

# ARMY HISTORY

Winter 2011

PB 20-11-1 (No. 78) Washington, D.C.

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The Professional Bulletin of Army History

# ARMY HISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

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The U.S. Army Center of Military History publishes *Army History* (ISSN 1546-5330) quarterly for the professional development of Army historians and as Army educational and training literature. The bulletin is available at no cost to interested Army officers, noncommissioned officers, soldiers, and civilian employees, as well as to individuals and offices that directly support Army historical work or Army educational and training programs.

Correspondence, including requests to be added to the distribution of free copies or to submit articles, should be addressed to Managing Editor, Army History, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 103 Third Ave., Fort Lesley J. McNair, DC 20319-5058, or sent by e-mail to [army.history1@conus.army.mil](mailto:army.history1@conus.army.mil).

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The opinions expressed in *Army History* are those of the authors, not the Department of Defense or its constituent elements. The bulletin's contents do not necessarily reflect official Army positions and do not supersede information in other official Army publications or Army regulations. The bulletin is approved for official dissemination of material to keep the Army knowledgeable of developments in Army history and to enhance professional development. The Department of the Army approved the use of funds for printing this publication on 7 September 1983.

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**Cover:** Men of the 107th Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, which served in Virginia in 1864 and in North Carolina in 1865/Library of Congress

**Page 33, left:** President Lincoln, 1863/Library of Congress

**Page 33, right:** Jefferson Davis, c. 1860/Library of Congress

## EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Military coalitions invariably join armed forces with distinctive national traditions in a common cause. Mark J. Reardon opens this issue of *Army History* with an account of the impact of the decision of then-Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower to accept the more aggressive approach of his British naval deputy, Admiral Sir Andrew B. Cunningham, over the recommendations of senior United States admirals on how to secure Oran harbor during the North African landings in November 1942. While the British had had the opportunity to learn from three years of war with Hitler's Germany and two years of occasional military encounters with the Vichy French regime, the operational plan implemented in Oran harbor proved disastrous, particularly for the nearly four hundred men of the 3d Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, tasked with seizing port facilities.

Thomas J. Ward Jr. examines in the second article the quandary faced by the Confederacy when confronted with the problem of how to handle black Union soldiers, some of them escaped slaves, whom the secessionists captured in battle. He finds that the executive branch of the Confederate government in Richmond and at least some Confederate state authorities gradually came to recognize that the threat of severe punishment of the black Unionists contained in a law adopted by the Confederate Congress could not be implemented without jeopardizing the safety of the captured members of their own forces. While the Confederates viewed their opponent's employment of former slaves to be an illegal act that would justify extreme countermeasures, they were forced by circumstances to largely accept this aspect of the Union's method of waging war.

In a commentary he titles "Tarnished Brass: Is the U.S. Military Profession in Decline?" Richard H. Kohn argues that one factor in the difficulties this nation's military has encountered in the last decade in subduing insurgents in much smaller and poorer nations in Asia is a decline in military professionalism. Kohn's pointed critique of U.S. military officers' strategic vision, political entanglements, and possible ethical lapses, which he supports with a well-informed selection of facts from the last two decades of the military's history, raises questions that, I believe, merit the serious consideration of all those who wish to see this nation's military services prosper. We welcome debate on the issues raised by this essay.

Charles Hendricks  
Managing Editor



# THE CHIEF'S CORNER

COL. PETER D. CREAN

On 30 July 2010, Dr. Jeffrey J. Clarke retired after a remarkable 39-year career at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. As the author of a book in the U.S. Army in Vietnam series and coauthor of another in the series on the U.S. Army in World War II, he made significant contributions to the writing of the history of the Army. His and Robert R. Smith's *Riviera to the Rhine* remains a definitive study of the invasion of Southern France, an important campaign that has suffered in the shadow of the Normandy landings. Even more critical to the overall health of the Army Historical Program, Dr. Clarke gave new direction to the Center of Military History and to the entire program after the Army named him as the first career civilian to serve as chief of military history after six decades of military leadership. The departure of a historian of his stature is a milestone for any organization, and the Center is no exception. As acting director, I believe that now is a good time to evaluate the core mission of the organization and assess how well we are doing.

As Dr. Clarke wrote in the Fall issue of *Army History*, the Army Historical Program and its products represent "the gold standard against which the historical programs of every Army and every federal agency have been measured." The high professional and academic standards of the publications, research products for the Army's senior leadership, organizational history work, and care of the Army's material culture undertaken by elements of the Army Historical Program represent in Clausewitzian terms our "center of gravity." As such, they must remain the focus of our efforts and must be rigorously enforced. However, our assessment must also recognize how technological advances have affected the study of military history and how we as historical professionals must adapt to better serve the Army and to help the Army Historical Program meet its goals.

