an important bearing on the international situation."<sup>16</sup>

The kidnapping of the Army aviators was the latest in a series of murders and kidnappings of American citizens in Mexico during the summer of 1919. In an editorial on "The Kidnapped Aviators," the *Washington Evening Star* warned that "this affair may become the turning point in the long course of patient submission to the plain incapacity of the government of Mexico to guarantee security to life and property within its jurisdiction." Several angry politicians demanded an armed response. Governor Joseph A. Burnquist of Minnesota, Lieutenant Peterson's home state, declared that if the two officers were not released, the United States should "put into Mexico an army of occupation to restore order and establish a stable popular Government." Congressman Julius Kahn of California, Lieutenant Davis's home state, also rattled his saber, assuring the War Department that, as the chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs, he stood ready to give "any legislative aid needed in securing the protection of American lives and property." Kahn estimated that a force of 100,000 regulars could restore law and order in Mexico.<sup>17</sup>

Using a Mexican named Tomás Sánchez as intermediary, Captain Matlack negotiated with Rentería, and the two men finally agreed that Matlack should ride about one mile into Mexico with half of the ransom money, exchange it for one aviator, return him to Texas, and then repeat the process. Matlack paid for Lieutenant Peterson first, and after delivering him to Candelaria, he rode back with the other \$7,500 to retrieve Lieutenant Davis. Matlack later testified that, as he waited for Davis to be brought to the rendezvous site, two Mexican riders passed near him in the darkness and he heard one of them whisper, "Mata dos gringos [*sic*]," or "Kill both Americans," and the other answer "seguro," "sure." When Matlack finally did encounter Davis and his captor, he decided to liberate the aviator at gunpoint, informing the Mexican that he was not paying Rentería any more money and quickly riding back to the river with Davis on a different trail to avoid ambush. For assisting him in dealing with Rentería, Matlack paid \$1,000 to Sánchez, who promptly moved to Texas. This left \$6,500 to be returned to the Marfa National Bank. Matlack did not consider his deception of Rentería to be a breach of



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of the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry*

faith, because he felt no obligation to deal honorably with men who intended to murder Davis and himself. When news of this change in plans reached General Dickman, however, his office announced that the other half of the ransom would be paid, "as the army would not be put in the light of having broken faith even with bandits."<sup>18</sup>

Early on the morning of 19 August, only a few hours after the aviators were safely in American hands, Colonel Langhorne informed General Antonio Pruneda, commander of Mexico's Ojinaga subdistrict, that a three-pronged punitive expedition was entering Mexico to capture Rentería and his band. Pruneda's military superior in Chihuahua City, General Manuel Diéguez, ordered him to tolerate the incursion on the basis of several nineteenth-century agreements that had granted the regular forces of each country the right to cross the border in pursuit of marauding Indians. Diéguez conveniently ignored the fact that these agreements did not apply to bandit raids and had not been in effect since the 1890s.<sup>19</sup>

Troops C and K of the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry under the command of Captain Matlack, using the two aviators as guides, formed the expedition's northern force, which crossed the border at Candelaria. Maj. James P. Yancey, the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry's newly assigned 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron commander, led the middle element, composed of Troop A, 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and Troop E, 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, across the Rio Grande at Ruidosa. Troop C, 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and the Machine Gun Troop of the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry comprised a southern force that entered Mexico across from Indio under the command of Maj. Charles C. Smith, the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry's 2<sup>d</sup> Squadron commander. Pack trains, small signal and medical units, and several civilians, including Dawkins Kilpatrick, accompanied the troops.<sup>20</sup>

Major Yancey had overall command of the expe-

dition. Born in Culpeper County, Virginia, in 1890, Yancey was a 1910 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, whose yearbook accurately observed and predicted that “he still has hopes of becoming one of Uncle Sam’s rough riders, when we feel sure he will be heard from.” After teaching briefly in Culpeper County public schools, Yancey applied for an appointment as an Army officer, but in 1911 he failed the required competitive examination at Fort Myer, Virginia, due to his lack of competency in an “elementary language,” Spanish. When he retook the exam in 1912, Yancey improved his score enough to be found qualified for mounted service, and he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 13<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. Yancey then spent several years serving on or near the border in New Mexico and Texas, before receiving an assignment to the 15th Cavalry in the Philippines. He rose quickly in rank as the Army expanded during World War I, and in 1918 he became a major.<sup>21</sup>

Captain Matlack’s column moved west through the Sierra Grande Mountains following a “hot trail.” After about nine miles, this trail split, and since the aviators had heard Rentería speak of taking money to his family in Coyame, the Americans followed the southern trail. Without encountering any bandits, the troops linked up with the Ruidosa column at T. O. Tank, a ranch watering facility, and camped for the night. The latter force had already captured five Mexican-American draft evaders shortly after crossing the Rio Grande and returned them to civil authorities in Texas.<sup>22</sup>

Lieutenants Estill and Russell H. Cooper supported the expedition on 19 August by flying a reconnaissance mission that passed over Quatralvo Springs, which was on Captain Matlack’s route. Spotting three mounted men in a canyon nearby, Estill and Cooper swooped down for a closer look. When the horsemen shot at their plane, Cooper returned fire with his machine gun, apparently hitting a man riding a white horse whom the airmen believed to be Jesús Rentería. Although they did not land to confirm this, the bandit’s death was reported through military channels and announced in newspapers.<sup>23</sup>

After heavy rains washed away the trail that the cavalrymen had been following, Major Yancey led two troops from T. O. Tank to Carrizo Springs, about fifteen miles farther west. A patrol captured three Mexicans, who were confined with a fourth prisoner taken in the settlement. They were not members of Rentería’s

gang, but Matlack recognized that U.S. authorities wanted the men for other crimes. Matlack identified the four prisoners as José Fuentes, wanted for murdering the brother of one of the civilian scouts who was accompanying the expedition; Jesús Jiner and his son Francisco, accused of stealing horses and cattle from Brite’s Ranch; and Bernardino Salgado, wanted for stealing horses. The identity of the fourth prisoner was, however, later placed in doubt.<sup>24</sup>

As the column left Carrizo Springs, Major Yancey ordered the prisoners’ military guards to turn them over to two law enforcement officials—the Marfa town marshal and a Presidio County deputy sheriff—and two other civilians who were accompanying the expedition, one of whom was the brother of the man Fuentes was accused of murdering. Lagging behind the column, these civilians executed the four Mexicans, leaving their bodies where they fell. The two troops and the civilians accompanying them then returned to T. O. Tank, where they linked up with the other four troops.<sup>25</sup>

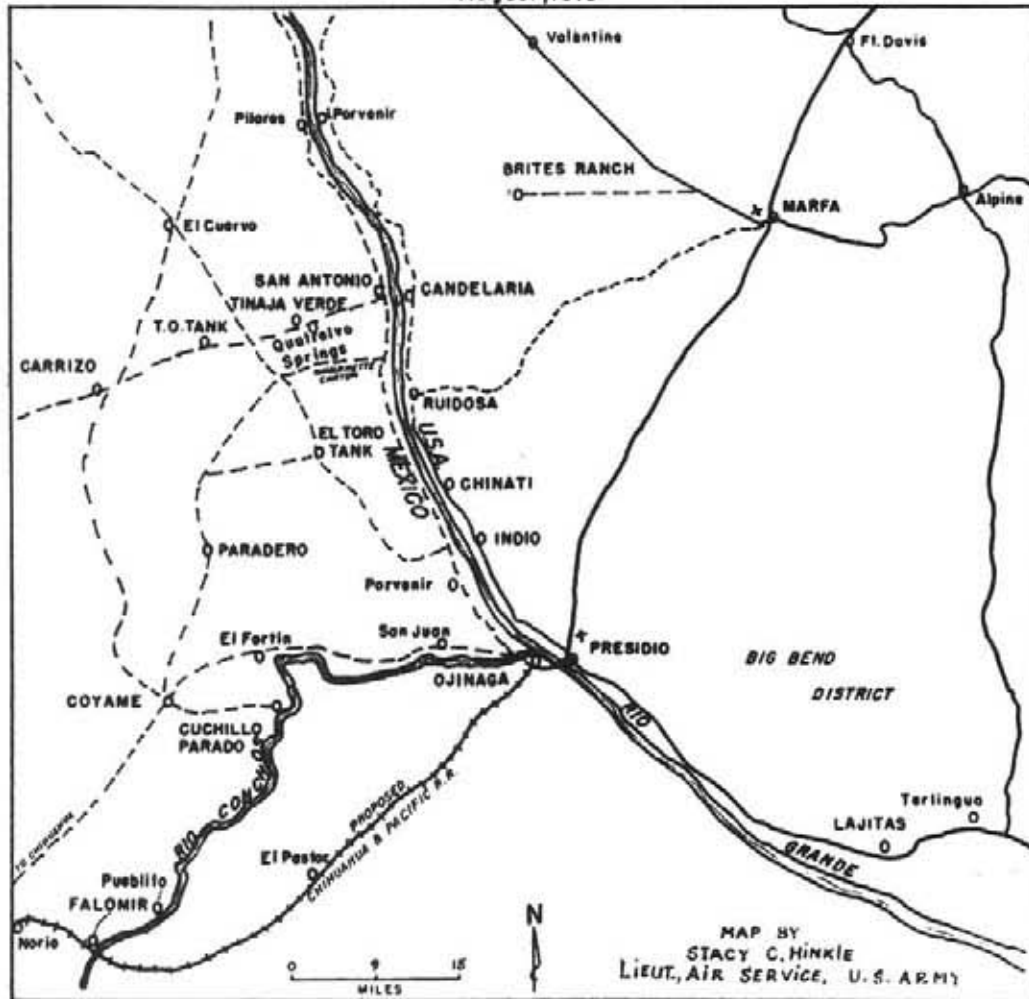
On 21 August Ygnacio Bonillas, the Mexican ambassador to the United States, sent a note to Secretary of State Robert Lansing protesting the expedition’s invasion of Mexican territory and demanding an immediate withdrawal. The *San Antonio Light* commented that it seemed “characteristic of the Latin temperament to . . . make a tremendous fuss about some comparatively insignificant thing. . . . It really seems as though Mexico should be grateful for the help offered by this country.”<sup>26</sup>

Five days after the Mexican ambassador’s protest, Secretary Lansing responded to it. He said that the Mexican government had been notified of the kidnapping of the two aviators, and, as it was unable to obtain their release, a ransom had to be paid. Lansing further explained:

The Government of the United States cannot be expected to suffer the indefinite continuance of existing lawless conditions along its border, which expose its citizens to maltreatment at the hands of ruffianly elements of the Mexican population, which their Government seems unable to control, and which have undoubtedly been encouraged to continue their acts of aggression against citizens of the United States by reason of the immunity from punishment for such acts which they have enjoyed.<sup>27</sup>



AIR SERVICE & CAVALRY SEARCH AREA  
August, 1919



Meanwhile, Captain Matlack had flown from T. O. Tank to Marfa to meet with Colonel Langhorne and General Dickman and explain why he had not paid the full ransom to Rentería. The general was especially upset, because he believed that the captain's action had dishonored the Army. Matlack explained that Langhorne's message to him had stated that the money had been raised by local ranchers, so he felt an obligation to save as much of it as possible. This mollified Dickman somewhat, and he allowed Matlack to return to the expedition. Before returning to San Antonio, however, the general publicly stated that an effort would be made to pay the remaining money to the bandits.<sup>28</sup>

The expedition remained at T. O. Tank on 21 August, sending out three small patrols, but it proceeded to El Toro Tank the next day. Early on the morning of

23 August, Major Yancey led his men south toward Coyame. About halfway there, the force stopped at the Paradero Ranch, and that night Captain Matlack took a ten-man patrol farther south. When he encountered a larger Carrancista force blocking the trail, Matlack wisely decided to avoid a confrontation by turning his men around and leading them back to the ranch. With Carrancista force levels increasing and prospects of capturing additional bandits running dry, General Dickman decided to recall the expedition. The six American cavalry troops promptly rode out of Mexico, their only casualties a few pack mules. At approximately 0030 hours on 25 August, during a heavy rainstorm, the last of the 375 soldiers crossed the Rio Grande near Ruidosa, many of them having ridden more than 250 miles in Mexico. Major Yancey proclaimed upon his return, "We had a good problem given us.

Our officers worked out the problem well and got valuable experience. Five bandits were killed while the expedition was in progress. The expedition was successful."<sup>29</sup>

Just before the cavalrymen left Mexico, some of President Carranza's troops reportedly captured nine members of Renteria's gang in a Coyame dance hall, and they were taken to Chihuahua City, tried by court-martial, and executed. On 1 September, in his annual message to the National Congress, Carranza charged that the American expedition constituted "a violation of our rights, a violation which was grave and uncalled for and which has wounded profoundly the patriotic sentiments of the Mexicans." Nevertheless, one week later, as a gesture of goodwill, the Mexican embassy in Washington informed the State Department that the lost DH-4 would be returned. The plane was shipped back to Fort Bliss via Juárez, but, after landing on broken ground and being dismantled for shipment, it was missing many of its parts and could no longer be flown. At the end of the month, as the Army continued its postwar downsizing, Lieutenants Davis and Estill were discharged from the Air Service as surplus officers, followed shortly thereafter by Cooper and Peterson. The latter two officers, however, would return to the Air Service in the 1920s and pursue military careers. The 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry also left the Big Bend, turning over its area of operations to the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and proceeding to Fort Bliss.<sup>30</sup>

Although the Army officially pronounced the punitive expedition a success, many citizens of the Big Bend were not completely satisfied with its results. They knew that many Mexicans across the Rio Grande were upset with the operation, and they fully expected bandit activity to continue. One Texan who was especially angry was J. J. Kilpatrick, Candelaria's 61-year-old justice of the peace and the father of Dawkins Kilpatrick. Neither of the Kilpatricks was fond of the military, and their feelings were reciprocated. Captain Matlack once described them as "the most vindictive, dishonest, immoral and filthy family in the town of Candelaria." Colonel Langhorne reported that J. J. "is said to have drunk sotol . . . for so many years that it has ruined his mind." Within a few days, the elder Kilpatrick journeyed to San Antonio to complain to General Dickman about the Army's presence in Candelaria, and he also wrote to the War Department, alleging that four Mexican prisoners had been mur-

dered at Carrizo Springs and not killed in an engagement, as had been reported.<sup>31</sup>

As a result of this complaint and representations from the Mexican government, Yancey was called before an officer of the Inspector General's Office in Washington in February 1920. In April that office recommended that he be tried by a general court-martial, and a month later Yancey was charged with violating three articles of war—ninety-two (murder), ninety-five (conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman), and ninety-six (a general article covering all offenses not specifically detailed in other articles). The court-martial of now-Captain Yancey, who had been reduced in rank as the Army contracted in size, convened at Fort Sam Houston on 14 June 1920. Twelve senior officers—six colonels, two lieutenant colonels, three majors, and Brig. Gen. George Van Horn Moseley, commander of the 2<sup>d</sup> Field Artillery Brigade, who presided—comprised the jury.<sup>32</sup>

The first charge specified that Yancey himself had killed the four Mexicans at Carrizo Springs. The second charge specified that Yancey had made two false statements to the inspector general regarding the Mexicans, had wrongfully delivered them to civilian scouts, failed "to care for and protect" them, wrongfully procured a false and untrue statement from some of the scouts, turned over the prisoners knowing that they would be killed, and failed to incorporate any account of the prisoners being captured or of their disposition in his official report on the expedition. The third charge repeated all of the specifications of the second charge. Captain Albert J. Myer, Jr., a cavalry officer who had participated in Pershing's punitive expedition into Mexico in 1916, prosecuted Yancey before the court. Myer was a grandson of Brig. Gen. Albert J. Myer, the Army's first chief signal officer.<sup>33</sup>

After more than a week of testimony, Captain Yancey's court-martial ended on 22 June, when the accused, in lieu of taking the stand, provided a signed statement to the court. In it, Yancey explained that he "had understood and felt that in accordance with the border custom that the proper disposition [of the prisoners] was to turn them over to the civilian officers." After this statement was accepted, Yancey's defense counsel, Col. Milton A. Elliott, an infantry officer, argued that the charge of murder was not sustained and that the act of turning the prisoners over to civilian

authorities was "regular, and in conformance with established custom."<sup>34</sup>

After conferring for two hours, the court reached its verdict, which could not be announced until it had been approved by the appointing authority, General Dickman. The court found Yancey not guilty of the first and most serious charge, murder, but found him guilty on six of the nine specifications in each of the other two charges. The court concluded that he "did, wrongfully and unlawfully fail to care for and protect the lives" of his four Mexican prisoners at or near Carrizo Springs while in command of a punitive expedition, and that he had subsequently made statements that he knew "to be false and untrue" both to Colonel Langhorne and to the Office of the Inspector General about the fate of those men, claiming that they had been killed in combat.<sup>35</sup>

The *Manual for Courts-Martial* clearly specified that "the punishment imposed by a court for a violation of the ninety-fifth article of war must be dismissal" unless that sentence were mitigated by the president of the United States. Dickman approved Yancey's sentence, "To be dismissed [from] the service," but, moved by the fact that half of the members of the court had recommended clemency, he added, "In view of all the circumstances surrounding the commission of the offenses alleged, the conditions of border service, and the previous excellent record and efficiency of this officer, clemency is urged."<sup>36</sup>

Any sentence involving the dismissal of an officer in peacetime had to be confirmed by the president, so Yancey's many supporters began writing letters designed to influence the commander in chief. In July forty-nine citizens of Marfa and Presidio County wrote Secretary Baker, asking him to show Yancey "such consideration as is possible." The following month, shortly after General Dickman approved the sentence, Congressman Carlos Bee of San Antonio, Texas, telegraphed a clemency plea to the judge advocate general, Maj. Gen. Enoch Crowder, to whom Dickman had forwarded the record of the trial. After a board of review completed its work in November, General Crowder deferred to the recommendation of clemency from Dickman, his West Point classmate, and forwarded a draft letter to Secretary Baker requesting that President Wilson reduce Yancey's punishment. Baker, however, rejected his staff's advice and urged the president to confirm Yancey's dismissal.<sup>37</sup>



*James P. Yancey as a VMI Cadet  
(Virginia Military Institute Archives)*

Two members of Congress from Virginia, Congressman Thomas W. Harrison of Winchester and Senator Claude Swanson, a former governor with close ties to the Virginia Military Institute, wrote on Yancey's behalf to fellow Virginia-native Wilson. Harrison hoped that the president would be able "to extend to this young man the clemency which has been recommended by the officers that tried him and the officers who have reviewed his sentence." Swanson wrote that "leniency in this case will be very much appreciated not only by myself, but by the many excellent and influential friends and connections of Major Yancey in Virginia." Their efforts paid off, and when Wilson finally confirmed the court-martial verdict on 26 January 1921, he overrode Secretary Baker's recommendation and commuted the sentence so that Yancey would be subject simply to a reprimand to be administered by General Dickman, restriction to the limits of his post or station for six months, and the forfeiture of fifty dollars of his pay per month for the same period. The extension of Yancey's military career was brief, however, as a board of general officers headed by General Dickman in 1922 placed Yancey in the group of officers selected for

elimination in a reduction of the Army mandated by Congress. Yancey retired as a major that December, after serving ten years on active duty. His retired pay was set at the level of one-fourth of his active-duty salary. He died in June 1965.<sup>38</sup>