During the 2010 Military History Coordinating Committee meeting, leaders from the Army's various history programs identified the need for better communication and cooperation across agencies. The community's emphasis in recent years has been on our individual agencies, the boundaries of our respective mandates, and the daily challenge of maintaining, within available resource

allocations, optimal levels and standards of support to our various chains of command. The reduced postwar budgets the Army anticipates in the coming years will only sharpen this challenge unless we can achieve the enhanced cooperation the coordinating committee is seeking. The Army's history community must fundamentally alter its thought process to see each member as a cooperative resource and potential partner early in any endeavor in order to tap its myriad strengths and to ensure continuity of support. The Army's history divisions and the history departments of its educational institutions could collaborate more efficiently with branch and field historians to create historical products relevant to their fields of expertise; U.S.-based historians must help plan the in-theater collection efforts of military history detachments and command historians; what is today a loose Army museum community must move toward a more cohesive Army Museum System.

The adaptation required of the historical field is even more fundamental than identifying cooperative business practices among history community members. The average consumer of the Center's products has changed over the last twenty years. The digital age has revolutionized our field, and, as with all revolutions, there are great opportunities to be harnessed and great challenges to be recognized and overcome. The future leadership of the Army is presently found in Iraq and Afghanistan in the ranks of captain, lieutenant, and junior noncommissioned officer. These future leaders are much more comfortable with the tools of modern technology than are their elders, and they gather most of their news and information from the Internet and other non-print media. Historians today must also become comfortable with nontraditional teaching methods if they intend to reach this new and growing audience. Admittedly, the message taught by the Army's history is more important than the media we use to convey it, but we must explore new avenues for transmitting this message if we are to remain relevant as the Army's junior officers grow into senior military leaders.

How valuable would it be to any researcher to have available at hand a tool linking written historical work

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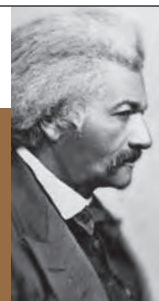


DEATH AT THE HANDS OF FRIENDS:  
THE ORAN HARBOR RAID DURING  
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ENEMY COMBATANTS:  
BLACK SOLDIERS IN CONFEDERATE  
PRISONS

By THOMAS J. WARD JR.

# NEWSNOTES

## COLONEL CREAN TAKES CHARGE AT THE CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

Col. Peter D. Crean, who was assigned as deputy director of the U.S. Army Center of Military History in May 2010, assumed the leadership of the organization at the start of August 2010, upon the retirement of the Center's director, Dr. Jeff Clarke. Colonel Crean holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Indiana University and a master's degree in logistics management from the Florida Institute of Technology. He also attended the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

Commissioned in May 1988, Crean served in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM in Saudi Arabia and Iraq as a platoon leader in the supply and transport battalion of the 82d Airborne Division. In 1994 to 1996 he commanded the 574th Supply Company in Germany. Beginning in December 1995, that company supplied from bases in Hungary and Croatia units engaged in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR in Bosnia, and it received an Army Superior Unit Award for its work. He was aide de camp to the commanding general of the 21st Theater Army Area Command in Kaiserslautern, Germany, in 1996 to 1997 and aide de camp to the commanding general of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Center and School in 1999. He served as operations officer and executive officer of the 260th Quartermaster Battalion in Kuwait and Iraq from January to November 2003 and commanded the 240th Quartermaster Battalion at Fort Lee, Virginia, in 2006 to 2008. Both of these battalions handled petroleum supplies. He commanded the 49th Quartermaster Group (Forward) at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, for a year beginning in January 2009; the group managed the Army's use of fuel in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Colonel Crean has a lively interest in military history, and he is related

through his mother to Maj. Gen. William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan, who commanded an infantry battalion in the 42d Division in World War I and led the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II.

## CALL FOR PAPERS: 2011 CONFERENCE OF ARMY HISTORIANS

The U.S. Army Center of Military History is soliciting papers for the conference of Army historians that will held in Arlington, Virginia, on 26–28 July 2011. The theme of this symposium will be "Armies in Persistent Conflict."

This biennial conference has traditionally featured presentations on joint and combined military history as well as papers focusing on the U.S. Army. It has brought together military and civilian historians working in the government, academia, and elsewhere. The Center again invites members of the international and academic communities both to attend and to participate in the panels.

Papers may deal with any aspect of protracted warfare or other armed interventions throughout history, including frontier conflicts; constabulary, stability, counterinsurgency, and contingency operations; and Cold War standoffs. Papers that focus on force structure and rebalancing during prolonged conflicts, manpower issues in protracted wars, retaining institutional knowledge after extended conflicts, the socio-political and economic consequences of fighting long wars, and the use of armies in domestic disturbances are especially welcome.

Participants should be prepared to speak for twenty minutes. The Center of Military History has published selected papers given at previous conferences. Should the Center decide to do so again, presenters will be offered an

opportunity to submit a formal paper for consideration.

Each prospective panel member should send a detailed topic proposal and academic biography either by mail to Conference of Army Historians, U.S. Army Center of Military History, ATTN: DAMH-FPF, 103 Third Avenue, Fort McNair, DC 20319-5058, or via e-mail to CMHhistoriansConf@conus.army.mil.

Further information about the exact conference location and other specifics relating to the gathering will, as plans for the event develop, be posted at the conference of Army historians page of the Center of Military History's Web site, <http://www.history.army.mil/CAH>.

## CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY ISSUES NEW PUBLICATIONS

The U.S. Army Center of Military History has published an account of the counterinsurgency operations in Iraq of a division task force during the last two years of the George W. Bush administration, a history of U.S. Army engineer operations in the Vietnam War, a book that describes and analyzes the impact of logistical challenges on U.S. Army ground operations in Grenada in 1983, and three posters featuring maps and chronologies of successive periods of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

Dale Andrade's book *Surging South of Baghdad: The 3d Infantry Division and Task Force Marne in Iraq, 2007–2008*, presents an in-depth study of U.S. Army counterinsurgency operations in a zone of more than sixty thousand square kilometers south of the Iraqi capital. During the period covered by the volume, five additional brigades "surged" into Iraq to defeat attacking insurgents. The two brigades of the 3d Infantry Division that deployed to Iraq in March and June 2007

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Retired Army Lt. Col. Mark J. Reardon** is a senior historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Commissioned as an Armor officer in 1979 upon graduation from Loyola College of Baltimore, he served in the United States, Korea, Germany, Haiti, and Saudi Arabia. He was first assigned to the Center in 2002 as an active duty officer. Soon after retiring from the military in 2006, he rejoined the Center as a civilian historian, and he is now acting chief of the Center's Contemporary Histories Branch. Reardon is the author of *Victory at Mortain: Stopping Hitler's Panzer Counteroffensive* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002) and coauthor of *American Iliad: A History of the 18th Infantry Regiment in World War II* (Bedford, Pa.: Aberjona Press, 2004) and *From Transformation to Combat: The First Stryker Brigade at War* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2007). He contributed several chapters to two 2009 Center publications, *A History of Innovation: U.S. Army Adaptation in War and Peace* and *Tip of the Spear: U.S. Army Small-Unit Actions in Iraq, 2004–2007*.



President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill confer at Casablanca, Morocco, in January 1943.

# DEATH AT THE HANDS OF FRIENDS

## The Oran Harbor Raid during Operation TORCH

By MARK J. REARDON

**S**taff Sergeant. Ralph Gower, a 37-year-old Californian who joined the U.S. Army when war broke out in September 1939, never imagined he would take part in an amphibious invasion of French North Africa. The light machine-gun squad leader was normally responsible for providing fire support to half-track-mounted riflemen of the 1st Armored Division. In the predawn darkness of 8 November 1942, Gower found himself off the Algerian coast sailing aboard HM cutter *Walney*, an ex-U.S. Coast Guard vessel transferred to the Royal Navy, with almost two hundred other American soldiers from Companies G and I, 6th Armored Infantry. As the cutter drew closer to the port of Oran, the sound of cannon fire punctuated the rhythmic slapping of waves against the hull. Moments later, a shiver went through the entire ship as the cutter's bow sliced through a cable linking a

double line of coal barges strung across the entrance to the harbor.

Gower then heard the chattering of nearby automatic weapons as the *Walney* slowed for a minute or two. Moments later, the cutter's intercom echoed with orders for Gower and his comrades to prepare to disembark. As Sergeant Gower and the others filed toward the outer hatchway, a heavy caliber shell slammed into their compartment. Gower remembered, "I never heard a sound. . . . It just went 'shisht-ppfftt. . . . Then I passed out. When I came to everything was quiet. I thought the battle was over. The ship was full of ammonia and smoke. . . . I finally started climbing a ladder. When I stuck my head out on deck I couldn't hear anything, but the air was full of tracer bullets. Then I realized there were dead men lying on the deck. I passed out."<sup>1</sup>

On 9 November 1942, Americans eager for news about the invasion

of French North Africa learned that U.S. troops were "advancing rapidly" in the face of weak resistance. The only setback of note involved two Allied ships lost at the Algerian port of Oran.<sup>2</sup> Six days later, a story filed by United Press correspondent Phil Ault revealed that six hundred Allied soldiers and sailors attempted to enter the harbor aboard two U.S. Coast Guard cutters with the intention of securing its facilities and docks. "That daring foray met a disastrous end," he reported, when the cutters encountered resistance from French shore batteries, a light cruiser, and several anchored destroyers.<sup>3</sup>

While Ault made no mention of losses, the *New York Times* on that same day broached the possibility of heavy Anglo-American casualties during the attempt to secure Oran harbor. In an accompanying piece focusing on the wounding of correspondent Leo

# ROOSEVELT FACED MOUNTING CRITICISM FROM THE REPUBLICAN PARTY ABOUT HIS FAILURE TO LAUNCH A SECOND FRONT IN THE WAR

S. Disher, who had been aboard one of the vessels, Americans learned that “fire from shore batteries sunk both cutters. It was believed that there was only one survivor from one of the vessels. He was identified only as Captain Peters, a 53-year-old rugged seafarer.”<sup>4</sup>

The next day, the same newspaper reported that Captain Peters, now identified as the commander of one of the vessels, had been killed in a plane crash. Captain Peters’ death

was announced by Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, commander in chief of the Anglo-American forces in the North African operation. Eisenhower also told reporters that Peters had been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, a U.S. decoration second only to the Medal of Honor.<sup>5</sup>