Captain Matlack's friends also brought political influence to bear on his behalf. Five months after Yancey's court-martial, Matlack's disabled right arm caused him to be honorably discharged. There were no provisions for an officer commissioned on an emergency basis to retire with disability payments, but Matlack's many supporters, anticipating his medical discharge, had managed to secure special legislation for him. As early as 1 June 1919, L. C. Brite, a prominent Presidio County rancher, had written Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas and said of Matlack, "The conscientious work of this officer is known throughout this portion of Texas. He has been a true and valuable friend to the cattlemen in protecting their property, and now that the time has come for him to lay aside his life's work, everyone is more than anxious to see that he receives suitable recognition from the Government."<sup>39</sup>

Later that month Congressman Claude Hudspeth of El Paso introduced a bill to authorize the president to appoint Matlack a Regular Army captain and for him to retire as such. In July Senate Military Affairs Committee chairman James W. Wadsworth of New York addressed Matlack's situation in a bill he introduced making special provision for eight officers. Wadsworth's bill would authorize the president to appoint Matlack directly as a captain on the retired list, subject to Senate confirmation. A letter from Matlack's father, calling for "simple justice" in his son's case, may have influenced Wadsworth. The senior Matlack had argued that "the battle fronts of the World War were not all in Europe. The Mexican border was one or is one that has demanded as much exacting service and furnished as much danger as many others."<sup>40</sup>

While Hudspeth's bill did not emerge from committee, the Senate approved Wadsworth's bill on 2 August 1919, two weeks before Jesús Rentería kidnapped Lieutenants Peterson and Davis. The Senate bill passed the House on 23 April 1920 and became law the following month, but the president did not exercise the authority this act gave him to place Matlack on the retired list and in November 1920 the captain was honorably discharged. Matlack did, however, be-

come eligible for veterans' benefits extended to disabled wartime veterans under the World War Veterans' Act of 1924, and in 1928 he was appointed to the emergency officers' retired list, after Congress provided for such disability retirements over President Coolidge's veto. Matlack died in 1957.<sup>41</sup>

The kidnapping of Lieutenants Peterson and Davis occurred at one of many low points in U.S.-Mexican relations. Several American citizens had been kidnapped or murdered in Mexico in the two months before the expedition, and Washington wanted to signal a less indulgent attitude toward President Carranza's failure to protect American lives and property from the "ruffianly elements" of his population. Public opinion solidly supported "handling the border nuisance without gloves," as the *San Antonio Light* characterized the operation. In an editorial on "Mexico's Protests," the *New York Times* maintained that Mexico had "yielded with a bad grace to the logic of international law," judging the expedition "salutary" and an "avorter of war." The *Philadelphia Inquirer* took a more jingoistic slant in an editorial that asked if the expedition was "a slap-on-the-wrist affair or are we shaking the iron fist in earnest? Some day we shall have to make up our minds that Mexico will have to be dealt with as we dealt with Cuba under Spanish Government. There seems to be no getting away from it."<sup>42</sup>

Today, it is difficult to measure the success of the Army's last punitive expedition into Mexico. Evidence suggests that, in spite of the claims of Lieutenants Cooper and Estill, Jesús Rentería did survive their strafing, although he was never again a nuisance in the Big Bend. Bandit activity there generally died out after 1919 and the Army discontinued the Border Air Patrol two years later, but this was due primarily to increased settlement in West Texas and improved stability in Mexico.<sup>43</sup>

Although American disregard for Mexican sovereignty and the human rights of Mexican citizens in August 1919 may certainly be faulted, American authorities did give serious consideration to these subjects and acted to impose at least some level of restraint. From a purely military perspective, the incident underscored the nation's timeless need for well-trained armed forces, such as the cavalrymen, who when called upon to defend their countrymen's security, were ready, willing, and able to ride through country that just got "worse and worse."

Roger D. Cunningham is a retired Army lieutenant colonel. His first assignment after graduating from the U.S. Military Academy was with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, at Fort Hood, Texas. He later served as a military police officer in the United States and Korea and as a foreign area officer in Pakistan, Egypt, and Nepal. He was the U.S. Defense Attaché in Kathmandu in 1991–1992. His article “‘His Influence with the Colored People is Marked’: Christian Fleetwood’s Quest for Command in the War with Spain and Its Aftermath” appeared in the Winter 2001 issue of *Army History* (No. 51).

## NOTES

The author would like to thank Mitchell Yockelson of the National Archives; Diane D. Jacob of the Virginia Military Institute Archives; and Sandra Tomczak, an archivist with the Association of Graduates, U.S. Military Academy, for their superb assistance.

1. W. D. Smithers, *Chronicles of the Big Bend: A Photographic Memoir of Life on the Border* (Austin, 1976), p. 140 (first quotation); U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Investigation of Mexican Affairs: Preliminary Report and Hearings*, S. Doc. 285, 66<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>d</sup> sess., 1920, p. 1629 (second quotation).
2. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers*, 2<sup>d</sup> ed. (Austin, 1935), p. 478, containing the quotation; T. R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star* (New York, 1968), p. 690; Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775–1945*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 20–212 (Washington, D.C., 1955), pp. 196–97; Paul J. Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress: Bandits, Police, and Mexican Development* (Lincoln, 1981), pp. 165–80.
3. On the 1916 punitive expedition see Clarence C. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars* (New York, 1969); Herbert Molloy Mason, Jr., *The Great Pursuit* (New York, 1970). On the National Guard’s mobilization, see *Report on the Mobilization of the Organized Militia and National Guard of the United States, 1916* (Washington, D.C., 1916); *War Department Annual Reports, 1917*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1918), 1: 197–98; Michael D. Doubler, *I Am the Guard: A History of the Army National Guard, 1636–2000*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 130-1 (Washington, D.C., 2001), pp. 159–62, 171.
4. *Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War (1917–1919)*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1931–49), 3: 605–06; Rpt, Brig Gen George Garretson, 7 Aug 1898, Doc. file #113328, Record Group (hereafter RG) 94, Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, National Archives (hereafter NA); Allan R. Millett, *The General: Robert L. Bullard and Officership in the United States Army, 1881–1925* (Westport, Conn., 1975), p. 116; *Official Army Register for 1893*, p. 390; 1894, p. 332; 1895, p. 339; 1896, p. 332; 1897, p. 249; 1916, p. 169. When Colonel Langhorne in 1920 described the length of frontier included in the Big Bend District as 420 miles, he was presumably including the Rio Grande’s twists and turns. See *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, S. Doc. 285, 66<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>d</sup> sess., p. 1630. Langhorne’s younger brother, Cary, received the Medal of Honor for heroism as a Navy surgeon at Veracruz in 1914.
5. Mary Lee Stubbs and Stanley Russell Connor, *Armor-Cavalry*, Pt. 1: *Regular Army and Army Reserve* (Washington, D.C., 1969), p. 36; Semimonthly Officers’ Reports, 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 1 Aug 1919, World War I Strength Returns, RG 407, Records of Army Commands, NA; *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, S. Doc. 285, 66<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d sess., p. 1641. Colonel Roberts’s report also appeared in the *Army and Navy Journal* 56 (16 Aug 1919): 1724.
6. *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, S. Doc. 285, 66<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>d</sup> sess., pp. 1630–39; “Regimental Notes,” *Cavalry Journal* 29 (April 1920): 102 (first quotation); Ronnie C. Tyler, “The Little Punitive Expedition in the Big Bend,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 78 (January 1975): 287 (second quotation); Clendenen, *Blood on the Border*, pp. 279–81, 344–46; Webb, *Texas Rangers*, pp. 499–501.
7. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border*, pp. 352–55, with the first quotation taken from the report on the action by the commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, Col. Selah Tompkins, on p. 355; Stacy C. Hinkle, *Wings over the Border: The Army Air Service Armed Patrol of the United States–Mexico Border, 1919–1921* (El Paso, 1970), p. 6; *War Department Annual Reports, 1920*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1921), 1: 244–45, containing the second quotation. The main elements of the U.S. force that entered Juárez were the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>

Cavalry and the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

8. Hinkle, *Wings over the Border*, pp. 11–12.

9. Herbert Molloy Mason, Jr., *The United States Air Force: A Turbulent History* (New York, 1976), p. 75; Stacy C. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles: The Air and Cavalry Punitive Expedition of 1919* (rev. ed., El Paso, 1974), pp. 6–7.

10. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, pp. 21–22. J. J. Kilpatrick, a Candelaria merchant, later alleged that Peterson and Davis landed in Mexico to present the Army with a “bandit chasing opportunity,” but this is highly unlikely. Harry Warren, a former U.S. Customs inspector who had taught and ranched for many years on both sides of the Rio Grande and had been a justice of the peace in Presidio County, surmised that the Army airmen might have flown into Mexico on purpose but certainly did not intend to be captured. See “Border History – Circular No. 4,” pp. 24–25, folder 88, box 4, Harry Warren Papers, Archives of the Big Bend, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas (copy in the CMH Library). This document was evidently written by Kilpatrick and annotated by Warren.

11. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, p. 9, containing the quotation; *New York Times*, 21 Aug 1919; Weekly Rpt [on Mexican Border Conditions] No. 332, Southern Dept, 23 Aug 1919, box 1370, Central Decimal Files, Mexican Border, RG 407, NA.

12. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, pp. 23–24; *San Antonio Light*, 29 Aug 1919. The telegrams to military officials went to the secretary of war, the Southern Department commander, Colonel Langhorne, and the aviators’ group commander in El Paso.

13. *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, S. Doc. 285, 66th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 1632, 1647–49; Compiled Military Service Record of Leonard F. Matlack, 1<sup>st</sup> Kentucky Volunteer Infantry, and Box 847, Regular Army Enlistment Papers, RG 94, NA; *Official Army Register, January 1, 1932* (Washington, D.C., 1932), p. 1159; Glenn Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande: Mexican Raids and Army Pursuits, 1916–1919* (El Paso, 1992), pp. 63–64; Ltr, Langhorne to CG, Southern Dept, 25 Mar 1919, printed in U.S. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, *Relief of Certain Army Officers*, S. Rpt. 98, 66<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1919; “A Bill for the Relief of Captain of Leonard F. Matlack,” H.R. 5583, 66<sup>th</sup> Cong., Library of Congress. Langhorne’s letter stated that Matlack’s injuries were

incurred in April 1917, but the preamble to the House bill observed that he received them in April 1918. The letter’s description of another participant in the accident, Charles Telford, as a major indicates that the latter date is in fact correct, as Telford held that rank in April 1918 but did not in April 1917 or March 1919. 14. *New York Times*, 20 Aug 1919; *San Antonio Light*, 20 Aug 1919; *Army and Navy Journal* 56 (23 Aug 1919): 1772; *New York Times*, 22 Aug 1919.

15. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, pp. 13–14, 16.

16. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 Aug 1919; *San Antonio Evening News*, 18 Aug 1919.

17. *Washington Evening Star*, 18 Aug 1919; *New York Times*, 19 Aug, 22 Aug 1919.

18. *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, S. Doc. 285, 66th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 1657–58, with the Spanish quotations and translations on p. 1657; *San Antonio Evening News*, 19 Aug 1919, containing the quoted announcement from General Dickman’s office; Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, p. 19. Harry Warren later claimed that Matlack had invented the story about the murder threat to justify his action and protect himself from Dickman’s wrath. See “The Aviators’ Mishap and Their Ransom,” p. 5, folder 88, box 4, Harry Warren Papers (copy in CMH Library).

19. *New York Times*, 20 Aug 1919; Don M. Coerver and Linda B. Hall, *Texas and the Mexican Revolution: A Study in State and National Border Policy* (San Antonio, 1984), p. 129; William M. Malloy, comp., *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776–1909*, 2 vols., S. Doc 357, 61<sup>st</sup> Cong., 2d sess., 1910, 1: 1144–46, 1157–59, 1162–63, 1170–71, 1177–78. Ojinaga was located across the river from Presidio.

20. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, pp. 26–27; Semi-monthly Officers’ Reports, 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 1 Aug and 1 Sep 1919, World War I Strength Returns, RG 407, NA. Yancey had just joined the regiment on 16 July. Major Smith had graduated from West Point in 1916. The remaining civilians with the expedition included two customs agents, two scouts, the marshal of Marfa, a Presidio County deputy sheriff who was a former Texas Ranger, and a rancher. For details see Review by the Board of Review, 16 Nov 1920, CM 140113, RG 153, Records of the Judge Advocate General’s Department, NA.

21. Yancey file, VMI Archives, Preston Library, Lexington, Va.; Doc. file #1266785, RG 94, NA; 13<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regimental Returns, 1912–1916, roll 111, National Archives Microfilm Publication M744; Proceedings of the General Court-Martial of James P. Yancey, p. 148, CM 140113, RG 153, NA; *Official Army Register, January 1, 1923* (Washington, D.C., 1923), p. 1168.
22. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, p. 28; *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, S. Doc. 285, 66th Cong., 2d sess., p. 1658; Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*, p. 74.
23. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, pp. 31–32, 44–45.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 39, 40. A member of the Jiner clan informed Harry Warren that the man identified as Salgado was actually Antonio Franco of Palomas, Mexico. See Warren's report of the "Court-Martial of Major Yancey," p. 1, file 88, box 4, Harry Warren Papers (copy in CMH Library).
25. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, pp. 30, 40; *San Antonio Express*, 16 Jun 1920; Smithers, *Chronicles of the Big Bend*, p. 44. The Indio column had arrived at T. O. Tank on the afternoon of 20 August.
26. *San Antonio Light*, 21 Aug 1919.
27. U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1934), 2: 560.
28. Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, p. 34; *New York Times*, 24 Aug 1919.
29. Major Yancey's Report on the Expedition, 24 August 1919, CM 140113, RG 153, NA; Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, pp. 37–38; *New York Times*, 25 Aug 1919, 26 Aug 1919, with the quotation in the issue of 26 August. The distance covered during the expedition varied by troop. For example, Troop K marched 287 miles, while the Machine Gun Troop reported covering 273 miles. See the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regimental Return, Aug 1919, World War I Strength Returns, RG 407, NA.
30. *New York Times*, 24, 25 Aug 1919; U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1919*, 2: 537 (containing the quoted words); Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, pp. 46–47; *Official Army Register, January 1, 1944*, pp. 191, 729. Cooper and Peterson reentered the Air Service in 1920 and 1924, respectively.
31. Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*, pp. 70, 80, containing the quotations; *San Antonio Evening News*, 29 Aug 1919; Hinkle, *Wings and Saddles*, pp. 38–39; Harry Warren, "The Punitive Expedition into Mexico, Hunting the Kidnappers of the Aviators," p. 9, folder 88, box 4, Harry Warren Papers (copy in CMH Library). Warren was not impressed with the expedition, calling it a "wandering, murdering, sotol drinking spree." According to the 1920 manuscript federal census, J. J. Kilpatrick; his wife, Lula; and their two sons, Dawkins and Jim, all lived together in Candelaria.
32. "Memo to General Crowder," 4 Nov 1920, CM 140113, RG 153, NA; *San Antonio Evening News*, 15 Jun 1920. Moseley, who would revert to a peacetime rank of lieutenant colonel on 30 June 1920, later became a major general and served in 1930–33 as Army deputy chief of staff under General Douglas MacArthur.
33. General Court-Martial Orders No. 6, War Department, 1921, pp. 1–8, with the quoted words on p. 3; Ltr, John Walden Myer to S. F. Tillman, *Army-Navy-Air Force Register*, 10 Jun 1957, copy in Albert J. Myer file, Signal Corps files, Force Structure and Unit History Branch, CMH.
34. *San Antonio Evening News*, 22 Jun 1920.
35. General Court-Martial Orders No. 6, War Department, 1921, with the first quotation repeated on pp. 3 and 6 and the second quotation repeated on pp. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7; *San Antonio Light*, 22 Jun 1920.
36. General Court-Martial Orders No. 6, War Department, 1921, p. 9; *A Manual for Courts-Martial, etc.* (New York, 1917), pp. 145, 185–86, 280, with the first quotation on p. 145; Ltr, six members of Yancey's court-martial board to Dickman, 22 Jun 1920, CM 140113, RG 153, NA. Five colonels and a lieutenant colonel recommended clemency. One of them, cavalry Col. Franklin Johnson, was one of Dickman's West Point classmates in 1881. Another, Col. Edgar Jadwin, would serve as chief of engineers in 1926–29 and retire as a lieutenant general.
37. *Manual for Courts-Martial*, pp. 185–86; Ltr, Texas citizens to Baker, n.d. [received 20 Jul 1920]; Telg, Bee to Crowder, 28 Aug 1920; Rpt of the Board of Review, 16 Nov 1920, all in CM 140113, RG 153, NA; Memo, Baker for Wilson, 25 Jan 1921, case file 5430, reel 382, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
38. Ltr, Harrison to Wilson, 11 Dec 1920; Ltr, Swanson

to Wilson, 13 Dec 1920, both in CM 140113, RG 153, NA; Henry A. Wise, *Drawing out the Man: The VMI Story* (Charlottesville, Va., 1978), p. 92; General Court-Martial Orders No. 6, War Department, 1921, p. 9; Obituary, Yancey File, VMI Archives; *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 42: 722–23; Special Orders 168, War Department, 1922; Work sheet, 18 Nov 1923, James P. Yancey file, entry 528, Records related to officers reconsidered and recommended for elimination in 1922, RG 165, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, NA; *Army Register*, 1923, p. 1168. After Wilson suffered a series of incapacitating strokes in the fall of 1919, his wife Edith controlled access to him, and she assumed a very influential role in the decisions he made during his final eighteen months in office. A lifelong Virginian, she may have joined with Harrison and Swanson in urging the president to reduce Yancey's sentence. Upon his death, Yancey was buried in the Culpeper National Cemetery.

39. *Official Army Register*, 1932, p. 1159; Ltr, Brite to Sheppard, 1 Jun 1919, file H.R. 5583, Papers Accompanying Specific Bills and Resolutions, Committee on Military Affairs, 66<sup>th</sup> Congress, RG 233, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, NA.

40. "A Bill for the Relief of Captain of Leonard F. Matlack," H.R. 5583, 66<sup>th</sup> Cong., and "A Bill for the Relief of Certain Officers of the United States Army

and for Other Purposes," S. 2448, 66<sup>th</sup> Cong., both in the Library of Congress; Ltrs, W. H. Matlack to Wadsworth, 8 Jul 1919, and Wadsworth to W. H. Matlack, 14 Jul 1919, file S. 2448, Papers Relating to Specific Bills and Resolutions, 66th Congress, RG 46, Records of the U.S. Senate, NA.

41. *Congressional Record*, 58: 3560–61, 59: 6097–6101; *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 41: 607, 43: 607, 45: 735–66; *Official Army Register*, 1932, p. 1159; *U.S. Army Register*, 1 January 1957, 2: 353; 1 January 1958, 2: 330. The 1928 act enabled officers not in the Regular Army who had incurred at least 30 percent permanent physical disability in the line of duty between 6 April 1917 and 2 July 1921 to be placed on the Emergency Officers' Retired List and receive 75 percent of the pay they had been earning when discharged.

42. *San Antonio Light*, 20 Aug 1919; *New York Times*, 24 Aug 1919; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 Aug 1919; Manuel A. Machado, Jr., and James T. Judge, "Tempest in a Teapot? The Mexican–United States Intervention Crisis of 1919," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 74 (July 1970): 1–23.