After the war ended, additional details about the raid on Oran harbor continued to emerge in uneven fashion. General Eisenhower’s 1948

account of his wartime career obliquely touched on the raid when he accepted responsibility for approving “direct and admittedly desperate assaults by selected forces against the docks of Algiers and Oran, in an effort to prevent sabotage and destruction and so preserve port facilities for our future use.”<sup>6</sup> While U.S. Navy Capt. Harry C. Butcher described the Oran raid’s repercussions in a draft manuscript recounting his experiences as Eisenhower’s naval aide, his published diary does not include this key passage.<sup>7</sup>

Across the Atlantic, British accounts shed a bit more light on events. While Eisenhower’s naval deputy for Operation TORCH, British Admiral Sir Andrew B. Cunningham, mentioned the failed Oran harbor attack in his 1951 autobiography, readers were unaware that his version of events glossed over significant information contained in yet-to-be-released classified records. British V. Adm. Bertram H. Ramsay, chief naval planner for TORCH, died in a wartime plane crash. His biographer, R. Adm. W. S. Chalmers, omitted all mention of Oran in the 1959 volume chronicling Ramsay’s life. British Commodore Thomas H. Troubridge, commander of the Center Naval Task Force during TORCH, entered the public literary eye as the subject of one of the biographical essays that composed Cdr. Kenneth Edwards’ 1945 book *Seven Sailors*. Edwards’ narrative provides some detail not found in other descriptions, but supplies little information about the raid’s planning. A full recounting of the raid on Oran harbor would not be possible until classified British Admiralty records were unsealed in 1972. By then, interest in the topic had waned so much that another thirty years would pass before author Rick Atkinson painted a vivid picture

General Eisenhower at work in Gibraltar, 5 November 1942







**Sergeant Gower, second from left, chats with newspaper correspondent Ernie Pyle, third from left, at the 38th Evacuation Hospital in Algeria, where the soldier was convalescing, 2 December 1942.**

of events in his Pulitzer Prize-winning work, *An Army at Dawn*. Atkinson's account of Oran rightly focuses on the dramatic moments leading up to and following the breaking of the boom outside the harbor entrance. The origins of the Oran harbor assault, however, make for an instructive tale of coalition politics, the difficulties of interservice planning, and the process by which senior commanders plan, resource, and execute military operations of great complexity and risk.<sup>8</sup>

The decision to invade French North Africa can be traced to the Anglo-American ARCADIA strategy meetings held in Washington, D.C., in late December 1941 and January 1942. Although both Americans and British recognized the need for offensive action against Nazi Germany, the former preferred invading mainland Europe while the latter supported a Mediterranean venture in the French territories of North Africa, a proposed operation they would code-name GYMNAST. The British had much to gain because eliminating Hitler's bridgehead on the African continent would shorten the lines of communications between England and India as well as begin the process of "closing the ring" around the Axis. American military leaders, including U.S. Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, were less

inclined to accept that reasoning. They objected that a Mediterranean operation would not, in the words of a later War Department staff study, "result in removing one German soldier, tank, or plane from the Russian front." Marshall believed that the war could only be brought to a successful conclusion if the Germans were defeated in western Europe. American opposition to a North African invasion in favor of western European landings, combined with the pressure of Pacific needs and heavy shipping losses, produced a strategic impasse on the question of future offensives throughout the entire conference.<sup>9</sup>

A second Anglo-American summit convened on 19 June with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill meeting initially at Hyde Park, New York, and their military advisers conferring in Washington, D.C., where the political leaders later joined them. The Americans resumed pressing for a cross-Channel invasion while the British stood firmly against it. While a complete agreement could not be reached before the meetings adjourned, General Marshall conceded on 24 June that "the possibilities of operation GYMNAST will be explored carefully and conscientiously [by the U.S. War Department], and plans will

be completed in all details as soon as possible."<sup>10</sup> The continuing failure to achieve a solid consensus on future offensive options prompted President Roosevelt to dispatch General Marshall; Admiral Ernest J. King, chief of naval operations; and Harry L. Hopkins, one of the president's closest advisers, as emissaries to London, where they arrived on 18 July. In addition to stalled strategic talks, New Deal Democrat Roosevelt faced mounting criticism from the Republican Party about his failure to launch a second front in the war as congressional midterm elections drew closer. Roosevelt's domestic concerns were captured in his instructions to Marshall and Hopkins, which specified that "if SLEDGEHAMMER [a 1942 invasion of western Europe] is finally and definitely out of the picture, I want you to . . . determine upon another place for U.S. Troops to fight in 1942."<sup>11</sup>

Faced with unyielding British opposition after three days of meetings in London, the emissaries reported to Roosevelt that the way ahead remained deadlocked. The president responded by directing the men to approve any one of five strategic options. The president's first preference was for an Anglo-American operation against either Algeria or Morocco, or both. After two more days of dickering, Marshall

# SCENE OF OPERATIONS



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Admiral Bennett, fourth from left, gathers with Admiral King, third from left, and other senior Navy officers, April 1944.

and King agreed to postpone a cross-Channel invasion until at least 1943 and committed the United States to large-scale military operations against the north and northwest coasts of Africa by late 1942.<sup>12</sup>

Marshall and King consented to having British joint planners produce an outline plan for the offensive as soon as possible. They and their British counterparts also agreed to change the operation's code name from GYMNAST to TORCH and to the appointment of an American commander for TORCH, who from headquarters in London would be responsible for all training and planning for the invasion. When Marshall and King, upon their return to Washington, expressed reservations about the London agreement's impact on plans for a 1943 invasion of western Europe, Roosevelt reminded them that "he, as Commander-in-Chief, had [already] made the decision that TORCH would be undertaken at the earliest possible date."<sup>13</sup>

General Eisenhower, who had been named commander of U.S. Forces in the European Theater less than two months earlier, learned of his impending selection as Allied commander in chief of TORCH on 26 July.<sup>14</sup> This latest assignment reflected Eisenhower's meteoric rise to high command. He had advanced in rank and position from a lieutenant colonel commanding an infantry battalion in the summer of 1940 to a three-star general in just two years. Indeed, Eisenhower had been in

England only since June following a three-month stint as chief of General Marshall's Operations Division. Although most of his career had involved service on high-level staffs rather than command of troops and some of his subordinate commanders had served as general officers for years, General Eisenhower had the self-assurance and political savvy to focus his energies on "the elimination of the frictions which are bound to arise when two armies—and two peoples—are in daily and inescapable contact."<sup>15</sup>

In addition to his coalition responsibilities, Eisenhower faced challenges during TORCH that were dissimilar to any he would encounter later in the war. Unlike future landings, the Anglo-American alliance did not have firm control of the seas or skies in 1942. In addition, the objective of the invasion was to turn the Vichy French into cobelligerents rather than defeat them. The fact that the French and British had clashed several times over the previous two years meant that the burden of the initial assault would fall to the untried Americans. The U.S. troops landing in North Africa would thus have to exert just the right amount of armed force to subdue the defenders in order to prevent the creation of long-lasting enmity between the French and Anglo-Americans. With the timing of the landings still uncertain, Eisenhower had only a few months at most to become acquainted with his component commanders, organize a combined

staff, marshal the necessary forces, assemble the invasion fleets, finalize plans, and issue written orders.

The initial directive for invading North Africa reached the British chief naval planner, Admiral Bertram H. Ramsay, on 31 July. Ramsay provided General Eisenhower with a draft outline plan within eight days. Ramsay's staff then experienced firsthand the bickering that characterized the decision to launch TORCH as the Americans and British argued over specific landing sites for another month. The British wanted to land in Algeria in order to position Anglo-American ground forces for a rapid westward dash into neighboring Tunisia that would threaten the supply lines of the German *Afrika Korps* opposing the British Eighth Army in Egypt. The American planners, on the other hand, were more concerned about the risk that Spanish dictator Francisco Franco would respond to the Allied invasion by assisting the Germans to seize Gibraltar and thus cut the Allied naval supply line. U.S. planners favored landing the bulk of the Anglo-American force in French Morocco.<sup>16</sup>

Eisenhower himself came to prefer eliminating the Moroccan option and staging landings in Algeria at Oran, Algiers, Philippeville, and Bône. The British position shifted in late August once the chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Alan Brooke, upon his return from the Middle East and the Soviet Union, pointed out "that it was militar-

ily unsound to by-pass Morocco. . . . The landings at Philippeville [proposed in his absence by the British Chiefs of Staff Committee] and Bône appeared to him too hazardous to undertake unless more air support was forthcoming.” After yet another exchange between Churchill and Roosevelt, Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers were agreed on as the TORCH landing sites.<sup>17</sup>

While Admiral Ramsay had hoped to command the naval expedition to North Africa, he soon learned that that assignment had been reserved for 61-year-old Admiral Cunningham. Shortly after he entered the Royal Navy, Cunningham’s intelligence and forceful personality had resulted in his being marked for advancement to senior ranks. As a sixteen-year-old midshipman aboard HMS *Doris* during the Boer War, he volunteered for duty on shore with the Naval Brigade primarily because it offered an opportunity for adventure and excitement.<sup>18</sup> During the first three years of World War I, Cunningham commanded a destroyer, HMS *Scorpion*, in the Mediterranean, where he would earn a promotion to commander and a Distinguished Service Order. In December 1917, Cunningham departed the Mediterranean and soon took command of the destroyer HMS *Termagant* assigned to the Dover Patrol. Cunningham supported the British bombardment of the Belgian port of Zeebrugge and agreed to try to scuttle an obsolete battleship, HMS *Swiftsure*, at the entrance to the harbor at Ostend, Belgium, used by German U-boats. Cunningham’s unyielding belief in aggressive battle tactics emerges in his autobiography when he wrote, “I still think it a pity the *Swiftsure* operation never came off.”<sup>19</sup>