43. "Border History – Circular No. 4," p. 8; Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*, pp. 77–79; Smithers, *Chronicles of the Big Bend*, p. 55; Ronnie C. Tyler, *The Big Bend: A History of the Last Texas Frontier* (Washington, D.C., 1975), p. 187.

### 2002 Conference of Army Historians

The 2002 biennial Conference of Army Historians will be held on 6–8 August in the Crowne Plaza Washington Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. The theme of the conference will be "The Cold War Army, 1947–1989." Four workshops geared to Army historians will be conducted on 6 August. Twenty-four academic panels relating to the Army in the Cold War will be held on 7–8 August. Panelists will include federal and academic historians, active and retired Army officers, and foreign officers and civilians. Panels will address nuclear weapons, missile defense, the training and staffing of the Army, and the Vietnam War.

You may reserve lodging at the Crowne Plaza Washington Hotel by calling (703) 416-1600 or (800) 227-6963. We ask those planning to stay at the conference hotel to mention the Conference of Army Historians when making room reservations, as the hotel is setting aside a number of rooms for conference attendees. The conference registration form is posted on the CMH website at <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/CAH2002/RegForm.htm>. The form lists the address to which the completed form and registration fee should be sent. Inquiries about the conference should be directed to Dr. Robert Rush at the Center of Military History. His email address is [Robert.Rush@hqda.army.mil](mailto:Robert.Rush@hqda.army.mil).



## THE CHIEF'S CORNER

John Sloan Brown

We have had yet another very busy quarter, with long-term business continuing alongside high-energy and short-notice activities to address the War on Terrorism. Let me share a few highlights of our ongoing activities.

This quarter the Histories Division, like the rest of the Center, continued to support the Secretariat and the Army Staff in the War on Terrorism. A broad range of historical studies, from vignettes and information papers to short histories, addressed Army warfighting in all its aspects and ensured that the Army's leaders would be guided in their planning and decision processes by a strong and appreciative sense of the past. Among the division's products were papers on mobilization, homeland defense, and the Soviet-Afghan War; a series of twelve studies—a "jihad gazetteer"—on the relationship of certain countries to terrorism; and, toward the end of the quarter, a first look at U.S. ground operations in Afghanistan. Underlying this first look at the fighting was the quest for lessons bearing on Army Transformation and the Quadrennial Review.

Beyond the mission of war support, the Histories Division continued to write the history of the U.S. Army, making headway on several fronts. A major work on the history of MACV, the joint command, received a favorable review from a CMH panel in March. A new volume in the Vietnam series, *Special Operations in Southeast Asia*, won approval from the Army Historical Strategic Planning Committee in October. That volume received enthusiastic support from the Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg and should go a long way toward filling a major gap in the history of operations in the Vietnam War. Two other volumes enjoying high-level interest neared completion in draft as the quarter ended: a history of the Puerto Rican 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry in the Korean War and an updating of *The Sergeants Major of the Army*, first published in 1995.

The Field Programs and Historical Services Division in concert with the Histories Division took the lead in the Army's effort to collect oral history testimony about the 11 September attack on the Pentagon and its aftermath. In this connection, the Center's capabilities were enhanced by the activation of two Army Reserve military history detachments (MHDs), the 46<sup>th</sup> and 305<sup>th</sup>, and their assignment to the Center. Together, members of the Histories Division and the detachments have interviewed more than five hundred people, military and civilian, ranging from victims to rescuers and bystanders. Once completed, these Operation NOBLE EAGLE interviews will constitute the single most important collection of information on the attack and the Army's response to it. This is not to mention the three MHDs dispatched overseas to the U.S. Army Central Command and two en route to the Army Special Operations Command, about which I will have more to report in the future.

Two historians from the Field Programs and Historical Services Division presented papers at the second conference sponsored by the Military History Working Group of the Partnership for Peace Consortium. The conference was held in Sofia, Bulgaria, during the first week in March. Dr. Robert Rush spoke on "The Bulgarian Soldier, 1910–1913" and CSM (and Dr.) Scott Garrett addressed "United States Military Interests in the Balkans, 1870–1914." The conference focused on military policy in Europe from the Franco-Prussian War to the outbreak of World War I, paying particular attention to the Balkan conflicts of that period. Organized by French and Bulgarian military history offices, it received contributions from historians from a dozen countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the United States.

Another important accomplishment with significant importance for the field history program is the Center's completion of Phase I of a cooperative digitization project with Headquarters, U.S. Army, Europe. The USAREUR Historical Office, directed by its command to undertake the electronic conversion

of several collections in its holdings, was able to secure contract services for this effort by utilizing an existing CMH contract to preserve historical documents digitally. Since the Center also possessed copies of most of the documents that USAREUR identified, we reached an agreement that will benefit both agencies by digitally preserving the historical records without duplication of effort. The first batch of material has been posted to a USAREUR website for global dissemination, and we have begun discussions on the digitization of materials identified for the second phase.

The biggest news from the Museum Division this quarter was the secretary of the Army's selection of Fort Belvoir, Virginia, as the site for the National Museum of the United States Army, along with the further deliberations that flowed from that site selection. Given that our first admonition to establish an Army museum in the National Capitol Region came in 1814, to have a decision paper signed by Secretary of the Army Thomas White with the concurrence of congressional leaders does represent a considerable breakthrough. Our intent is that the National Museum of the United States Army not only serve as a capstone museum to tell the Army's story in the National Capitol Region, but also that its design, construction, and resourcing benefit and generate interest in every museum in the Army Museum System. We are organizing committees now to shepherd the project through a major fund-raising effort to a 2009 opening date. Expect to be consulted—or even asked to sit on a committee—as work progresses. We will welcome and need the active support of the entire Army Museum System to make this project be all it can be for all of us.

The development of the United States Military Academy bicentennial exhibit in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, popularly labeled USMA 200, is also moving along with CMH assistance. The actual name for the exhibit will be "Engineering, Exploration, and War—the United States Military Academy and the Making of America, 1802–1918." It will in effect tell the story of the entire U.S. Army during the period in which our nation grew from a cluster of communities along the Atlantic seaboard to a transcontinental nation and a global power.

The Office of Production Services has remained truly busy as well. Consider the titles delivered since last the *Army History*:

1. *Judge Advocates in Combat: Army Lawyers in Military Operations from Vietnam to Haiti*, by Col. Frederic L. Borch, a co-imprint with the Office of the Judge Advocate General;
2. *Battle of Balls Bluff: Staff Ride Guide*, by Ted Ballard, the prototype for a new series of high-quality, printed staff-ride booklets;
3. *Quarters One*, updated edition;
4. *Army Historical Program, 2002*;
5. *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 1993*;
6. *Publications of the United States Army Center of Military History, 2002*, compiled and edited by Linda Holbert.

I think you will agree that there is a lot going on in the Center of Military History and in the Army Historical Program. Let me extend my personal thanks to all of the energetic and enthusiastic people who are doing so much to make all of this happen.

### **Government Printing Office Offers New Email Alert Service**

The Government Printing Office has initiated an email alert service to inform interested web users of publications relating to military history as it offers them for public sale. Individuals may register for the military history alert service or any of GPO's other topical alert services on the web at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov/alertservice.html>. The CMH website, <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg>, has a link to that web address. This service has already announced a number of CMH publications.

## In Memoriam: Colonel Bettie J. Morden (1921–2001)

Retired Col. Bettie J. Morden, a highly regarded officer and author who worked at the Army Center of Military History for sixteen years, died of cancer on 12 October 2001 at her home in Arlington, Virginia. Born on 12 August 1921 in Port Huron, Michigan, she worked for the Chrysler Corporation before enlisting in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps on 15 October 1942. After training at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, she served at the Third Women's Army Corps Training Center at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, where she became first sergeant of Headquarters Company, South Post. After her discharge from the Army in November 1945, she attended Columbia University in New York, receiving a bachelor's degree in 1949 and a master's degree in English the following year.

Colonel Morden enlisted in the Army Reserve in September 1949 and was commissioned a reserve second lieutenant in the Women's Army Corps in 1950. She returned to active duty in May 1952 as a first lieutenant. During her first ten years of active commissioned service, she served two tours with the U.S. Army Security Agency and commanded Women's Army Corps detachments at Fort Riley, Kansas, and Pirmasens, Germany. She served in 1962–1965 as a personnel officer at the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the Defense Language Institute, spending time away in 1964 to attend the Command and General Staff College.

In January 1965 Colonel Morden assumed command of the Women's Army Corps Training Battalion at Fort McClellan, Alabama. This organization was responsible for preparing female basic trainees, reenlistees, and reservists for Army life. The director of the Women's Army Corps selected Morden in November 1966 as her executive officer. Colonel Morden remained in the director's office through 1972, serving as acting deputy director of the Women's Army Corps from February 1971 to May 1972. From August to December 1972 she chaired a committee charged by acting Army Chief of Staff Bruce Palmer, Jr., to study the potential impact on the Army of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment, which Congress had proposed to the states for ratification. This eighteen-member committee recommended the admission of female cadets to the U.S. Military Academy, a reform effected in 1976 under congressional mandate. She retired from the Army at the end of 1972 with the rank of colonel and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. During her military career, Colonel Morden was also awarded the Legion of Merit, Joint Staff Commendation Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster.

Colonel Morden was recalled to active duty in February 1974 to serve at the Army Center of Military History and to write the history of the Women's Army Corps, which the Army would disestablish in 1978 as it integrated women into its other elements. She reverted to a retired status at the end of 1982, but she remained an associate at



*Colonel Morden*

the Center of Military History until she completed her book. The Center published *The Women's Army Corps, 1945-1978*, in 1990. This 543-page text has remained the most detailed account to date of the evolution of that women's military service organization after World War II. It won a Distinguished Book Award from the Society for Military History in 1991.

In July 1973 Colonel Morden became president of the Women's Army Corps Foundation, which later became the Army Women's Museum Foundation. She led these two organizations for twenty-eight years. The Women's Army Corps Foundation raised funds for the construction of the Women's Army Corps Museum, which opened at Fort McClellan, Alabama, in 1977. The Army Women's Museum Foundation raised funds for the Army Women's Museum at Fort Lee, Virginia, which opened in May 2001, replacing the Fort McClellan museum.

Remembering Colonel Morden's extraordinary contributions to the Army and to the understanding of its history, the Center mourns the death of this distinguished officer.

### New Official Military History Publications

The Center of Military History has published a new book by Col. Frederic L. Borch, *Judge Advocates in Combat: Army Lawyers in Military Operations from Vietnam to Haiti*, CMH Pub 70-77. It may be purchased from the Government Printing Office for \$44 under stock number 008-029-00373-2. The Center has also issued a new staff ride guide, Ted Ballard's *Battle of Ball's Bluff*, CMH Pub 35-1-1. It may be purchased from the Government Printing Office for \$7.50 under stock number 008-029-00372-4. Orders may be placed with the Government Printing Office online at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

The Center and the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command have issued a new edition of *American Military Heritage* by General William W. Hartzog. This is CMH Pub 69-6-1, which may be purchased from the Government Printing Office for \$25 under stock number 008-029-00371-6. The Center has also reissued three sets of prints of paintings of American soldiers by H. Charles McBarron covering the period 1775-1983. These prints are in the series *The American Soldier*, Sets 2, 3, and 4. Each set contains ten prints. These sets may be purchased from the Government Printing Office for \$9.50, 9.00, and 8.50, respectively. Their respective stock numbers are 008-020-00227-5, 008-020-00225-9, and 008-020-00760-9. Each of the prints in these sets may be examined on the CMH website, <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg>, by going to the artwork page and clicking on Print and Poster Sets.

The National Guard Bureau has published a new book by Lt. Col. Michael D. Doubler, *I Am the Guard: A History of the Army National Guard, 1636-2000*. The book is DA Pamphlet 130-1. It may be purchased from the Government Printing Office for \$48.50 under GPO stock number 008-000-00861-2. The Historical Office of the Office of the Secretary of Defense has published *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Volume 3: Strategy, Money, and the New Look, 1953-1956*, by Richard M. Leighton. The author was an Army historical officer during World War II and served as a civilian historian at the Office of the Chief of Military History for more than a decade. His 808-page volume may be purchased from the Government Printing Office for \$74 under GPO stock number 008-000-00863-9.

The Center has published two additional *Department of the Army Historical Summaries* in paperback. The summary for *Fiscal Year 1992*, by Dwight D. Oland and David W. Hogan, Jr., is CMH Pub 101-23-1. The summary for *Fiscal Year 1993*, by Stephen E. Everett and L. Martin Kaplan, is CMH Pub 101-24-1. These publications are available only to Army publication account holders, who may order any of the publications mentioned in this announcement from the Army Publications Distribution Center-St. Louis.

## WHITTLESEY'S "LOST" BATTALION

By Taylor V. Beattie

When an individual shows courage under stress, we feel a thrill at his achievement, but when a group of men flash out in the splendor of manliness we feel a lasting glow that is both pride and renewed faith in our fellow men.<sup>1</sup>

Lt. Col. Charles Whittlesey, 11 November 1920

It was 5:15 P.M. on 2 October 1918 when 554 men from nine infantry and machine gun companies in the 77<sup>th</sup> Division, upon whom popular history has pinned the moniker the "Lost Battalion," filed down the southern slope of a ravine buried in the depths of the Argonne Forest in France.<sup>2</sup> The bottom of the ravine was a muddy morass through the center of which snaked the Charlevaux brook, a tributary of the Aisne. Having by this time in their experience on the battle fields of France learned to place great value on dry feet, these "doughboys" lined up and trooped across a narrow plank bridge over the creek. Minutes before, their commander, Maj. Charles Whittlesey, a lanky, fastidious, Wall Street lawyer, had surveyed the situation from the ridge south of their northward movement. Across the way in the fading light he could just make out the chalk cliff backdrop of their objective, the Charlevaux road. Major Whittlesey considered the scene for a moment and ordered the force down the hillside and across the Charlevaux brook to the opposite hillside just below the road. They had made good progress, managing to slip through an unmanned gap in the German trench line on Hill 198. With daylight fading, the Charlevaux road in sight, and no German resistance evident on the hill ahead, Whittlesey ordered his men on to the objective.

The Americans established a position about 300 yards long and 60 yards deep just below the road on the reverse slope of the hill. The slope was steep and rocky, but the tired men dug in within the hour as darkness settled into the ravine. Whittlesey posted machine gun sections manning light French Chauchat machine guns (called the sho-sho by the Americans) and heavy Hotchkiss machine guns on his position's east and west flanks. He had established runner posts every 100 yards along the route of march to maintain

contact with the rear. Returning patrols reported that the surrounding terrain was clear of the enemy, so the position on the reverse slope of the hill appeared to be secure. The exhausted men under Whittlesey's command settled down to a cold but quiet night, disappointed that their wool blankets and overcoats had been left in the rear.



*Hillside on which the Lost Battalion had been surrounded for five days, as it appeared in November 1918 (Signal Corps photograph)*



*Major Whittlesey in France, 29 October 1918*  
(Signal Corps photograph)

By first light, patrols Whittlesey sent out on the flanks and rear of his position encountered small German contingents. The Germans who had previously occupied positions on Hill 198 had shifted westward twenty-four hours earlier to reinforce their defenses against the adjacent French. Satisfied that their western flank was secure for the time being, the Germans began shifting troops back to the trenches on Hill 198 and closed the seam in the defenses through which Whittlesey's unit had infiltrated the previous evening.

At 0830 the first trench mortar shells began to rain on the Americans from German positions<sup>3</sup>. The shells did little damage due to the protection provided by the reverse slope position. However, by mid-morning Whittlesey's men had received the first indications that the runner posts to the rear had been broken. Attempts to reestablish the posts were met with heavy machine gun fire from positions that had been vacated by the Germans the day before. Whittlesey's command was cut off.

OUR MISSION IS TO HOLD THIS POSITION AT ALL COSTS. NO FALLING BACK. HAVE THIS UNDERSTOOD BY EVERY MAN IN YOUR COMMAND.<sup>4</sup>

Order issued by Major Whittlesey in the Pocket  
12:00 P.M., 3 October 1918

Isolated from friendly forces and surrounded by a determined enemy, the men of the Lost Battalion stood their ground, enduring incessant sniper, machine gun, mortar, and grenade fire and vicious ground assaults led by flamethrowers. For five dreadful days characterized by cold, thirst, hunger, fatigue, pain, numbing fear, misery, and death, the Lost Battalion held on. Finally on 7 October 1918, 194 officers and men staggered out bearing 107 dead and 159 wounded. The Army would award five Medals of Honor and a number of Distinguished Service Crosses for actions taken in, around, and over the "pocket."<sup>5</sup> In a poignant postscript to the entire affair, Charles Whittlesey, who commanded the force in the pocket, apparently took his own life three years after the war's conclusion, dying at sea in what appeared to be a meticulously planned suicide.

I wish they would let me forget. . . . not a day goes by but I hear from some of my old outfit, usually about some sorrow or misfortune. . . . I cannot bear much more. I want to be left in peace.<sup>6</sup>

Charles Whittlesey to a friend, 12 August 1921

On 11 November 1921, the third anniversary of the end of the Great War, Whittlesey and some thirty other Medal of Honor recipients attended the interment of the first Unknown Soldier at Arlington National

Cemetery. In the following weeks Whittlesey drafted his own will and fine-tuned notes to pending law cases, ensuring, it now appears, that legal associates could seamlessly resume litigation in Whittlesey's stead.

On Thanksgiving Day 1921 the tormented former officer boarded the SS *Tolosa*, a passenger-carrying freighter bound for Havana, Cuba. Over the course of the day, Whittlesey wrote a number of letters to close friends and relatives, along with a note to the ship's captain providing detailed instructions for the disposition of the baggage left in his stateroom. The *Tolosa* quickly sailed beyond the statutory three-mile limit and began to offer alcoholic beverages in the saloon.<sup>7</sup> During the evening Whittlesey had a drink in the saloon with a passenger named Maloret and engaged him in casual conversation concerning the war. Abruptly, Whittlesey rose from the table and announced that he was going to bed. The recipient of the Medal of Honor, one of the men whom General Pershing named as the "three outstanding heroes of the A.E.F.," went out on deck and stepped over the rail to a self-appointed rendezvous with eternity somewhere in the Atlantic.<sup>8</sup> His body was never recovered.

I am convinced that his death was in reality a battle casualty and that he met his end as much in the line of duty as if he had fallen by a German bullet . . . in the Argonne. The scars of conflict or the wounds of battle are not always of the flesh.<sup>9</sup>

Col. Nathan K. Averill  
a wartime commander of the 308<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
at a memorial service for Colonel Whittlesey

**On Hill 198, at the southern edge of the Charlevaux valley, looking into the pocket, late afternoon February 2000:** I stand at the military crest of Hill 198 and peer north into the ravine below, observing a sight not unlike that seen by Major Whittlesey on the afternoon of 2 October 1918. My imagination working and military intuition reeling, I feel a growing sense of understanding of how events may have unfolded here over eighty years ago. It's getting dark, and before sunset I need to be across the pocket and up on the road where my rental car waits. Though I have a map, compass, and flashlight and am really quite comfortable wandering the woods alone, the idea of stumbling around this pocket with its associated

history after dark is unsettling.

I have been to the Lost Battalion's pocket, nestled deep within what could best be described as the bowels of the Argonne Forest, on numerous occasions since 1993. Each time I have departed, my spirit unsettled, bothered by the secrets hidden within. Why did Major Whittlesey choose to hunker down on the reverse slope within arm's length of his objective, rather than occupying the dominant high ground just to the north? Why had 554 men, a reinforced battalion, been pinned down during the initial stages of the siege by a contingent a fraction of their number? These and a host of other questions surge through my mind as I plow through dead leaves on the way down the steep slope into the ravine. The sights, sounds, and smells are all familiar to me. Even on warm days with the sun shining overhead, the ravine remains relatively cold and gloomy, the warming rays cut off by a thick, interlaced canopy of trees. The ground smells of rotting leaves, fertile soil, and mud with just a hint of sulfur from the marshy ground surrounding the brook. It is deathly quiet in the pocket with no birds singing and no leaves rustling save those I kick up. I slow my pace self-consciously like one who bursts into a church service in progress, suddenly, painfully cognizant of the faux pas. I fear that I am making too much noise for this hallowed ground.

While I have visited the site of the Lost Battalion on many occasions, this is the first time that I have approached the ravine from the south, tracing the route along which Major Whittlesey would have led his composite force. The perspective from this approach is telling. I should have taken this walk before.

The story of the Lost Battalion cannot be completely understood without an examination of the command environment and the associated combat that surrounded the saga of the ravine at Charlevaux mill. One immediately realizes that the "Lost Battalion" was neither lost nor a battalion. The force was in fact a composite unit composed of Companies A, B, and C of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, commanded by Major Whittlesey, and Companies E, G, and H of the 2<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 308<sup>th</sup> Infantry, with the latter battalion under the command of Capt. George McMurtry. The force also included Company K, 307<sup>th</sup> Infantry, under Capt. Nelson Holderman and Companies C and D of the 306<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion. Whittlesey was the senior officer present and therefore commanded the whole.

Gosh, I just lost my wrist watch.  
That's nothing; a major over in the 77<sup>th</sup> Division  
just lost a whole battalion.<sup>10</sup>

Two comedians at an Army show  
following the Armistice

As for being “lost,” nothing could be further from the case. The members of the Lost Battalion knew exactly where they were, not more than a kilometer north of the 77<sup>th</sup> Division’s frontline trace, trapped on the reverse slope just below their objective, the Charlevaux road. The Lost Battalion’s higher headquarters—its regiment, brigade, division, corps, and army, and even the A.E.F. and General Pershing—knew where it was. More important, with respect to the immediate prospects of the Americans trapped in the pocket, the Germans overlooking and surrounding the position knew exactly where it was. In fact, the Germans, members of the 76<sup>th</sup> Reserve Division, referred to the battalion in their communications as the *Amerikanernest* (American nest).<sup>11</sup> The Germans had occupied the region for some time and knew the area inside and out. Consisting largely of older reservists, the German troops in this region were no elite formation, but the difficult terrain of the Argonne Forest had leveled the playing field.<sup>12</sup> Capitalizing on the advantages of defending in rough terrain, the Germans had augmented the natural barriers of the forest with barbed-wire obstacles designed to canalize movement into meticulously planned kill zones, covered by small arms, grenades, machine guns, and trench mortars.

With respect to the larger picture, the American First Army was fresh from its first success, reducing the St. Mihiel salient, and was now into the Meuse-Argonne offensive, part of the overall Allied push directed by French Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch. While the offensive had started well for the Americans, it bogged down quickly due to bad weather, difficult terrain, and tough German resistance. Foch became impatient with the slow American progress, noting that adjacent French armies appeared to be pulling ahead of American gains and that the resulting gaps would constitute a threat to Allied flanks. Ranking members of the French leadership reacted by suggesting that

French staff officers be incorporated into the management of U.S. divisions. Marshal Foch, who was inclined to act decisively, toyed instead with the notion of directing the French Second Army to take command over the U.S. I Corps.<sup>13</sup>

During the early months of American involvement in the war, General Pershing had engaged in a vigorous fight to keep the A.E.F. intact and able to fight as an American army rather than assigned piecemeal to French and British commands. Pershing perceived Foch’s latest plan as yet another attempt to break up the American army. Beside himself with anger and frustration, General Pershing persuaded Foch to delay his reassignment plan and demanded immediate action and results from his subordinate commanders across the Meuse-Argonne front, placing intense pressure on American corps and division commanders to advance.

A surprising twist to the story of the Lost Battalion, overshadowed by the hoopla of postwar legend, is the fact that Major Whittlesey’s command had been surrounded and cut off in the Argonne Forest not once but twice in the ten-day period ending on 7 October 1918. On 28 September, the third day of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, Major Whittlesey and his 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 308<sup>th</sup> Infantry, had continued the 77<sup>th</sup> Division’s attack north into the heart of the Argonne Forest. Following in close support was the regiment’s 2<sup>d</sup> Battalion under Captain McMurtry. A stockbroker by trade and an adventurer at heart, McMurtry had left Harvard at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War to serve in Cuba with Theodore Roosevelt and the “Rough Riders.” In 1917 again, he left Wall Street, this time to enlist and receive a commission as a first lieutenant. McMurtry had a reputation as a rough-and-tumble, fearless yet cheerful commander who was boundless in optimism and loved and respected by his troops.<sup>14</sup>

The fighting was tough in late September as Whittlesey’s unit slugged it out with German defenders, employing platoon-size groups of skirmishers to work through the thickly wooded, enemy-infested terrain. Under orders to support Whittlesey’s main effort, Captain McMurtry, who was always looking for a good scrap, used the frequent enemy contacts in the forest as an excuse to bring his command forward to fight alongside Whittlesey’s battalion. At 1715 on the 28<sup>th</sup>, Whittlesey’s command had advanced to a point about



a kilometer southeast of Binarville.<sup>15</sup> As the sun was setting, Whittlesey chose the reverse slope of *L'Homme Mort* (Dead Man's Hill) to establish a two-battalion headquarters for the night. Companies were placed in a square perimeter and runner posts were in position.

Whittlesey's unit occupied the far left flank of the U.S. sector. Liaison between the 77<sup>th</sup> Division and the adjoining 368<sup>th</sup> Infantry, a black U.S. unit attached to the French 1<sup>st</sup> Dismounted Cavalry Division, had been poor in the forest. On this date there had been no liaison at all, as the 368<sup>th</sup> had retreated before a German attack that left a large gap on the 77<sup>th</sup>'s left flank.<sup>16</sup> Taking advantage of this gap in Allied lines, the Germans infiltrated behind Whittlesey's force under the cover of darkness. By the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup>, Whittlesey knew that his runner posts had been cut off from the rear, and he used a carrier pigeon to send back a message describing the situation and position of the unit.

The regimental headquarters of the 308<sup>th</sup> received his message, and the regiment's commander, Lt. Col. Fred E. Smith, directed that all detachments lost in the woods should be collected and reorganized for further orders. A lead-from-the-front commander, Smith took off with a small detachment to relieve his friend cut off to the front. Proceeding down a path that he believed led to Whittlesey's position, Smith's detachment encountered a German machine gun position. Colonel Smith directed the others to seek cover and began firing his pistol. He was quickly felled by a bullet, which struck him in the side. Regaining his footing, he again fired into the positions until most of his men were safe. Refusing medical treatment, Smith then obtained grenades with which to attack the German positions. Returning to the spot, he was hit again and fell mortally wounded. For his efforts in trying to reach Whittlesey's unit and protect his own men, Colonel Smith was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.<sup>17</sup>

Whittlesey held his position until late afternoon on 30 September 1918, when elements of the 308<sup>th</sup> broke through and relieved the weary force. Thus ended the first chapter of the Lost Battalion saga. Major Whittlesey reported back to headquarters where he was again ordered to "advance independently without regard for exposed flanks or contact with adjacent units. Upon reaching the objective of the day, dig in and hold out for the rest of the Division to catch up." Whittlesey



*Major McMurtry upon his return to the United States, April 1919 (Signal Corps photograph)*

protested up the chain of command.<sup>18</sup> His unit, he said, was exhausted and down to 50 percent strength after the tough fighting of the preceding days. The commander of 77<sup>th</sup> Division, Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander, mindful of Pershing's state of mind and desiring to keep his job, flatly rejected the reclama. As a result, Whittlesey's augmented battalion attacked to the north on 2 October. As the sunlight faded at 1715, after a long day of fighting, Whittlesey stood at the military crest on the north side of Hill 198 looking down into Charlevaux valley.

The General says you are to advance behind the barrage regardless of losses.<sup>19</sup>

Order from Brig. Gen. Evan Johnson  
Commander, 154<sup>th</sup> Brigade  
to Col. Cromwell Stacey  
Commander, 308<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
2 October 1918

All right. I'll attack, but whether you'll hear from me again I don't know.<sup>20</sup>

Major Whittlesey to Colonel Stacey  
his new commander, 2 October 1918

My examination of the terrain and analysis of the situation some eighty years after the fact lead me to believe that Major Whittlesey crested Hill 198, sensed the weakness of his opponent as darkness approached, and hurried into the ravine to take his objective, a road that could be clearly seen from his position. Sacrificing security for speed, Major Whittlesey, I suspect, wanted to get his unit dug in and settled before dark. Whittlesey really had three options at this juncture: pull back to defensible terrain on Hill 198; get to the objective (the road) and set up there; or press forward still farther and take the high ground just north of the objective.

Any ground gained must be held. . . . If I find anybody ordering a withdrawal from ground once held, I will see that he leaves the Service.<sup>21</sup>

Brig. Gen. Evan Johnson  
Commander, 154<sup>th</sup> Brigade

Heeding his orders and the numerous threats concerning withdrawal from ground once held, Whittlesey elected to hunker down on the reverse slope just beneath the objective and wait there until the rest of the division could catch up.

**Back in the pocket, February 2000:** In the valley the floor is soft with mud, and care must be taken not to lose a boot in the odorous, calf-deep muck. A stream about two meters wide meanders lazily through the valley, flowing west toward the Charlevaux

mill. To the west sits a large pond where the stream was dammed some time after the war. This was an open field in 1918. With a careful and somewhat practiced eye, it is relatively easy to spot rusted chunks of shell fragments that had sliced through the ravine eighty years ago. On the north side of the stream there seem to be a number of small pools roughly one to two-and-a-half meters across. These are the old shell holes created by mortar and artillery rounds that rained into the pocket for five days. A misguided American artillery barrage, designed to relieve German pressure on Whittlesey's unit, probably made a number of these holes. While the Lost Battalion was pinned in its hillside positions, a U.S. field artillery officer had transposed the map coordinates for the American and German positions, causing the "friendly" barrage to fall on the American positions rather than those of their German tormentors.

We are along the road parallel 276.4.  
Our own artillery is dropping a barrage directly on us.

For heaven's sake, stop it.<sup>22</sup>

Whittlesey to U.S. forces, 4 October  
a message delivered by his last carrier pigeon

From the valley floor, the hill to the north rises to the Charlevaux road; for about 75 meters the hill is steep and difficult to ascend. The soil is loose and rocky, and at times all four limbs must be engaged to keep from sliding back. The men of the Lost Battalion dug their funk holes (fighting positions) right into the side of this hill, which provided them a modicum of protection from the plunging fire coming from the German positions above. The slope did not, however, provide any cover from the machine gun fire coming from the reoccupied German positions across the ravine to the south.

As an active-duty Special Forces officer, I am, as my craft requires, a light infantryman at the core. Desiring to understand the situation confronting a trapped rifleman in the pocket, I plop down into a number of the remaining funk holes to get a feel for the terrain. There is no rhyme or reason to the spacing or disposition of the pits. They are placed where I imagine exhausted soldiers found some room to dig. I hunker down into each position and with my walking

stick, turned model 1917 Enfield rifle, try to determine the fields of fire available from the hole. In all positions, the fields of fire and observation north are limited to the edge of the road. If I lift my head and body high enough to see the cliff, I know I could have been seen from the German positions above. As the old infantryman's adage goes, "if you can be seen, you can be hit, and if you can be hit, you can be killed." Observation and fields of fire are, however, relatively clear for 50–75 meters or more on the flanks east and west.

A variety of thoughts emerge, triggered by artifacts found in and around these positions. My eye catches an unfired U.S. .306-caliber bullet resting on some moss, plainly visible. The bullet has tarnished brown with age but otherwise is in good shape, its primer intact. If it were chambered into a rifle today, I'd bet a

case of beer it would fire. The bullet holds its own set of secrets. Ammunition in the pocket was at a premium; resupply meant stripping a dead buddy's body of remaining ammo. So why is this bullet here?

It pains like hell, Captain, but I'll keep as quiet as I can.<sup>23</sup>

Wounded private's reply to Captain McMurtry's query about how he was faring

The agony endured in the pocket is difficult to comprehend, more so to explain. As time dragged on, machine gun fire, mortars, grenades, flamethrowers, cold, thirst, and hunger all took their toll. Hardened men wept at the pitiful moans of wounded comrades beyond help, barely hanging on to life in adjacent funk



*Men from the Lost Battalion near Apremont, France, 29 October 1918*  
(Signal Corps photograph)

holes. Sticky blood-soaked bandages and puttees (leg wraps) were removed from the dead for use on the living. Each morning Whittlesey would arrange burial details within the perimeter for those who had died during the night. Burying the dead was hard work, as the men were weakened from starvation and exposure. Digging was done at best from a kneeling position but most commonly lying on the side. Great care in noise and movement discipline was taken as the click of an entrenching shovel against a rock or an observed flash of movement would be answered by a hail of machine gun fire from the opposite ridgeline. During the frequent mortar and artillery attacks, interred comrades would at times be blown free of their graves to rejoin crouching soldiers in the cramped funk holes.

And yet the members of the Lost Battalion hung on, with Whittlesey, McMurtry, and Holderman making the rounds to each funk hole, talking cheerfully, and speaking words of encouragement to their men. McMurtry was often heard to say, "It's all right boys; everything's practically OK."<sup>24</sup>

The suffering of your wounded men can be heard over here in the German lines and we are appealing to your human sentiments.<sup>25</sup>

Excerpt from a German appeal  
for the surrender of the Lost Battalion

Legendary accounts of the saga will say that Whittlesey shouted, "Go to Hell!" in response to a German call for surrender. The reality is that Whittlesey said nothing but simply ordered his men to take in the white panels they had laid out as a signal for aircraft, lest the Germans mistake them for a white flag of surrender. Then in an almost anticlimactic spin of fortune, the Germans, under pressure from American attacks farther north, pulled out of the area surrounding the pocket. At 7 P.M. on 7 October, five days into the ordeal, the first U.S. patrols made contact with the Lost Battalion, effecting not its relief but its incorporation into friendly lines.

**On the Charlevaux road looking down into the pocket, February 2000:** The sun has dropped beyond the hill. It won't be long now before night covers the pocket in a dark shroud. In keeping with a personal tradition started at least six visits ago, I pull a bottle of

French wine from the trunk of my car and raise it in salute to the men of the Lost Battalion. After a hearty draw, I consider the slope of the pocket momentarily and try to imagine the view eighty or so years ago. In my mind's eye I observe a sea of tin hats below me. Pale faces rimmed with grimy, black stubble peer up from their funk holes with a fixed melancholy stare. A revelation: there were 554 men jammed into a 300- by 60-yard box. As they were all bunched up, only those on the perimeter of the defense could engage me. Fields of fire would have been severely restricted for those in the middle, who could have been only marginally effective in combating a ground attack from any quarter. It is evident that the Lost Battalion could have brought only a fraction of its available combat power to bear in any direction. Promoted beyond his martial experience and abilities, Major Whittlesey, a citizen-soldier like so many others in the A.E.F., had made a junior-officer mistake.

Whittlesey had bunched 554 men together on the side of a hill within arm's reach of his objective in his determination, produced by an oppressive command environment, to attain and hold that objective, meshed with a need to keep all in his charge together and under his immediate personal control. In his mind, Whittlesey had accomplished his mission. But by ensconcing his force on the hillside, bunched as they were, Whittlesey unconsciously allowed an initially smaller enemy force to find, fix, and gradually hack away at his command with mortars, grenades, and machine gun fire. The saving grace in the end, it appears, was Whittlesey's decision to use the reverse slope, which provided a modicum of cover and concealment from observed fires.

The sun has set. The pocket is dark. It will be another year at least before I return to visit the Lost Battalion. I will be back. In spite of the fact that I now have some notion of how a smaller German force was able to encircle and pick apart Whittlesey's command, a larger question now lingers. In that silver-lined shadow of heroic legend, which blossomed from the misery of the Lost Battalion, a gray core remains posing the essential question. Was all of this necessary? This is a question that I am sure rested heavily on Charles Whittlesey's mind as he mounted the rail of the SS *Tolosa*, peered into the black waters running below, and stepped out to join the fallen ranks of his "Lost Battalion."

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### NOTES

1. Lee Charles McCollum, *History and Rhymes of the Lost Battalion* (Chicago, 1922), p. 3.
2. Various sources differ on the issue of how many men were trapped in the ravine. An account written by Maj. Charles Whittlesey and Capt. George McMurtry states that there were 554. See L. Wardlaw Miles, *History of the 308<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 1917-1919* (New York, 1927), p. 170.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
4. Typescript, Nelson Holderman, "Operations of the Force Known as 'The Lost Battalion,' from October 2<sup>nd</sup> to October 7<sup>th</sup>, [1918,] in the Forest of the Argonne, France," 1925, p. 21, Infantry School Library, Fort Benning, Ga.
5. Medals of Honor were awarded to Major Whittlesey

and Capt. McMurtry and Nelson Holderman for actions in the pocket and to 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Harold Goettler and 2<sup>d</sup> Lt. Erwin Bleckley, airmen who were shot down and killed trying to resupply the surrounded American force. Lt. Col. Fred E. Smith, who was killed in an attempt to relieve troops under Whittlesey's command trapped in an earlier pocket, was also posthumously awarded a Medal of Honor. See U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, *Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863-1978* (Washington, D.C., 1979), pp. 434, 442, 445, 452, 462, 467.

6. Irving Werstein, *The Lost Battalion* (New York, 1966), p. 17.
7. Although Prohibition had taken effect in the United States, alcohol could be served on U.S. vessels outside of its territorial waters.
8. Thomas M. Johnson and Fletcher Pratt, *The Lost Battalion* (Indianapolis, 1938), p. 279-81. Pershing's other outstanding heroes of the war were Sgt. Alvin York and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Samuel Woodfill. See John J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War*, 2 vols. (New York, 1931), 2: 392.
9. McCollum, *History and Rhymes*, pp. 4-5.
10. Johnson and Pratt, *The Lost Battalion*, p. 266.
11. American Battle Monuments Commission, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* (Washington, D.C., 1938), p. 364.
12. Johnson and Pratt, *The Lost Battalion*, p. 27.
13. Meirion Harries and Susie Harries, *The Last Days of Innocence: America at War, 1917-1918* (New York, 1997), p. 380.

### Upcoming Military History Conferences

The Council on America's Military Past (CAMP) will hold its 36<sup>th</sup> annual military history conference on 10-14 July 2002 at the Wyndham Old San Juan Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The conference will emphasize United States military activities in the Caribbean region and will include visits to historic military sites in Puerto Rico. Further information is available from retired Marine Col. Herbert M. Hart, who may be reached by phone at (703) 912-6124 or by email at [camphart1@aol.com](mailto:camphart1@aol.com).

The 28<sup>th</sup> International Colloquium of Military History will be held on 11-16 August 2002 at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel in Norfolk, Virginia. The conference theme is "Coming to the Americas: The Eurasian Military Impact on the Development of the Western Hemisphere." This will be the first international military history colloquium to be held in this country since 1982; it will be the third ever held in the United States. Registration materials and other information about the conference are available on the web at <http://www.uscmh.org/ICMHPPrereg.htm>. Registration must be completed by 1 June.