After a successful interwar career that saw him assigned as an aide de camp to the king and knighted, Cunningham received command of the Mediterranean Fleet with the rank of full admiral in May 1939. Italy’s entry into the war as an ally of Germany in June 1940 transformed that posting from an undermanned backwater to a central fighting front. Cunningham oversaw a number of key battles to include a night aerial attack on Italian battleships in Taranto harbor; the

destruction of several Italian cruisers off Cape Matapan in Greece; the bloodless immobilization of a French naval squadron at Alexandria, Egypt; the evacuation of British ground forces from Greece and Crete; and the ongoing defense of Malta. General Eisenhower, after meeting Cunningham, later remarked, “He was the Nelsonian type of admiral. He believed ships went to sea in order to find and destroy the enemy. He thought in terms of attack, never of defense.”<sup>20</sup>

Cunningham’s fame initially resulted in his appointment as Eisenhower’s naval component commander being

kept secret, even within the military. Rather than recall Cunningham from his latest assignment as senior British naval representative in the United States, Admiral Ramsay flew to Washington, D.C., in early September 1942 to brief him. After spending two weeks together, Ramsay and Cunningham departed together for London on 20 September. Cunningham planned to remain in the British capital for a week before returning to the United States once again to wind up unfinished business.<sup>21</sup>

Before leaving to meet with Cunningham, Admiral Ramsay directed

### Admiral Cunningham





View of Oran from the  
Mediterranean Sea

View of Oran harbor looking east from the  
Chapel of Santa Cruz



his staff to develop a draft plan for the landings at Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers. Sometime around 12 September, U.S. R. Adm. Andrew C. Bennett, commander of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet's Advance Group Amphibious Force at Rosneath, Scotland, received a summons from the TORCH planning cell. Bennett, a submariner who earned the Navy Cross in World War I, had captained the light cruiser *Savannah* for the two years prior to his current assignment. After arriving in London with several members of his staff, Bennett learned that he would be responsible for operating one major and two minor ports in the wake of the Oran landings conducted by the TORCH Center Naval Task Force.<sup>22</sup>

Bennett's representatives, in close cooperation with Ramsay's staff, settled on a three-phased operation designed to sequentially secure the ports in the Oran area. The first consisted of sending a combined naval party and the U.S. 1st Ranger Battalion to Arzew, located twenty-five miles east of Oran, to capture all dock facilities and anchored ships.<sup>23</sup> The Rangers were the only commando-trained American unit in England. The U.S. 1st Infantry Division, reinforced by a brigade-size combat command from the U.S. 1st Armored Division, would then land at Arzew and Les Andalouses, located fifteen miles west of Oran. Phase Two,

which involved Admiral Bennett's headquarters and several reconnaissance parties deploying to Oran, would take place after the 1st Infantry Division obtained the surrender of the city's garrison. The final phase involved the dispatch of a combined naval operating party to take charge of the Mers el Kébir naval anchorage located several miles west of Oran.<sup>24</sup>

While Arzew and Mers el Kébir were expected to fall into Anglo-American hands intact, Admiral Bennett anticipated a great deal of French mischief at Oran. Protected by a 3,000-yard artificial breakwater running diagonally along its entire length from the west to the northeast, the harbor was, in Bennett's view, particularly susceptible to sabotage. At the port's easternmost edge, a smaller breakwater projected seaward to form a 160-yard-wide entrance. The breakwaters limited the harbor's width to 800 yards at its widest point. Four large docks projecting from shore separated the interior basins, each of which was narrower than the previous one. The passages between

the basins also diminished in size as one progressed inward, the last being only 76 yards wide.<sup>25</sup> If the French succeeded in scuttling the ships moored there, they could deny use of the port's facilities for a considerable period. As a result, Bennett's force included naval salvage experts and several hundred Army engineers trained to put the harbor back into full operation as soon as possible.

Admiral Bennett's decision to wait several days before deploying to Oran had been influenced by the port's seaward defenses. Thirteen coast artillery batteries manned by four thousand personnel were arrayed in an overlapping belt from Mers el Kébir to Arzew. Vichy troops also manned Fort Lamoune situated on a promontory overlooking Oran harbor.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the French Navy had recently established a considerable presence at Oran under V. Adm. André Rioult. On 1 October, the 7th Destroyer Division, consisting of the *Tramontane*, the *Typhon*, and the *Tornado*, had arrived at Oran from its previous base at Bizerte, Tunisia.