14. Miles, *History of the 308<sup>th</sup> Infantry*, p. 140.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
16. Typescript, Historical Section, Army War College, "The Ninety-Second Division, 1917–1918: An Analytical Study," 1923, pp. 26–34, in U.S. Army Center of Military History Library.
17. U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, *Medal of Honor Recipients*, p. 462.
18. Holderman, "Operations of 'The Lost Battalion,'" app. 3, containing the quoted words; Werstein, *The Lost Battalion*, pp. 48–49.
19. Johnson and Pratt, *The Lost Battalion*, p. 31.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Harries and Harries, *The Last Days of Innocence*, p. 371.
22. Johnson and Pratt, *The Lost Battalion*, p. 136.
23. Miles, *History of the 308<sup>th</sup> Infantry*, p. 158.
24. John Toland, *No Man's Land: 1918, The Last Year of the Great War* (Garden City, N.Y., 1980), p. 466.
25. Holderman, "Operations of 'The Lost Battalion,'" p. 39.

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### Letter to the Editor

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To the Editor:

Col. Antulio Echevarria's fine article on Count Alfred von Schlieffen in the Summer–Fall 2001 edition of *Army History* (No. 53) has much to commend it. He postulates that the military theories of the German Staff chief were much more flexible and comprehensive than previously realized and that his major work, the Schlieffen Plan, "can no longer serve as an example of a war plan that was too rigid or too focused on operational details at the expense of political objectives." Traditional criticisms, like those of the German historian Gerhard Ritter, are long due for major revision; at the very least von Schlieffen's work needs to be clearly differentiated from that of his successors who actually executed the failed German offensive during the opening months of World War I. Instead, a closer examination of von Schlieffen's writings, both during and after his tenure as General Staff chief (1891–1905), reveal a more careful thinker, one who was well aware of the growing power of the defense, the importance of new technologies, and the impossibility of achieving a decisive Napoleonic engagement on the extended modern battlefield.

By concentrating on the operational aspects of German prewar planning against France, however, Echevarria creates a straw man that is difficult to sustain within the historiographical record. Legions of history students have in fact learned that the essence of German prewar planning was a steadfast determination to avoid a debilitating two-front war by defeating Germany's potential adversaries in rapid succession. Such defeats were in turn predicated on

Germany's ability to mobilize, concentrate, and strike with its military forces significantly faster than could its foes—and not to any intrinsic technical, tactical, or operational superiority over them. In sum, an early and quick mobilization was the foundation of all German military planning, and any circumstance that reduced its vital lead-time was a major security threat. Thus to Berlin, the early mobilization of either Russia or France on the borders of the Reich was tantamount to a declaration of war completely independent of any operational or tactical concerns—whether, for example, Germany planned to strike first at one or the other or the precise location of that initial offensive. The result, as everyone knows, was that a Russian mobilization in 1914, primarily aimed at Austria-Hungary, in essence triggered an immediate German attack on France many hundreds of miles away. In this respect the German invasion of Belgium for operational reasons only compounded the basic flaws of the Schlieffen Plan but did not cause them. In fact, the series of events might have occurred almost any time following the Franco-Russian alliance of 1893 and the development of the first German two-front war plans in response. Such inflexible war plans—in no way limited to those of Imperial Germany—left little room for diplomacy and crisis decision-making, and thus have been roundly criticized by historians of the period.

In his presentation, the good colonel offers little evidence that von Schlieffen himself addressed these problems directly or challenged the isolation between Imperial Germany's operational military planning and its broader security concerns. The author notes that

during the 1905 winter war games von Schlieffen apparently abandoned a first-strike operational strategy but still planned for a decisive victory, after the initial enemy attacks had been defeated on both fronts. Nothing is shown that might, for example, suggest that the German chief of staff contemplated the economic and social planning that an extended war might necessitate after having “broken free of the Napoleonic paradigm.” His desire to fight closer to the French border (rather than expecting a decisive encounter after a penetration of northeastern France), was presumably to take advantage of Germany’s superior rail system that would allow a quicker buildup of tactical combat power, rather than simply to protect a vital German industrial area. In fact, Echevarria concludes that von Schlieffen had made “a decisive break from the [elder] Moltkean view that strategy was a system of *ad hoc* expedients” and that his “strategic requirements . . . drove first [his] operational, and then [his] tactical approaches [to war].” Hardly a testimony to flexibility or a summation that would justify a major revision in our judgment of von Schlieffen’s strengths and weaknesses!

Jeffrey J. Clarke  
Chief Historian  
U.S. Army Center of Military History

*Dr. Echevarria responded as follows:*

To the editor:

I must thank Dr. Jeffrey Clarke for his letter, for it illustrates both the confusion that has surrounded Schlieffen’s infamous legacy and how historians have contributed to it, even when we should know better. The Chief Historian has made two fundamental errors in his letter. First, he assumes that because Germany’s war plan of 1914 was strategically flawed, the operational aspects of Schlieffen’s planning are unimportant to the military historian. It is precisely this confusion that has induced “legions of historians” to do little more than pass along rote generalizations concerning the transgressions of turn-of-the-century military thinking. We have not had a fresh look at Schlieffen’s military thinking for some time. This is not to say that Schlieffen did not make some flawed

political assumptions in his planning or that Germany’s war plan of 1914 (which was not Schlieffen’s) does not deserve criticism, especially—but not only—for its rigid mobilization schedule and the lack of flexibility it afforded the Reich’s political leaders once that mobilization began. However, a genuine analysis of Schlieffen’s theories reveals that they—and those of many of his French, British, and American contemporaries—do, in fact, represent a decisive shift in, among other things, how warfare was perceived at the turn of the century. Yet it is also true that while this shift clearly entered into Schlieffen’s war planning, he did not enjoy sufficient influence outside the General Staff to improve the plan’s chances for success. He was not able, for example, to convince the Military Cabinet or the Reich’s political leaders to approve the necessary increases in the Kaiserheer. Germany’s political limits, and not the rigidity of Schlieffen’s war plans as Dr. Clarke suggests, elevated the risks Germany bore in going to war in 1914.

The second error that Dr. Clarke makes is that he conflates the so-called Schlieffen Plan, which was never actually carried out, with the Reich’s war plan of 1914, developed by the younger Helmuth von Moltke. Far from adulterating Schlieffen’s concept as many historians have assumed, Moltke developed his own. As one German historian has aptly written, “Moltke did not dilute the Schlieffen plan, he abandoned it.”<sup>1</sup> The strategic situation had changed significantly between 1906, when Schlieffen’s concept was completed, and 1914—and not in Germany’s favor. As chief of the General Staff, Moltke had the right and the duty to change Germany’s war plans. This he did. It was Moltke who incorporated the surprise assault on the Belgian city of Liège. It was Moltke who canceled the eastern deployment plan in 1913, leaving Germany with only one option, an attack against France, when the crisis of 1914 occurred. The similarities that Moltke’s and Schlieffen’s concepts shared owed mainly to circumstances of geography. There were, after all, only so many avenues of approach into France. Both Chiefs of the General Staff also shared the same assumption—not that the war would be short—but that Germany *could not win* a long one. If the Reich could not win quickly, it could not win at all. Hence, planning for a long war made little sense. For all the prestige that the General Staff

allegedly enjoyed, Moltke's warnings to the Reichstag in 1913 that the next war in Europe would not be short, seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

All of this is not to make Moltke the scapegoat for the Reich's failed war plan of 1914, but to give him his due. It is easy to forget that he had almost nine years to rewrite Germany's war plan. He also enjoyed more influence with the Kaiser and with the various bureaus within the German government than Schlieffen ever did. As historian Annika Mombauer has recently pointed out in her excellent book, *Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War*, the Reich's political leaders were well aware of all but a few aspects of the Moltke plan. They essentially approved the plan and in the process knew that they forfeited any opportunity to influence events once mobilization began. In 1914 Germany's political leaders consciously accepted the risk of war, without the "economic and social planning that an extended war might necessitate" that Dr. Clarke demands. The younger Moltke's great crime was not in changing Schlieffen's concept, but in

misleading Germany's political leadership as to how much of a gamble the plan of 1914 really was. Ironically, Moltke's concept of military honor prevented him from taking the only truly honorable course he had, namely admitting that the Reich's strategic situation in 1914 was nearly insoluble militarily.

Hence, the straw man is Dr. Clarke's. His criticisms pertain less to German war planning in general and more to one plan in particular, and less to the legacy of one chief of the General Staff than to that of another.

Antulio J. Echevarria II  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army  
Director of National Security Studies  
Strategic Studies Institute  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

1. Friedrich von Mantey, "Graf Schlieffen und der jüngere Moltke," *Militär-Wochenblatt*, 1935, no. 10, p. 398.

### Site Selected for a National Museum of the U.S. Army

Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White announced in October 2001 the selection of Fort Belvoir, Virginia, as the site of the future National Museum of the United States Army. The vice chief of staff of the Army, General John M. Keane, and the Executive Steering Committee he heads will provide oversight, guidance, and support for the project to develop a national Army museum.

At the Center of Military History, Director of Army Museums Jeb Bennett chairs a Museum Planning Committee composed of six Army Museum System staff members from around the country. This committee and its subcommittees will develop exhibit galleries, programs, policies, and special projects for the national museum. A separate Museum Advisory Panel chaired by former chief curator of the Army Jody Davis will review the planners' recommendations before the chief of military history forwards them to the Executive Steering Committee. Meanwhile, the Army Historical Foundation, led by retired General William W. Hartzog, will raise funds needed for a hoped-for June 2009 national Army museum opening.

Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, was among the sites considered by Secretary White for a national Army museum. While he did not select Carlisle, Secretary White did endorse in October 2001 a new Army Heritage Museum to be included in an Army Heritage and Education Center to be built on fifty-six acres adjacent to Carlisle Barracks donated by Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. Plans for this center include a new building for the U.S. Army Military History Institute (MHI) and an educational and visitor center, as well as the Army Heritage Museum. The new MHI building will be constructed using funds that have been appropriated by Congress, while the adjoining educational center and museum will be built using a combination of state and private contributions. The Military Heritage Foundation led by retired Brig. Gen. Joseph E. McCarthy is leading this fund-raising effort. Ground should be broken for the new MHI building in the spring of 2002.



### In Memoriam

Two Army civilian historians, Burton Wright III and Stephen P. Gehring, died in February 2002. Burton Wright was the historian at the U.S. Army Chemical School at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. A retired Army Reserve lieutenant colonel, Dr. Wright had served on active duty in Korea with the 2d Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry. He had worked as a historian in the Field and International Division of the Center of Military History in Washington, D.C., and at the Army Aviation Center, Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Stephen Gehring was the historian in the Office of the Deputy Commander for Transformation of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Lewis, Washington. He served as an enlisted man in Army combat service support units in Vietnam and in the 82d Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He taught history briefly with the University of Maryland's program in Europe. He went to work for Headquarters, U.S. Army, Europe, in 1976, serving as chief of its publications division and as a management analyst before becoming a historian with that command in 1987. He was the author of *From the Fulda Gap to Kuwait: U.S. Army, Europe, and the Gulf War*, a book the Center of Military History issued in 1998.

In addition, two special friends of the Army historical program, retired Col. Paul Braim and Dr. James H. Edgar, died toward the end of 2001. Colonel Braim served as an infantry officer in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. After his retirement from the Army, he earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of Delaware and taught at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He is the author of *Test of Battle: The American Expeditionary Force in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign* (Newark, Del., 1987) and *The Will To Win: The Life of General James A. Van Fleet* (Annapolis, Md., 2001) and has contributed papers to conferences of Army historians sponsored by the Center. He died in September 2001.

James Edgar was director of procurement policy and acquisition reform in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology when he died in October 2001. A retired Army Reserve lieutenant colonel, Dr. Edgar had received a Ph.D. degree in history from the University of Virginia in 1972. His long career in government service focused on Army acquisition. He worked closely with Defense Department historian Dr. Alfred Goldberg to win approval for the Defense Acquisition History Project now under way at the Center of Military History.

### CMH Historian Wins Prize from the Organization of American Historians

Dale Andradé of the Center of Military History and Kenneth J. Conboy of Jakarta, Indonesia, have been awarded the 2002 Richard W. Leopold Prize by the Organization of American Historians. The association awards the prize for the best book published in the previous biennium pertaining to the history of the federal government authored by a historian connected with that government or with the government of a state or municipality. Andradé and Conboy were honored for their book *Spies and Commandos: How America Lost the Secret War in North Vietnam* (Lawrence, Kans., 2000).

This is the second successive award of the Leopold Prize to a Center historian. William M. Hammond received the 2000 award for his book *Reporting Vietnam: Media and Military at War* (Lawrence, Kans., 1998).

**Book Review**  
by Samuel Watson

*Professional Military Education  
in the United States: A Historical Dictionary*  
Edited by William E. Simons  
Greenwood Press, 2000, 391 pp., \$95

This book, one of the most recent in the fine Greenwood series of military history dictionaries, will also be among the most widely used, for no other source so neatly concentrates so much information on professional military education (PME). The entries range across the services and across U.S. military history, though most, given the growing complexity of professional military education, concern twentieth- and twenty-first-century institutions. They cover the entire range of the services' military education, except training, such as the Army's Officer Basic Course, Officer Advanced Course, and Combined Arms Service Support School. Many address significant individuals, doctrinal concepts and terms, and themes in the history and practice of PME. Others address influential officer boards and major service, though not branch, journals. Most major European institutions are covered, as are reserve component education and significant congressional actions related to PME. The entries are presented alphabetically but not listed in the table of contents. That would have taken perhaps half a dozen pages but would have enabled the unacquainted to see what is available and refer to it more quickly. The entries are, however, thoroughly indexed, and asterisks within the text also indicate those persons and institutions addressed in separate entries. There is also a succinct introduction summarizing the evolution of professional military education in the United States, an evaluative postscript by the editor, a short general bibliography, and a list of acronyms and abbreviations.

The entries average about a page apiece. Most are written by insiders, and those pertaining to institutions are usually written by resident faculty or retirees from the school in question. Some of the entries are by authors of official histories. The tone of their assessments is usually quite balanced, celebrating

accomplishment while noting past difficulties and suggesting current problems. Judging from the entries in my area of expertise, the information is usually accurate, and the short bibliographies after the entries, usually comprising two to four works, are well selected and up to date. There are occasional errors, generally minor, and some of the excerpts from earlier works used for older topics, particularly biographical entries on nineteenth-century figures, are dated. The best example of this is the excerpt from Samuel P. Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957) on the so-called "American Military Enlightenment" of the 1830s. Huntington presented there an interpretive construct that, like so much of the history in his book, has been thoroughly undercut by more specialized scholarship, in this case that of Marcus Cunliffe and William Skelton.

*Professional Military Education in the United States* will be valuable to all PME commands. It provides a quick shortcut for junior officers and civilians overwhelmed by unfamiliar acronyms and confusing references to the plethora of military educational institutions, presenting hard-to-find historical background and a concise summary of each institution's responsibilities and vision. (Having it on my bookshelf will save the officers in my department from a lot of questions I would otherwise ask them.) Given this utility, there should be sufficient demand for Greenwood Press to publish future editions, and if it does so, the publisher should include telephone numbers and web and e-mail addresses for the current institutions that are described. Collecting this information in a new edition every few years would raise *Professional Military Education in the United States* to a level of utility very rarely seen in historical dictionaries.

*Dr. Samuel Watson is an assistant professor of history at the U.S. Military Academy, where he teaches courses on antebellum and Civil War America. He is the author of the chapter on the years to 1865 in the academy's bicentennial history that will be published by the Government Printing Office later this year. The University Press of Kansas will publish his book on Army officers in the borderlands of the early Republic next year.*

**Book Review**  
by Samuel Watson

*Mr. Polk's Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War*

by Richard Bruce Winders

Texas A&M University Press, 284 pp.  
cloth, 1997, out of print; paper, 2001, \$ 17.95

*Mr. Polk's Army* is about the connections between Army and society, explored along multiple axes from multiple perspectives. Bruce Winders provides an interesting survey of the life and death of American soldiers from recruitment to Mexico City, drawn mostly from published primary sources. He reminds us that for American soldiers the war with Mexico was proportionately the most lethal in our history: At 110 per thousand, Americans' Mexican War mortality was nearly double the mortality rate of 65 per thousand during the Civil War. Almost 90 percent of these deaths were by disease, and Winders provides an excellent discussion of the reasons for the high morbidity and the state of military medicine during the war. This material, like his chapter on American attitudes toward Mexico and its inhabitants, echoes James M. McCaffrey's *Army of Manifest Destiny: The American Soldier in the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York, 1992), and there is little to choose between them on the American military experience of the war. McCaffrey, however, used many more manuscript collections in his research, and even Winders's secondary research is incomplete, as he cites only one article and one dissertation besides his own written since 1987. McCaffrey also treated operations, which Winders does not address, although Winders provides on pp. 163-64 a short but interesting account of reactions to battle.

*Mr. Polk's Army* is superior in its informative chapter on weapons and equipment and its attention to the politics of officer appointments, the focus of Winders's 1994 dissertation. Commissions in state volunteer units were inevitably politicized, but Winders demonstrates that Democratic politicians, especially President James K. Polk, took an active hand in filling the hundreds of new commissions opened up by the creation of eleven Regular Army regiments, which nearly doubled the size of the regular officer corps during the war. Winders perceptively observes that

expanding the Regular Army gave Polk more direct control over these appointments than if the units had been recruited as volunteers by the states. Antebellum regulars, often with two decades' company-grade experience, were systematically excluded from promotion to the field-grade slots in these units, ten of which were raised only for the duration of the war, leaving commissions in the new regiments almost entirely to men appointed directly from civilian life.

Though the statistics on partisan affiliation are incomplete, Winders uses available samples to show that Polk, following the logic of the Jacksonian-era spoils system, preferred Democratic candidates for these commissions at every rank. Four of the five new major generals (excepting only Zachary Taylor, promoted after his initial victories) and twelve of the fourteen brigadier generals (excepting longtime regulars David Twiggs, a Democrat, and Stephen Kearny) were appointed directly from civil life; all of the civilian appointees to general officer rank were either Democratic politicians or men with significant connections to that party. Hoping to forestall opposition (Whig) political gains, Polk searched unsuccessfully for Democratic appointees from civilian life (most famously Senator Thomas Hart Benton) to supersede regulars Winfield Scott, the commanding general and a Whig presidential hopeful since 1839, and Taylor—also a Whig, but politically inactive before the war—to command the war's major offensives. This pattern, along with Polk's incessant suspicion and overbearing treatment of Taylor, Scott, and the Army staff, amply demonstrated the president's "disdain" (p. 195) for the prewar regulars, though this was perhaps due as much to Polk's desire for personal control—he accurately considered himself more efficient than most people, regardless of profession—as to ideology or partisanship alone.

Yet the picture is more complicated than Winders suggests, for longtime professional officers maintained effective control at the tactical and operational levels, and there were no major strategic controversies between the president and his generals. Polk was unable to replace Taylor or Scott, both of whom, like the regular officer corps as a whole, served him faithfully despite their partisan allegiances and his partisan suspicions. Brig. Gen. John Wool, a Whig, led the invasion of Chihuahua, and Kearny led the advance through New Mexico to California. Taylor and Scott

gave their ranking regulars, Twiggs and William Worth—a Whig and a Scott protégé, as well as an aggressive, experienced commander and expert tactician—priority over the volunteer major generals, the largest divisional commands, and the principal responsibility for leading assaults throughout their campaigns, despite the fact that Twiggs was a brigadier, and Worth a general only by honorary brevet.

Winders does a fine job examining the soldier's experience of the war. He illustrates the links between that experience and the political culture of the late 1840s and 1850s, including the increasing sectionalism and rapid partisan realignments of the period. Winders fails to demonstrate, however, the detailed knowledge of the Army's evolution necessary to explain pre- and postwar Army politics and civil-military relations. Statements on page 15 notwithstanding, the Regular Army's composition did not undergo frequent change between 1821 and 1846. While it often came under rhetorical attack in Congress, it was in that period remarkably stable in practice. Nor was the Army at a "low ebb" (p. 9) in effectiveness in 1845. Some foreign and civilian observers critiqued its readiness, but inspection reports and officers' testimony strongly suggest that the Army's drill and discipline improved after the conclusion of the Seminole War in 1842, and this would be borne out by its performance on the Rio Grande. As Congress had not mandated or even provided for military retirement, half the field-grade officers assigned to the regiments of Taylor's army on the Rio Grande were too old for active service, but the regiments (battalions in today's terms) were commanded effectively by senior captains. The adjutant general meanwhile assigned a lieutenant straight out of West Point to each company of the new Regiment of Mounted Rifles to instruct the president's officer appointees in drill and discipline.

Winders acknowledges that available samples suggest an even partisan split among regular officers, but he takes Polk's belief that most officers were Whigs at face value, much as he accepts the private statements of grievance from the officer corps. Both were powerful perceptions, but neither was really accurate. Apart from attempting to replace Scott with Benton, Polk's appointments were really efforts to provide temporary patronage and postwar political advantage to state-level Democrats rather than to supersede the professionals or to refashion the Regular

Army along partisan lines, as Theodore Crackel found Thomas Jefferson to have attempted. For all the president's caviling, there is very little to suggest that Polk truly questioned the principle of professional expertise.

Yet Winders's attention to wartime appointment politics leads him to assert that "political influence often played an important part in an officer's advancement" (p. 56)—a highly distorted portrait of Regular Army life and antebellum civil-military relations. Officers grumbled constantly, so the perception of influence was certainly present, but Regular Army promotion almost entirely followed an extraordinarily rigid system of seniority. Winders's only example of an officer's receiving a political promotion in the antebellum Army is John C. Fremont, Senator Benton's son-in-law. This was a very rare exception to the rule though, as such, a glaring one that generated considerable outrage among officers. But Fremont's leap in promotion was into the new Mounted Rifles in 1846, not in one of the old regiments before the war. As William Skelton has pointed out, most of the politicking in the Regular Army was for choice duty assignments, not the rare opportunity for promotion into new (and often temporary) units. Regulars were certainly conscious of partisan politics, but they were not elected by the troops, as in volunteer units, so their discipline and demeanor remained very much that of the antebellum Army, as Winders points out when discussing relations between officers and enlisted men.

West Pointers continued to fill the vacancies in the old regiments. Though not promoted for their prewar service, antebellum regulars kept their commissions when the temporary regiments were disbanded after the war, so the composition of the professional officer corps actually changed very little. Ironically, as Winders acknowledges, the war's greatest impact on the Regular Army came in an enhanced reputation that effectively preempted Democratic critiques (like Polk's) after the war ended. The politicization of wartime appointments notwithstanding, victory cemented West Point's status as the primary peacetime commissioning source until the Civil War and predisposed both Democratic and Republican presidents to seek men with regular experience for most senior commands at the outset of that conflict.

This is not the conclusive study of the Army and American society in the war with Mexico. Winders's

concise, highly readable book does many things, especially for the volunteers and temporary regiments and as a social-cultural military history from the bottom up, but Winders's portrait of the Regular Army is less convincing. Indeed, by showing the many ways in which regulars, volunteers, and politicians (as well as officers and enlisted men) came into conflict, the author's evidence undermines his statement that "American participants in the Mexican War shared a common experience" (p. xi) based on the society from which they came. This is true if one's comparison is to another national society, such as that of Mexico, but Winders exaggerates by defining the perspective of Americans generally as "Jacksonian." Whigs and Democrats cannot be treated simply as members of similar political parties.

Instead, Winders's evidence suggests that there were at least three distinct categories of American soldiers during the war with Mexico: President Polk's army of largely rural and Protestant volunteers, who were Jacksonian democrats (and usually Democratic party adherents as well) from the South and the West, who elected their officers and resisted discipline; old-line regular officers, more urban and national in origin, split about evenly between Whigs and Democrats, but generally conservative and nonpartisan in temperament; and regular enlisted men, largely recent Irish and German immigrants isolated from political involvement, heavily Roman Catholic, predominantly residing in the urban East, and subject to a much more rigid discipline. (The civilians commissioned into the new regular regiments were similar in origin to the volunteers.) *Mr. Polk's Army* delineates both the substantial differences between professionals and citizen-soldiers and their integration into an effective force. Readers will have to evaluate the evidence for themselves to see the distinctions, but their time doing so will be well spent.

#### **Book Review**

by **John W. Mountcastle**

#### ***"A Grand Terrible Drama"***

***From Gettysburg to Petersburg***

***The Civil War Letters of Charles Wellington Reed***

**Edited by Eric A. Campbell**

**Fordham University Press, 2000, 402 pp., \$49.95**

Eric Campbell is a highly regarded National Park Service historian at Gettysburg. He has made a major contribution to our appreciation of the Civil War by providing us with this skillfully edited collection of wartime impressions recorded by one who fought in that conflict. We, the readers, are the beneficiaries of Campbell's painstaking research and expert knowledge of his subject. One can argue that it isn't absolutely necessary that an author or editor be familiar with battlegrounds to explain the battles that occurred there. But I believe that Campbell's personal experience in guiding visitors around the Gettysburg Battlefield and explaining the importance of what happened there gives him a decided advantage when dealing with materials that relate to the Civil War. It is very clear that he has an excellent "feel" for the events of 1-3 July 1863 and for the war of which they were a part. His experience with the terrain and with the units that fought over the ground enables him to better understand and interpret the first-person accounts of his subject, a young Union soldier.

Campbell is your guide to the Civil War experiences of Charles Wellington Reed. He does not intrude into your exploration of Reed's story, but you will benefit greatly from his editing as you read the young soldier's illuminating wartime letters. The fact that he thoroughly understands the national mood of the 1860s and the history of the Army of the Potomac is immediately evident in his organization of this collection of 180 letters and hundreds of drawings. Campbell's editorial notes capture the events and clarify the context in which young Private Reed recorded his experiences as a Union volunteer serving as a bugler in the Ninth Massachusetts Battery. Not only do Campbell's expansive and useful notes frame the correspondence of the fledgling bugler; they also assist us in gaining a much better appreciation for the events that significantly affected the soldiers of this fighting unit in the Army of the Potomac. Moreover, he inserts concise editorial narrative to fill the gaps that sometimes occur in his subject's correspondence.

The book's introduction and first chapter suffice to provide us with the sort of background information we need on Charles W. Reed. We learn about the interests and aspirations of this 21-year-old who enlisted on 2 August 1862 for service as a bugler in a newly formed battery of Massachusetts artillery. Campbell's

description of Reed's family background, the photo taken early in his Army service, and the letters Reed wrote to family and friends documenting his early training combine to give the reader an excellent feel for the young man. We learn early on that Bugler Reed was self-effacing and serious about his performance of duty. While he was a volunteer for wartime service only, the young fellow was also genuinely committed to "getting ahead" as a soldier and looked for opportunities to better his station. Because of his unique status as senior bugler in the battery, Reed was able to associate with the noncommissioned officers, a situation that pleased him.

The Civil War was the greatest event of Reed's life, just as it was for most men of his generation. Reed served in his battery for nine months before being exposed to enemy fire. His comments on the difficulties of life during the harsh winter of 1862 at a series of central Virginia camps are illuminating and often amusing. The departure of the battery's initial and ineffective commander and his replacement by an experienced combat officer handpicked by Massachusetts Governor John Andrew occurred prior to the unit's baptism of fire. Bugler Reed's letter of 5 March 1863 commented on the impact of his new commander's arrival: "John Bigelow, our new Captain, arrived here last Saturday afternoon with Lieutenant Foster, who has been home on furlough. He is a young and fine looking fellow, but the rules and regulations he has laid down for us are worthy of a 'Regular' of lifetime experience." (p. 83)

Reed and his comrades were fortunate to have had four months of effective training under Bigelow's direction prior to their first combat action at Gettysburg. On the second day of the battle, the Ninth Massachusetts Battery found itself fighting desperately to delay the advance of Longstreet's Confederate troops as they assaulted the Union Third Corps positions near the Trostle Farm. Reed distinguished himself during the battery's defense of the Union position and saved his wounded battery commander at the risk of his own life. He subsequently participated in the Mine Run campaign of 1863, the Overland campaign of 1864, and the siege of Petersburg. In the course of his nearly three years of active service, he produced an extensive collection of sketches and issued a number of lithographs that sold well among the Army of the Potomac's soldiers. Following the Civil War, his artistic

talents contributed to the success of the very popular book by John Davis Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee, or the Unwritten Story of Army Life*, first published in 1887. Reed's gallantry in action at Gettysburg was belatedly recognized in 1895 by the award of the Medal of Honor.

This published collection deserves the praise it has received from academic historians. It is very nicely organized. By providing substantive notes along the side of each page instead of endnotes or footnotes, the publisher encourages more frequent reference to Campbell's annotations than is generally the case. The sketches used to illustrate the correspondence are beautifully reproduced and contribute substantially to the reader's appreciation for Reed's wartime experiences. The drawings are quite interesting in their own right, because of the skill with which the young artist and self-taught cartographer depicted personalities (Grant, Custer, et al.), equipment, and locations.

Campbell also provides a number of appendixes that focus on events that occurred after the Civil War, including Reed's much-delayed receipt of the Medal of Honor. Each of the appendixes is interesting in itself and contributes to the reader's appreciation for nineteenth-century America. The volume has a full bibliography, especially useful to anyone seeking a guide for library collections of primary sources. The index is equally useful and well organized.

The inclusion of the many illustrations, along with the excellent quality of the book's paper and binding, has undoubtedly contributed to the book's only drawback. At the publisher's price of \$49.95, it is simply too expensive for many readers. Fortunately, both major on-line booksellers are offering it at a discounted price. If you are looking for first-person accounts of Civil War camp life and combat by someone who viewed both with an accomplished eye, this would be an excellent addition to your library.

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Flame On! U.S. Incendiary Weapons, 1918–1945  
(Shippensburg, Pa., 1999).

## Book Review

by Len Fullenkamp

### *Grant*

by Jean Edward Smith

Simon and Schuster, 2001, 781 pp., \$35

Jean Smith's biography of Ulysses S. Grant covers his military career, his years in the White House, and the last years of his life. With a text of just over six hundred pages, Smith devotes the first four hundred to Grant's early career and the Civil War, leaving just over two hundred pages to cover Grant's service during the tumultuous years of Andrew Johnson's presidency, his two terms in the White House, the writing of his memoirs, and the events leading to his death from cancer in 1885. The reader will consider this distribution of effort with mixed views.

How Grant was able to rise from personal failure and obscurity in 1861 to command all the Union armies in 1864 and why he so successful as a general but a failure as president are questions any good biography of Ulysses Grant must address. Jean Edward Smith, currently the John Marshall Professor of Political Science at Marshall University, ably explains Grant's genius on the battlefield and the events that led to his eventual selection as general-in-chief of the Union armies. Equally provocative, but less developed, are his views on Grant's political education and his two terms as president. Smith's Grant is not the political neophyte and incompetent chief executive others have portrayed; rather, he is a man of modest talents forced to grapple with exceedingly challenging issues in the most difficult of times. Smith provides an interesting and well-grounded analysis of Grant's presidency, and therein lies this biography's best feature. Unfortunately, the reader is left wishing that Smith, a political scientist, had expanded the sections dealing with Grant's political life, even at the expense of coverage devoted to his military career.

Smith finds the foundation for Grant's later military successes in the war with Mexico, where he served under both of the great military commanders of that war, Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor. Smith argues

that Grant's views on war were greatly influenced by these two men. It was Taylor's informal and relaxed command style that Grant later emulated in the Civil War, while from Scott Grant learned the art of campaigning and one of its most important aspects, logistics. Just as Scott had been able to conduct a successful march on Mexico City without maintaining lines of communication with his base, so would Grant later conceive of a similar decisive attack on the capital of Mississippi during the Vicksburg campaign.

Smith examines Grant's service in the Civil War from his early stumbles as a general officer at the battle of Belmont in Missouri to his final victory at Appomattox. Throughout, Smith provides an interesting balance between narrative detail and critical analysis. The chapters on Shiloh and the Vicksburg campaign are superbly crafted. Smith finds Grant's special relationships with such men as Elihu Washburne, William T. Sherman, Henry Halleck, and Abraham Lincoln as key to understanding Grant's development as a general, and he illustrates how each of these important figures helped Grant along the way. We find that Grant helped himself as well by bringing to bear those traits and characteristics that best explain his success on the battlefield: an above-average intellect; courage, both moral and physical; an indomitable will; and a finely honed intuition cultivated by experience.

Grant found that amid the confusion and chaos of battle he had an uncanny sense of how things were going, leading him to press the attack when he sensed he had an advantage. Ironically, as Smith so ably points out, Grant was often wrong in his judgments, yet it was his simple view of things that gave him the edge he needed to win victories. "Grant always thought more about what he was going to do to the enemy than what the enemy might do to him," Smith observes. (p. 131) In situations where others saw impending disaster, Grant saw opportunity. In the opening battle of the Overland campaign in 1864, Grant's army in the Wilderness actually suffered more casualties than did Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, but Grant saw not defeat but reasons to press the attack. Smith convincingly portrays Grant as keenly in tune with both the political and military realities of the war, a sense that propelled him forward while others before him had fallen back in the face of similar adversities.

Smith's chronological narrative shifts gears after the Civil War and during Grant's two terms as

president. During these periods Smith examines major events and initiatives—Reconstruction, diplomacy, scandals, and corruption—successively and evaluates how Grant contended with each. Thus Smith discusses Grant's handling of the gold crisis of 1873 and his policies dealing with the Plains Indians and foreign policy issues without reference to other ongoing events. The reader can easily lose track of what developments were occurring simultaneously and fail to see how one or another scandal might have impacted the president's political initiatives.

Smith contends that Grant had trouble adapting to the presidency because of the fundamental differences between the military and political systems. Grant soon learned that the principal difference between being president and general-in-chief was "that the army chain of command was explicit. Things did not always go according to plan; indeed, Grant's strength as a commander lay in his ability to improvise when things went awry. But there was always a denouement. A battle was won or lost, and after that one moved on. In the White House problems lingered. The president could not command—most issues required trimming and compromise. Alliances were transitory. Criticism, second-guessing, and backbiting were continuous. Occasionally one had to choose between friends. Those who lost out could be unforgiving." (pp. 476–77)

Smith credits Grant's presidency with more success than it is generally accorded. That his tenure in office has been considered a failure by many has, Smith argues, as much to do with the impossible nature of the tasks at hand as it did with Grant's success or failure at handling them. A Reconstruction policy that would meet the twin challenges of the peaceful restoration of the Union and the integration of the former slaves as fully functioning members of civil society proved unattainable. Grant supported Reconstruction but would not countenance unlimited use of military forces to secure its provisions. Smith explains that "Grant's determination to see that the Reconstruction Acts were enforced was colored by his desire to bring the Southern states back into the Union as quickly as possible. At the same time he wished to ensure that the rights of the freedmen were protected. He was also concerned about the army's prolonged involvement in civil affairs." (pp. 442–43) Sadly, Smith notes, "For the last two years of his administration, Grant stood watch over the South almost

alone. His cabinet was uninterested, Sherman was dubious, the Supreme Court had eviscerated the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments, and the public was more interested in reconciliation than Reconstruction." (p. 571)

Smith gives Grant high marks for confronting the Ku Klux Klan, for such foreign policy successes as the resolution of American claims against Great Britain for the support it gave to the Confederate States, for the president's enlightened views on the government's proper relationship with the Plains Indians, for his game but unsuccessful efforts at civil service reform, and for his efforts to restore public confidence in the nation's monetary policies. On Grant's efforts to move the country away from the soft money of the Civil War and toward the resumption of a sound gold standard, Smith writes, "Grant imparted to the Grand Old Party a commercial, pro-capitalist stance that replaced emancipation as the party's *raison d'être*." (p. 582)

If Grant chose to confront directly the difficult tasks the country faced, why then have historians not given him higher marks for those efforts? Smith attributes Grant's low standing among presidents to the general tone of scandal and corruption that marred his tenure in the White House. Smith asserts that Grant was personally honest but that many of those around him, on his personal staff and in his administration, were not. That he was constantly surprised by corruption even as it tainted those closest to him inevitably raises the question of how much attention the president paid to the affairs of daily life. Grant's judgment of men, an ability that held him in good stead as a general, seems to have deserted him once he became president. Although guileless, he appears in matters political to have been gullible almost beyond belief, for that seemingly is the only explanation for the mischief and malfeasance that characterized his tenure in office.

Does this biography answer the two questions about Grant as general and president? Yes, but not entirely. Grant for all his apparent simplicity endures as an extraordinarily complex and, perhaps, unfathomable personality. His friend Sherman may have said it best: "He is a mystery to me. And I believe he is a mystery to himself." (p. 479) Readers of this excellent biography will likely agree.

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## **Book Review**

**by Frank N. Schubert**

*The Black Regulars, 1866–1898*

**by William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips**

**University of Oklahoma Press, 2001**

**360 pp., \$34.95**

*Ungentlemanly Acts*

*The Army's Notorious Incest Trial*

**by Louise Barnett**

**Hill and Wang, 2000, 287 pp., \$25**

The constantly expanding literature on the military service of African Americans includes valuable books from official sources, among them the Center of Military History's volumes on World War II, Korea, and desegregation, as well as a steady stream from scholarly presses and commercial publishers. A substantial portion of these books has focused on the period between the Civil War and the War with Spain, the time of the climactic battles with the western Indians. These conflicts were fought by an army of scarcely 25,000 men, among whom black men comprised the enlisted force of two regiments of cavalry (the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup>) and two of infantry (the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>). Known now as buffalo soldiers, they made up a small fraction—usually just over 10 percent—of this tiny force. According to William Dobak and Thomas Phillips, the authors of *The Black Regulars*, just under 20,000 individual black soldiers served in these regiments during the entire period. (p. xi and p. 285, note 1)

*The Black Regulars* looks closely at the black military experience in the West. It examines the reasons for the recruitment of black soldiers, looks at the lives

of the soldiers, their education and discipline, alternatives to soldiering, and retention in the service. The authors also analyze their relationships with officers, white soldiers, and civilians, including women, Latina and Indian as well as black.