# Action in the Port of Oran



Ravin Blanc

Quai de Dunkerque

Typhon

Quai Beauvuy

Spotlight

Fort Lamoune

Quai d'Alger

Epervier

JETTY

Broken Boom

# CITY of ORAN



Route of the Walney

Route of the Hartland

Route of the Tornado

The trio of 1,500-ton Bourrasque-class vessels each mounted four 5.1-inch cannon, two 37-mm. and two 13.2-mm. anti-aircraft guns, and six torpedo tubes. Dockyard workers were also wrapping up a five-month overhaul on the 2,441-ton flotilla leader *Epervier*. Still in dry dock at the western end of the harbor, the Aigle-class destroyer mounted five 5.5-inch guns, four 37-mm. and four 13.2-mm. anti-aircraft guns, and six torpedo tubes.<sup>27</sup>

While the four warships enhanced Oran's sense of security, they also exacerbated the overcrowding within the harbor. As a main node for the transportation of people and goods to metropolitan France, Oran had always been a busy port. In addition to the destroyers, a dozen or more merchant ships, seven submarines, five patrol vessels, and several minesweepers were anchored there. While one or more Vichy destroyers were absent as they escorted convoys, the warships rotated among the available wharves, which included the Quai de Dunkerque near the entrance, the Quai Beaupuy in the center, and Quai d'Alger at the western end. The periodic departure of the destroyers, coupled with their rotating berths, made it difficult for

Anglo-American intelligence sources to determine the location and number of Vichy warships moored in the harbor at any given time.<sup>28</sup>

In the midst of the session conducted by Bennett and Ramsay's staff, Admiral Cunningham arrived in London. Cunningham spent the next week and a half meeting with King George VI, Churchill, Eisenhower, and family. Cunningham also learned who would serve as his naval task force commander during Operation TORCH. Commodore Troubridge, who led the Center Naval Task Force bound for Oran, had served in the Mediterranean Fleet under Cunningham as commanding officer of the battleship *Nelson* and the aircraft carrier *Indomitable*. Crippling damage inflicted on the *Indomitable* by German dive bombers during a convoy to Malta had forced Troubridge and his ship to return to England.<sup>29</sup>

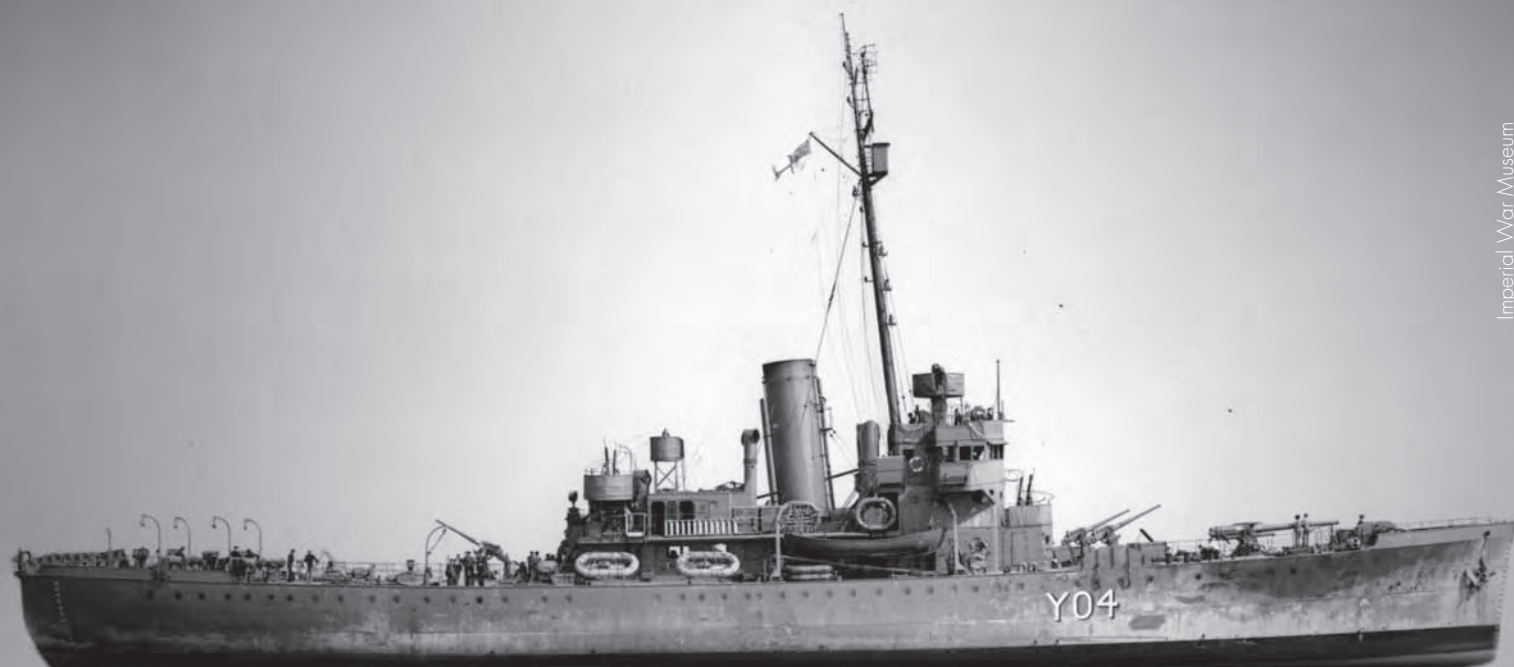
When Cunningham finally had an opportunity to review the draft plan for securing Oran, he objected to Ramsay's willingness to accept a certain amount of French sabotage as American port parties waited in Arzew for the 1st Infantry Division to capture the city. With little time remaining before he departed once again, Cunningham

decided to revise the plan developed by Ramsay and the Americans. To preclude any chance of widespread French sabotage, the British admiral decided to sail a task force carrying an American infantry battalion into Oran harbor on D-day. He justified the change by explaining that "it was also highly important that, if possible, the harbour installations and shipping in the ports of Algiers and Oran should not be destroyed before our forces gained control of them." After about twelve days in Great Britain, Cunningham flew back to the United States.<sup>30</sup>