There are really only two things this book does not do. While the authors note that “during the late 1870s and on into the 1880s, the black regulars amassed an admirable record of action,” (p. 38) with many lieutenants getting opportunities for field command during the bitter small-unit actions against the Apaches, they generally do not bother with the operational details of the regimental histories. Their choice is justified, because the black soldiers' campaigns are well covered in William H. Leckie's oft-reprinted classic, *The Buffalo Soldiers, A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman, Okla., 1967), and in Arlen L. Fowler's *The Black Infantry in the West, 1869–1891* (Westport, Conn., 1971). Dobak and Phillips also do not use the phrase “buffalo soldiers” to refer to the black regulars. The authors contend, correctly as far as I can tell, that there is no evidence that the soldiers applied the phrase to themselves and that in fact they considered the word “buffalo” insulting, as when a private called a sergeant a “God damned black cowardly buffalo son of a bitch.” (p. xvii)

Overall, *The Black Regulars* is a fine examination of a military experience shaped and defined by prejudice and discrimination. As the authors show, sometimes the situation was complex. White civilians frequently had little enthusiasm for their black protectors, especially in Texas, where the unreconstructed South met the Wild West, but the War Department did not discriminate against black soldiers in either the quantity or the quality of arms and equipment they received. Given the small size and vast responsibility of the units scattered throughout the West, the Army could hardly afford to shortchange a valuable portion of its combat force. Arms were issued and distributed fairly, and horses of roughly equal quality were provided to blacks and whites. Moreover, black and white soldiers of equal rank received equal pay, and military courts accepted the testimony of black witnesses, usually treated black soldiers fairly, and meted out punishment more or less without bias. There was still ample institutional racism, shown by the almost total exclusion of blacks from the ranks of officers and the brutal treatment of black

cadets at the Military Academy. Nevertheless, the Army was one of the most impartial institutions of the time, helping to explain why it attracted and retained able black men.

According to Dobak and Phillips, the two-tiered segregated army, in which blacks were relegated mainly to menial units and jobs, was largely a product of the twentieth century, although that later arrangement definitely had its roots in the segregation that had been imposed from the beginning. In general, black soldiers had to satisfy professional and racial criteria: "From the outset, they managed to meet professional standards. Prejudice, on the other hand, dogged them and their successors for generations." (p. 266)

Dobak and Phillips look closely at the men themselves, who changed slowly over time as literacy spread through the ranks. A substantial part of this change was due to the efforts of the regimental chaplains whose responsibilities included the common school education of the men and whose primary contributions were in fact educational rather than religious.

Despite the efforts of their chaplains, the black regiments had their problems, including alcoholism and desertion. However, both were much less prevalent in black regiments than in white, possibly reflecting the blacks' relative satisfaction with Army life. Overall, black soldiers less often got into serious trouble than did their white counterparts, although black regiments had disproportionately large numbers of violent crimes, including homicides. As the authors note, "The army never discovered an effective way to control soldiers'

vices, and throughout the post-Civil War period, enlisted men continued to gamble, drink, and whore." This was true of black and white soldiers alike, as carousing helped alleviate "the stupefying boredom" involved in Western military service. (p. 178)

Generally speaking, this book is the best single volume on the lives of black soldiers in the frontier Army. The literature still starts with Leckie and Fowler for their operational history, but it ends with Dobak and Phillips for social history.

While Dobak and Phillips range widely over the history of the black regulars, Louise Barnett in *Ungentlemanly Acts* focuses on life inside the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry at Fort Stockton, Texas. There, in 1879, two veteran frontier officers, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Louis H. Orleman and Cpt. Andrew J. Geddes, became embroiled in a major scandal in which Geddes accused Orleman of sexual relations with his own daughter, fifteen-year-old Lillie Orleman. Orleman countered by accusing Geddes of trying to seduce and abduct the girl. When the issue went to trial, the members of the court-martial and later reviewing officers, unable to confront the possibility of incest in their midst and among their kind, decided against Geddes, but Barnett contends that "history . . . must render another judgment." (p. 224)

Barnett tells an engrossing story that goes beyond the issue involved in the case at hand. She probes the austerity and proximity of living conditions of officers on the frontier, the long, frustrating years of struggling to make ends meet while waiting for a promotion, and the attitudes of the entire command structure toward sexuality and family life. Geddes was a 34-year-old

### **French Army Archive Issues Inventory of Its Holdings on Franco-American Military Ties**

France's Service historique de l'armée de Terre issued in May 2000 a 153-page inventory of the institute's holdings of books and archival sources relating to the United States. The documents listed treat subjects ranging from a 1736 plan for the defense of French colonial Louisiana to Franco-American NATO military cooperation as recent as 1974. The documents relate to both peacetime and wartime military relations. Substantial bodies of documents inventoried pertain to the War of American Independence and World War I. The collection is housed in the Château de Vincennes, a residence of the French crown from the late twelfth to the mid-seventeenth centuries, in Vincennes, France, a suburb of Paris.

This inventory is entitled *Etat des fonds relatifs au Etats-Unis conservés au Service historique de l'armée de Terre*. The library of the Center of Military History holds a copy of the inventory.

veteran of eighteen years of service, including some very severe campaigning with Pecos Bill Shafter along the Mexican border in the mid-1870s, with an earned reputation as a womanizer. Orleman was 41, had fifteen years' service under his belt, and had been with Troop H of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at Beecher Island in 1868 and at Fort Sill during the stormy days of 1870 and 1871. He also had a wife and seven children in San Antonio, while he and his oldest daughter shared a bedroom at Fort Stockton. Geddes was their next-door neighbor, on the other side of a very thin wall.

Barnett never loses sight of the context of her story. The drama takes place in a black regiment, and her book deals well with the complexity of borderland race relations. Like Dobak and Phillips and historians such as James N. Leiker,<sup>1</sup> she recognizes that race is not acted out on a binary basis, between just whites and blacks, and that Indians, Hispanics, and others are part of a complex, evolving story. She does fall into the trap Dobak and Phillips so carefully avoid, claiming that the soldiers considered the name "buffalo soldiers" so much of a compliment that "the Tenth Cavalry promptly enshrined the image of the buffalo on the regimental crest." (p. 59) The problem with this view is twofold. First, we have no idea what the soldiers thought of the name, because there is no evidence that they used it. Second, the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry's crest does feature a buffalo, but the animal was not "promptly enshrined" thereon. The regimental emblem was an artifact of the twentieth century, adopted in 1911.<sup>2</sup>

Both of these books have significance beyond their limited subjects. Dobak and Phillips tell a story important to the understanding of the evolving role of African Americans in the armed forces. Barnett's tale transcends Fort Stockton in 1879 to illuminate American views of sexuality, family life, and privacy. Both books are very well researched and clearly written. They should be on the shelves of all readers interested in the United States Army, race relations, and the American West.

## NOTES

1. See Leiker's *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande* (College Station, Tex., 2002).
2. GO 1, Headquarters, 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 11 Feb 1911, Miscellaneous Records, 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, Record Group 391, National Archives.

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## Book Review

by Roger D. Cunningham

*The Philippine War, 1899–1902*

by Brian McAllister Linn

University Press of Kansas, 2000, 427 pp., \$39.95

After the Spanish-American War, the United States emerged as a colonial power. The Spanish overseas possessions of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines came under the American flag, but continued Filipino efforts to achieve independence imposed on American troops several more years of difficult fighting across the vast Philippine archipelago. Brian McAllister Linn, a professor at Texas A&M University, discusses the military operations of this conflict in his well-written history *The Philippine War, 1899–1902*.

Often referred to as the Philippine Insurrection, the conflict has been largely neglected by historians. The War Department's official history, Capt. John R. M. Taylor's *The Philippine Insurrection against the United States* (see box below), was suppressed by the government, in part due to its candor on sensitive issues. When the war was recalled, America's conduct often received unfavorable treatment. For many years, what most students learned about the conflict was generally summarized by the cliché "Civilize 'em with a Krag," which suggested that brutal and racist American soldiers had tried to "civilize" the Filipinos with their Krag-Jorgensen rifles. Professor Linn is far less critical of how the United States conducted its military operations, thereby joining a group of modern historians who seem to agree that the war was won by "a combination of Filipino mistakes and American military effectiveness." (p. 323)

Indeed, the author expresses quite a high regard for each of the three U.S. Army organizations that

fought the war—the State Volunteers, U.S. Volunteers, and Regulars. The citizen-soldiers of the State Volunteer regiments, mostly from the West, waged conventional operations on the island of Luzon in 1899.

Twenty-five regiments of U.S. Volunteers replaced them, while the soldiers of the Regular Army eventually came to dominate the American effort, ultimately providing three out of every five men who served during

### Capt. John Taylor's Suppressed *Philippine Insurrection against the United States*

By Roger D. Cunningham

John Rodgers Meigs Taylor (1865–1949) spent four years writing *The Philippine Insurrection against the United States*, but it was never published in this country. Grandson of both the Union Army's quartermaster general and its commissary general, Taylor graduated from West Point in 1889. He was a captain in the Fourteenth U.S. Infantry with a reputation as a man who "picks up languages readily," when Maj. Gen. Elwell S. Otis selected him to translate captured enemy documents in 1899. Taylor offered to write a history of the war, and his plan was accepted. In 1902 he was detailed to the War Department's Bureau of Insular Affairs and given a staff of five to support his work. When he completed the assignment four years later, the War Department developed plans to publish 1,000 copies of his five-volume study—two volumes of history and three volumes of documents. Half of the copies were to be distributed to the members of Congress.

Prior to publishing Captain Taylor's history, Capt. Frank McIntyre, acting chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, sought publication approval from Secretary of War William H. Taft. Taft, a former chief of the Philippine Commission, expressed reservations. Taylor had criticized many Filipino leaders who by 1906 were working for the United States, and his history contained an implicit indictment of William Jennings Bryan and other anti-imperialist Democrats. Taft told McIntyre that he was "a good deal concerned in reference to the propriety of publishing at public expense a history that gives so many opinions as Taylor's resumé does." Taft concluded that he did not wish to publish it before the upcoming congressional elections and that Taylor should rejoin his regiment and "leave the history for our correction."<sup>1</sup>

Captain Taylor reported to Vancouver Barracks and informed McIntyre that he could revise the text "in my evenings at this post," but a subsequent unfavorable review of Taylor's narrative by James A.

LeRoy, Taft's former private secretary and a rival expert on the Philippines, ensured that the U.S. government took no further action on Taylor's work. LeRoy argued that Taylor's history treated the Filipinos unfairly and tended to dismiss all criticism of American actions in the Philippines. Only in 1971 did a Philippine press issue a limited edition of Taylor's five volumes. Today Taylor's study and related documents may also be studied on National Archives microfilm publication M719, and the galley proofs may be viewed in the Rare Book Collection of the Library of Congress. In the 1912 letter forwarding the work to Dr. Herbert Putnam, the librarian of Congress, McIntyre simply explained, "we have not felt authorized, under the circumstances[,] to make it generally available."<sup>2</sup> Taylor's volumes remain significant nonetheless. In writing *The Philippine War, 1899–1902*, Brian Linn found Taylor's work "invaluable as a source of documentation on the Filipino side." (p. 402)

#### NOTES

1. John M. Gates, "The Official Historian and the Well-Placed Critic: James A. LeRoy's Assessment of John R. M. Taylor's *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*," *Public Historian* 7 (Summer 1985): 58–64; ltr, Taft to McIntyre, 18 Aug 1906, William H. Taft Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
2. John T. Farrell, "An Abandoned Approach to Philippine History: John R. M. Taylor and the Philippine Insurrection Records," *Catholic Historical Review* 39 (January 1954): 397; Gates, "The Official Historian," pp. 60–65; John R. M. Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection against the United States: A Compilation of Documents with Notes and Introduction*, 5 vols. (Pasay City, Philippines, 1971). McIntyre's letter to Putnam is attached to the first volume of the galley proofs at the Library of Congress.

the conflict. The effective service of all these fighting men convinced the author that "Far from being the bloody-handed butcher of fable, the average soldier in the Philippines was probably as good as or better than any in this nation's history." (p. 326)

Dr. Linn also concludes that American military leaders regularly outmaneuvered their Filipino counterparts, especially Emilio Aguinaldo, who consistently underestimated his American enemies and committed many tactical and strategic blunders. Except for a few officers, however, such as Col. Frederick Funston, who earned a Medal of Honor for his role in the capture of enemy fortifications at Calumpit and later participated in the capture of Aguinaldo, competent American field commanders have been largely forgotten, while inept officers such as Brig. Gen. Jacob Smith, who waged an inordinately harsh campaign on the island of Samar, have come to typify the American officers who managed the war. Linn's book will help to correct this misperception.

One fine example of American military leadership occurred in northern Luzon in December 1899. Two forces under Col. Luther R. Hare and Lt. Col. Robert L. Howze pursued retreating Filipinos to rescue their American prisoners. Howze soon caught up with part of the enemy and destroyed the force in a three-hour battle. After marching over 300 miles, the two columns joined and pushed farther into the mountains, where they finally found the abandoned prisoners. Sick and malnourished, the combined force staggered on, subsisting on one meal of rice a day, supplemented by an occasional coconut. On 2 January 1900, it finally reached a river town, contacted the Navy, and was ferried back to the coast. Linn concludes that this expedition "was one of the most heroic marches in American military history, an epic of exemplary leadership, courage, and endurance." (p. 158)

There is one minor addition that I feel would have improved this otherwise impressive study. A concise discussion of the war's racial dimension would have been enlightening. Many African Americans were loath to support what they viewed as American imperialism, and the black press was often critical of the way Uncle Sam treated his "little brown brothers." Nevertheless, one black cavalry regiment, the Regular Army's 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and four black infantry regiments, two regular and two volunteer, served in the Philippine War. The latter two were unique in that all of their company

officers (twenty-four captains and forty-eight lieutenants) were black at a time when most white Americans doubted whether African Americans should even be commissioned and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Charles Young was the only black line officer in the Regular Army. The black regiments performed capably, although a handful of disillusioned soldiers did defect, including the infamous Cpl. David Fagan, who campaigned against American forces as an *insurrecto* officer for two years.<sup>1</sup> Many other African Americans married Filipinas and decided to remain in the islands after their enlistments expired, trying to escape the rising tide of racism that was constricting their lives in the United States. Linn did not discuss this aspect of the war, and he should have.

## NOTES

1. For details on David Fagan, see Michael C. Robinson and Frank N. Schubert, "David Fagan: An Afro-American Rebel in the Philippines, 1899-1901," *Pacific Historical Review* 44 (February 1975): 68-83.

### Book Review by Mason R. Schaefer

*Victory in the East: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial German Army*  
by Michael P. Kihntopf  
White Mane Books, 2000, 99 pp., \$19.95

Michael P. Kihntopf joins the ranks of historians who praise the Germans' fluid and inventive tactics on the Eastern Front during World War I. The Germans repeatedly stymied or defeated the Russian "steamroller," whose masses of men lacked enough weapons, ammunition, and effective leadership to cope with innovative German strategies. In the Balkans, the Germans led combined operations that quickly defeated smaller states like Serbia and Romania and threatened the Allied position in Greece. Clearly, they found the Eastern Theater more congenial than the trenches of France. However, Kihntopf begins his narrative in 1916 and does not cover in any detail the Central Powers' successful 1915 offensives against Russia and Serbia, which had both earlier defeated the forces of

Germany's often inept ally, Austria-Hungary. He does, however, discuss some tactical successes each side achieved on the Western Front. He covers in episodic detail two major events of 1916 (a year without German offensives in Russia), the Brusilov offensive of that year and the Central Powers' conquest of most of Romania. Overall, he seeks to reveal fundamental changes in German strategic and tactical doctrine that enabled the kaiser's armies to make progress in the East.

A retired Air Force officer, Kihntopf served as a top personnel planner for the Strategic Air Command, where he helped map out manpower policies during the Persian Gulf War, and as a war planning officer for the Military Airlift Command during the Grenada invasion. He thus has firsthand experience of military doctrine and tactics. The author's research included mostly secondary works, with an occasional dip into printed sources like the diary of German General Max Hoffmann and *The Story of the Great War: History of the European War from Official Sources* (8 vols., New York, 1916–1920). He also draws on contemporary secondary works like Francis W. Halsey's ten-volume *Literary Digest History of the World War*, published in 1919–1920. His more recent secondary sources include a broad selection of works on World War I and the Eastern Front, and in addition he uses more current encyclopedias of World War I. Although he synthesizes these sources well, one could have hoped for some more original research. Fortunately, he has written his short book in a highly readable style, largely free of jargon or technical descriptions. Readers other than military buffs will be able to follow his narrative, for better or for worse.

Does Kihntopf produce a cohesive, well-argued book? I am afraid not. His work tends to be discursive rather than analytical. Kihntopf begins by describing German tactics and the state of the German and Russian armies on the Eastern Front. The Germans had by 1915 abandoned mass unit tactics (headlong advances into enemy fire) in favor of structured breakthroughs, which often started with short but overwhelming "hurricane" bombardments. The latter proved effective against the Russian forces, which often lacked sufficient ammunition. He then moves on to German tactical successes on the *Western* Front, such as use of gas at the second Battle of Ypres (1915)

and flamethrowers at Verdun. These gave the Germans momentary advantages but did not win them decisive success. The tank did much the same for the Allies in 1916–1917. Kihntopf tends to describe the German tactical successes and move on, without giving enough of the larger picture. When the Germans failed to consolidate their initial gas attack at Ypres, for example, they bogged down like the Union Army at Spotsylvania in 1864. In similar fashion, British forces could not effectively exploit their tank breakthrough at Cambrai.

The author then describes the major Eastern Front offensive of 1916, Russian General Alexei Brusilov's attack that almost knocked Austria out of the war. Though the Germans backstopped their tottering ally, they did not launch an offensive of their own. While they were supposedly masters of the battlefield, the Germans did not hold the initiative in Russia at that point. The author then describes the Romanian campaign at length, in which Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey crushed what S. L. A. Marshall called a "fifth-rate power." Despite its military weakness, Romania entered the war to seize a territory it had long claimed, Transylvania in Hungary. A well-coordinated German-Austrian offensive soon overwhelmed Romania despite its brave resistance. Supported heavily by Russia, the Romanians eventually held only a portion of Moldavia, a northern province. There they sharply repulsed a major German offensive in August 1917, inflicting losses of two to one. Fresh weapons plus a French training mission made a difference. After the Bolshevik Revolution ended Russian support, the Romanians tried to negotiate a peace settlement. Nonetheless, they did not sign formal surrender terms until May 1918. Germany itself collapsed six months later, which left it little time to enjoy its victory in the Balkans.

The conquest of Romania embarrassed the Allies but gave the Central Powers no critical advantage, their acquisition of oil and wheat notwithstanding. Ultimately, social and political forces contributed more to German gains on the Eastern Front than did military tactics. Angered by military stalemate, heavy casualties, and Tsarist inefficiency, the Russian people overthrew their monarch in March 1917. This largely knocked the fight out of Russia's armies. Nonetheless, Alexander Kerensky's provisional government at least momentarily held the military initiative. In June 1917

that regime launched an offensive, but it quickly sputtered out. A few months later the Bolsheviks deposed Kerensky and pulled Russia out of the war. Accordingly, the Germans did not vigorously riposte until February 1918, when the Bolsheviks refused to meet German demands at their peace negotiations. Then the kaiser's legions, proving that they could seize territory without much opposition, quickly forced the Russians to give up the Ukraine. Nonetheless, the vast open spaces of Russia soon swallowed up the Germans, who were plagued with incessant guerrilla warfare. Germany's defeat in the West pushed them out of Russia by the close of 1918.

At least some German veterans of the Eastern Front did not think it any grand cakewalk. In B.H. Liddell Hart's classic, *The German Generals Talk*, General Blumentritt recalled that "even in 1914–1918 the greater hardness of war conditions in the East had its effect on our own troops." Despite the evident German success in the East, many troops preferred the grueling attrition of the Western Front. In Russia, they found battle "more dogged," with night fighting, forest combat, and hand-to-hand clashes. The Germans also faced hard and unsparing Cossacks and Siberians, as well as the "good-natured" European Russian soldiers, who themselves routinely burned villages as they pulled out of enemy territory.<sup>1</sup>

After discussing the abortive German occupation of western Russia in 1918, the author gives us a fillip on the Latvian campaign of the German *Freikorps*, an obscure military operation that ended in its defeat. However, he does not present an overall conclusion to his work. Such a wrapup would give meaning to the various campaigns he has discussed and reveal how they fit into his overall thesis. He perhaps thinks his stories are enough to illustrate his themes, but unfortunately they are not. They do, however, uncover the essentially defensive German tactics on the Eastern Front, especially in Russia in 1916–18. German tactical ability kept the Russians away from the border but did not turn the tide decisively until Russia's own internal disintegration gave Germany a broad opening. Sideshows in Romania and Serbia did not necessarily alter this equation. For a more comprehensive look at the Eastern Front, the reader may turn to Norman Stone's book, *The Eastern Front, 1914–1917* (New York, 1975), or Holger Herwig's *The First World War:*

*Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914–1918* (New York, 1997), which covers the conflict from the Austro-German side.

## NOTES

1. The quotations in this paragraph are from Basil H. Liddell Hart, *The German Generals Talk* (New York, 1948), pp. 224–25.

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### Book Review by James C. Fischer

#### *Doughboy War: The American Expeditionary Force in World War I*

Edited by James H. Hallas

Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, 347 pp., \$55

One objective of the U.S. Military Academy's course on the History of the Military Art is to build an understanding of the personal challenges of war by analyzing the experience of soldiers and leaders in combat. Instructors assist cadets in achieving that goal primarily through the use of memoirs or other first-person accounts. We encourage cadets, who often are completely unfamiliar with battle, to engage the texts and think about what the future could hold for them. By doing this, we intend to reduce some of the naiveté that so often accompanies the first experience of war and to better prepare the cadets for the rigors of military leadership.

James Hallas's *Doughboy War* will contribute to those efforts. This is an edited volume of short selections from journals, diaries, personal narratives, unit histories, and other first-person accounts by Americans who fought on the ground in the Great War. Arranged chronologically by topic or event, the book begins with a chapter on the coming of war that includes various soldiers' stories of entry-level experiences, such

as the first physical, the first run-in with a sergeant, and the first experience with Army bureaucracy. The final chapter contains vignettes from the end of the war, the occupation, and the return home. There is also an epilogue with a small collection of stories from many years after the war. Between are chapters that illustrate the arrival in France, what it was like to be wounded, the St. Mihiel Offensive, and the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, to name a few.

Mr. Hallas has written two books on World War II, *The Devil's Anvil: The Assault on Peleliu* and *Killing Ground on Okinawa: The Battle for Sugar Loaf Hill*, as well as one other on the First World War, *Squandered Victory: The American First Army at St. Mihiel*. Hallas does not appear to be a historian by training. In these earlier works, he built his narrative on an extensive bibliography of published firsthand accounts along with adequate support from secondary works, but only in *Squandered Victory* did he use endnote citations. In *Doughboy War*, Hallas concludes each passage with an attribution to the author, while including endnotes after each chapter and a full bibliography that makes it very easy to trace his sources.

By presenting excerpts from about 200 previously published primary works, Hallas has painted a fairly comprehensive picture of the experience of the First World War encountered by the servicemen of the American Expeditionary Force. He scoured the land for old published accounts, examined them, and compiled samples of their contents into a coherent whole. He deliberately left out members of the Air Corps and Navy to focus on "the story of the ground soldier—the combat infantryman, the artilleryman, the engineer, who slept in the rain, ate corned beef from a can, and fervently hoped the next German artillery shell would fall far from his personal funk hole." (p. 2) From Hallas's selections, one can empathetically consider these Americans' confused induction into the military world, the physical discomfort of the trenches, the fear of battle in no-man's-land, and the shock of being wounded. Hallas expands beyond purely military matters to include stories that reveal the soldiers' wonder at the strangeness of France, their experiences with the locals between battles, their arrival in Germany as occupiers, and their reintroduction to family and friends after their return to the United States.

Hallas leaves his editorial comments at a minimum. He typically sets the stage for each section with only a few brief narrative sentences, then presents the selected passages from the sources. I truly applaud this effort to stay out of the way when the words of the actual participants more than suffice. Hallas is helpful, but not intrusive. There are many portions where he has almost seamlessly stitched together narratives from various memoirs to tell the story of a battle, for instance when describing the action at Cantigny. He lets the accounts speak for themselves, which they do admirably. However, his almost exclusive reliance on his texts leaves the more serious student obliged to look elsewhere to obtain a broader perspective into which to place these accounts.

Because *Doughboy War* is an edited collection of anecdotes from personal chronicles, there is a different challenge beyond the use of primary sources that yields my basic critique of the book. From my examination of the bibliography, it appears that Hallas has used only one analytical history as background for his work. Granted it is Edward M. Coffman's classic, *The War To End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (New York, 1968). Nonetheless, the historiography of America in the First World War is not so sparse that there is nothing of repute less than thirty years old upon which Hallas might also have relied to provide context for his selection of memoirs. Had I seen listed, for example, David M. Kennedy's *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York, 1980), I might have been more convinced that Hallas had done his homework before embarking on this impressive resurrection of memoirs from the Great War. While it is probably not fair to have expected him to turn this work into a detailed analytical compilation, like *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London, 1996), edited by Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle, further secondary citations would have shown that Hallas appreciated the context into which he brought these accounts, many of which, he rightly points out, unfortunately risk being forgotten even as we approach the centennial of the Great War. Without that contextual foundation, I cannot agree with the publisher's description of this book as a "multilayered history." (p. 347)



Although *Doughboy War* is not an analytical work, what Hallas did, he did quite well. While this book may not be great history, it is of great educational value for it provides an outstanding anthology to those who want to know more about the experience of war. This book does not add anything new to the historiography of the First World War, but it does help keep alive the memoirs of soldiers who might otherwise be forgotten. I will certainly encourage cadets to read it. I would recommend it as an accompanying volume for those teaching a course on a World War I-related topic. Junior officers seeking to understand war in the first person, anyone participating in a World War I-era staff ride in Europe, and those attempting to find the American face in the great industrialized battles of the Western Front will also gain from this book. It appears, however, that the American version of Denis Winter's *Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War* (London, 1978) and the First World War equivalent of Gerald F. Linderman's *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York, 1987) still await publication.

*Maj. James C. Fischer was an assistant professor of history at the U.S. Military Academy when he prepared this review. He is currently a student at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and is writing a Ph.D. dissertation for the Ohio State University on the U.S. War Department's supply bureaus at the beginning of the First World War. An air defense artillery officer, Fischer served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division in Germany and Bosnia.*

### **Book Review**

**by Steve R. Waddell**

#### ***Clash of Arms: How the Allies Won in Normandy***

**by Russell A. Hart**

**Lynne Rienner, 2001, 469 pp., \$79.95**

*Clash of Arms: How the Allies Won in Normandy* is a scholarly examination of four armies that fought in Normandy in June and July 1944. Russell A. Hart, an assistant professor at Hawaii Pacific University, examines how the armies of the Western Allies—the

United States, Great Britain, and Canada—learned on the battlefield to defeat the German war machine. This work offers a comparative look at how successful these four armed forces were at adapting and innovating during wartime, specifically during the Normandy campaign.

Hart begins with a quick review of the interwar years and then devotes a chapter to each of the four armies from the beginning of the war to D-Day, laying a foundation for his evaluation of their performance during the Normandy campaign. He concludes that the U.S. Army of 1944 was far superior to the army of 1942, as the American service “demonstrated an ability both to learn quickly from its combat experience and to adapt rapidly by improvising and retraining in the field, even during combat operations.” (p. 92) Hart links this ability to the broader cultural characteristics of the “American democratic tradition of individualism, competition, and entrepreneurial spirit.” (p. 92) The British Army on the other hand proved slow to adapt, because “its culture and traditions, as well as its interwar neglect, had left it devoid of modern doctrine and without mechanisms to evaluate its performance.” (p. 101) The British Army was also the product of its society, which was dominated by a class structure that required innovation from the top down. Hart argues that the Canadian Army started the war poorly prepared and ill equipped as a result of interwar neglect. He concludes that by 1944 the Canadian Army was at best “a poor imitation of the British Army.” (p. 187) Hart credits much of the German Army's success early in the war to “the German military's professional commitment to critical self-appraisal and a refusal to equate victory with excellence in performance.” (p. 195) Unfortunately for the Germans, their professional commitment to critical self-appraisal was limited to the tactical and operational levels of war and did not apply to strategy or logistics.

Having laid the foundation, Hart examines the performance of each army in Normandy. He concludes that “U.S. troops fought under many limitations—poor coordination, inadequate infantry firepower, lack of preparation for bocage warfare, an inefficient replacement system, flawed attack doctrine, ammunition shortages, and tactics poorly suited to German defensive methods—that limited their combat effectiveness.” (p. 291) According to Hart, the key to

U.S. success was “the professional commitment by commanders and troops alike to evaluate honestly their combat performance, identify deficiencies, perfect new tactics and procedures, improvise new equipment, and retrain intensively in the field.” (p. 291) To support his conclusion Hart points to the development of new tactics, the narrowing of attack frontages at places like St. Lo to maximize the effect of limited U.S. resources, the use of improvised “deck phones” on the rear of tanks to improve tank-infantry communication, efforts to increase firepower such as the 2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division’s use of rocket artillery for the first time in the European Theater and the improvisation of fully automatic M1 carbines, and the development of improved ground-air communication and close-air support through the use of the “armored column cover” concept. Hart argues that the U.S. Army mastered combined-arms warfare in Normandy. That the U.S. Army found itself confronting many problems and that individual units worked very hard to improvise, adapt, and overcome the worst of the problems is clear. How exactly the U.S. Army as an institution learned from and adapted to what happened in Normandy requires further study.

As a result of class distinctions, planning flaws, serious morale and discipline problems, limited firepower, the absence of a quality tank, and reliance upon inadequate equipment, British performance in Normandy was unspectacular, Hart argues. Meanwhile, the British continued to suffer from a “disdain for intellectual development and theory,” which prevented the British Army “from substantially rethinking doctrine and tactics.” (pp. 328–29) Hart shows how the ability of the British to respond to lessons learned was hampered by General Montgomery’s censoring of reports that were critical of the army on the grounds that they would harm morale. He cites the history of British countermortar groups, which were introduced in the Mediterranean and saved numerous British lives, as an example of a lesson lost. The British disbanded the groups to conserve manpower prior to the Normandy assault. The British then suffered 70 percent of their casualties in Normandy from mortars. Most British units re-created the countermortar groups during the campaign. Hart concludes that the British made advances in the areas of combined-arms coordination, fire support, and air-ground cooperation, but progress remained sporadic.

Hart is extremely critical of the Canadians in Normandy. He argues that the Canadian Army exhibited “a ponderous approach to battle, poor coordination, and amateurish reliance on courage, self-confidence, and good luck rather than sound staff work and planning.” (p. 344) To support his argument, Hart cites the performance of the Canadian forces during Operation WINDSOR, an attack on Carpiquet airfield outside Caen on 4 July 1944. The attack failed when the Germans detected preparations for the offensive and shelled the assembly areas as the attack got under way. Poor coordination between infantry and armor elements added to the Canadian problems. Hart concludes that, although the Canadians did adapt fairly quickly, “inexperience, inadequate and misguided training, poor coordination, sluggish attack doctrine, poor understanding of enemy fighting methods, and inadequate preparation for the air-ground battle resulted in setbacks and repeated partial success.” (p. 361)

Finally, Hart concludes that the German Army in Normandy continued to adapt and innovate at the tactical and operational levels and prolonged the war as a result. For example, German units adapted to Allied air superiority by dispersing their troops and deepening their defensive zones. Correctly evaluating the importance of Allied artillery, the Germans learned that only instant counterattack, before Allied troops could consolidate their positions and register their artillery, could retake objectives. German artillery adopted new tactics to counter Allied air and artillery superiority, resorting to “shoot and scoot,” random “sprinkling fire,” and “roving fire” involving individual guns. Ammunition shortages precluded massed barrages. Despite their tactical adjustments, the Germans exhibited continued weaknesses in the areas of strategy, logistics, intelligence, and interservice cooperation.

The value of Hart’s work derives less from the component parts than from the collective whole. That the U.S. Army learned to adapt and innovate on the battlefield in Normandy; that the British Army was hindered by a society that was extremely class conscious and unable to replace heavy losses; that the Canadian Army started with little and remained behind the others; or that the Germans were innovators at the tactical level, stressed the learning of lessons from the bottom up, but suffered from poor strategy, logistical problems, and weak interservice cooperation, is hardly new. What makes Hart’s work important is the

author's scholarly, comparative look at the four armies before and during the Normandy campaign and his efforts to explain why the armies adapted and innovated the way they did. He successfully demonstrates that "a complex blend of personalities, intellectual trends, societal influences, and societal standing of the military" affected their divergent levels of innovation. (p. 9) As a result of his work, historians are a step closer on their long journey to understand how armies adapt and innovate, both in peacetime and in war.

Hart's work also raises some interesting unanswered questions and highlights some potential areas for further study. Would a look at the four armies in November 1944 lead us to the same conclusions? Was the U.S. Army as successful innovating during the Hürtgen Forest campaign as it was in Normandy? Did the Canadian Army catch up with the British by May 1945? Did the armies learn from Normandy and as a result do a better job of innovating in the final ten months of the war? Perhaps Hart or some other scholar will one day revisit this topic and explore these other questions.

*Clash of Arms* is well written. It includes four maps, twenty-four tables, and numerous illustrations, as well as extensive endnotes and a comprehensive bibliography. *Clash of Arms* is an important addition to the study of combat effectiveness and will prove useful to anyone interested in the armies of the Western Allies and Germany during World War II.

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## **Book Review**

**by Stephen A. Bourque**

***Montgomery and "Colossal Cracks": The 21st Army Group in Northwest Europe, 1944-45***

**by Stephen Ashley Hart**

**Praeger, 2000, 215 pp., \$59.95**

Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery's battlefield performance has been a controversial point in any discussion of Allied operations during World War

II. Debates circling around "Monty" generally focus on two issues: his "distasteful" personality and his ponderous method of conducting offensives, requiring a massive buildup of forces and materiel before he would consider launching an attack. It is the rare American historian of World War II who has not taken a verbal shot or two at the British commander. English scholars, as one would expect, are much more supportive of their famous military leader.

Stephen Ashley Hart, a senior lecturer in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, has attempted to provide a focused and balanced assessment in *Montgomery and "Colossal Cracks."* His thesis is that Montgomery conducted the Northwest Europe campaign more effectively than most scholars have argued and that both he and his subordinate commanders were competent military leaders. Hart argues that historians have focused excessively on personal attributes that have obscured Montgomery's military capabilities and have not focused on his role as an operational commander. Hart believes that the marshal's reliance on firepower was justified and that historians have "understated" the difficulties facing the British Army in 1945. Finally, Hart argues that Montgomery's tactical goal, producing the colossal crack that he hoped to open in the German defensive line, was appropriate to the battlefield situation the British Army faced.

Hart organizes his book, which reads like a doctoral dissertation, into three major sections. Beginning with chapters two and three, Hart lays out the strategic context within which Montgomery had to operate. On the one hand, the army in the field had to maintain the morale of the British people by not wasting lives and by continuing to win victories. How the Allies won the war was not important, only that they succeeded in the end. On the other hand, at the operational and tactical levels, Monty had to nurture and maintain the morale of his forces. Hart acknowledges that by mid-July 1944 the 21<sup>st</sup> Army Group's morale problems were already significant and as many as nine of his command's sixteen divisions were not completely reliable.

The way to sustain morale, at all levels of war, was to keep plugging away on the battlefield while minimizing friendly casualties. By mid-1944 the British armed forces had exhausted their manpower pool. There were simply not enough young men to replace

those lost in the Northwest Europe campaign. This personnel shortage would also have significant ramifications for postwar negotiations. If Britain were to survive but see its army destroyed in the process, the nation's "ability to influence the shape of postwar Europe would be diminished," Hart cautiously explains. (p. 50) As a result, he argues, the issue of "casualty conservation" dominated Montgomery's way of war.

Chapters four and five describe Montgomery's colossal cracks methodology. What Hart presents is a repeat of the worst World War I operations: excessively detailed planning, massive concentrations of forces, devastating air and artillery bombardments, and insufficient flexibility to take advantage of opportunities. Montgomery demanded a classic, set-piece operation in which materiel alone would become the arbiter on the battlefield. French towns were not liberated, they were destroyed. Caution, designed to minimize casualties in the short run, became a hallmark of this methodology.

Montgomery's army commanders, Lt. Gen. Miles Christopher Dempsey and Lt. Gen. Henry Duncan Graham Crerar, are the subjects of chapters 6 and 7, respectively. As in the previous sections, Hart paints a rather dismal picture of the situation within the field armies. He argues that three general elements caused these two commanders to "over control" their subordinates: the inexperience of subordinate commanders, overconfidence in their own abilities, and a determination to hold casualties down at all costs. Hart portrays Dempsey as a competent commander who labored comfortably in the shadow of his overbearing field marshal. Crerar, who led the Canadian forces, was usually at odds with Monty, who did not believe him capable of army command. As the senior Canadian officer in Europe, Crerar could, and did, challenge the army group commander at the political as well as the operational level.

It is doubtful that Hart's argument will change many opinions of Montgomery. His analysis of the strategic context in which the marshal labored is, if anything, more severe than most. He describes the British nation as close to military impotence, with only the existing Second British and First Canadian Armies left as implements of power. One small defeat and the morale of both the troops in the field and the civilians at home would disintegrate. The result, according to Hart, was an extremely conservative operational meth-

odology that strove to beat the Germans into submission with a massive expenditure of ammunition in classic World War I style. Given the "inexperience" of corps and division commanders, each operation and battle had to be stage-managed to minimize casualties and any loss of British morale. Hart believes that, as a result of what he considers a realistic approach, Montgomery was more effective than his detractors have allowed. This reviewer is not convinced.

While the author's analysis of the strategic context of the campaign is thorough, his operational discussion needs further elaboration. Montgomery's army, corps, and division commanders were certainly no more inexperienced than their American counterparts; England and Canada had been fighting more than two years longer than the United States. Caution and control became the ultimate methodology of the 21<sup>st</sup> Army Group. Faced with opportunities to exploit German mistakes, Montgomery and his commanders held back, allowing the enemy to regroup and fight another day. Thus, in the end the British and Canadians probably suffered more casualties because of his operational timidity. Finally, Professor Hart does not adequately reconcile his defense of Montgomery's methods with two of the major criticisms leveled by his American detractors. Why did it take him three months to clear the Scheldt Estuary and open Antwerp for Allied shipping? Why was his planning so poor and his decision-making so reckless during Operation MARKET GARDEN?

Putting these questions aside, this is an important book, and it should be in the hands of all students of the European Theater. Stephen Hart has done a masterful job in summarizing the operations of the British 21<sup>st</sup> Army Group. His bibliography is impressive and should be consulted by prospective researchers on related topics. Hart's analysis, while still incomplete, should set the tone for any further discussion of Montgomery and his role in the Second World War.

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