Cunningham's decision to launch a direct assault against Oran harbor called for subject-matter experts familiar with mounting those types of operations. At Cunningham's request, the Combined Operations Command sent Royal Navy Capt. Frederic Thornton Peters, a Canadian, to work with Ramsay's staff. Peters had won the Distinguished Service Order, second to the Victoria Cross, for action during the North Sea Battle of Dogger Bank on 24 January 1915. He had returned to civilian life in 1920, departing at the rank of lieutenant commander. He reentered the service in December 1939, subsequently commanding an

**The French destroyer *Le Malin*, a ship of similar size and design as the *Epervier*, docked at Casablanca after suffering damage in an engagement with U.S. ships during Operation TORCH**





antisubmarine trawler, heading a naval intelligence staff section, and commanding a school that trained British intelligence agents, before assuming command of the auxiliary anti-aircraft cruiser HMS *Tynwald* in August 1941. After a brief tour of duty in Far Eastern waters, Peters returned in England in August to assume new duties as a special operations and naval planner for TORCH.<sup>31</sup>

Admiral Bennett, who returned to Rosneath before Cunningham modified the original plan, remained unaware of the British admiral's intervention for several days. Not until 6 October did Bennett learn that the plan, now code-named Operation RESERVIST, called for preventing French sabotage of the dock and harbor facilities in Oran either before or immediately following the city's capitulation. On 9 October, Bennett also received a formal directive from General Eisenhower to make available the U.S. Navy portion of the RESERVIST force. With the main body of his command not due to arrive in Algeria before D plus 3, the American admiral reorganized the advance parties slated for Arzew to obtain the required twenty-five naval personnel and six U.S. marines. Bennett selected Lt. Cdr. George D. Dickey to head the

RESERVIST detachment, with Lt. (jg) John M. Gill Jr. as Dickey's second in command.<sup>32</sup>

Aware of Cunningham's preference for a direct assault, Captain Peters championed the plan to sail a pair of Banff-class cutters, each carrying several hundred U.S. infantry and a party of U.S. naval personnel and marines, into Oran. The soldiers, numbering approximately a battalion, would seize Fort Lamoune and the coastal battery at Ravin Blanc. The naval parties would secure all ships anchored in the harbor, with special attention paid to ensuring merchant vessels were not scuttled in place. The ships would sail under the U.S. flag in the hope that the French might not open fire on what appeared to be American ships.

Peters made arrangements to neutralize the *Epervier* at the onset of the operation. One of the cutters would tie up alongside the French destroyer-killer while American troops cleared the opposing vessel's deck with automatic weapons fire. A specially trained party of soldiers and British sailors would then board the *Epervier* for the purpose of seizing control of that ship. While the British and Americans believed that at least seven submarines and five minesweepers were docked at Oran, no special provisions were made

to seize other Vichy naval vessels.<sup>33</sup> In addition to the U.S. soldiers and combined naval parties, the RESERVIST force included twelve British Special Boat Section (SBS) operatives manning six folding kayaks equipped with mobile mines. The mines would be used to destroy the inner and outer booms, consisting of two parallel lines of coal barges roped together, barring access to the mouth of the harbor.<sup>34</sup>

The decision to employ the Banff-class cutters *Walney* and *Hartland* for the assault stemmed from the fact they were originally commissioned as the U.S. Coast Guard 250-foot cutters *Sebago* and *Ponchartrain*. Transferred to the Royal Navy in early 1941, both of the 1,511-ton vessels were reconfigured as convoy escorts. The conversion included mounting light anti-aircraft weapons and welding depth-charge racks onto the stern. The additional weapons augmented the cutter's original foredeck armament of a five-inch gun, flanked by a pair of lighter dual-purpose cannons, and a three-inch gun aft. Despite British modifications, the two ex-cutters retained their unique lines, which lent credence to the use of U.S. colors as the vessels entered Oran. The *Walney* and the *Hartland* were detached from Convoy SL 122 en route from Freetown to Liverpool



## HMS Walney

Admiral Cunningham, fourth from left, pointing, reviews plans for Operation TORCH with General Eisenhower, sixth from left, and other officers and officials in Gibraltar six days before the North African landings.

on 6 October. The cutters arrived at Londonderry on 13 October, where they began fitting out for the assault.<sup>35</sup>

The issues of timing and rules of engagement for Operation RESERVIST remained to be resolved. Although Peters preferred to “go in if he could at H plus 15 minutes with all guns firing,” Cunningham and Commodore Troubridge were less enthusiastic about the prospect of Allied ships opening fire on the port’s defenders.<sup>36</sup> Cunningham wanted to avoid opening hostilities with the French to minimize the chance of resistance. After some discussion on the timing issue, Admiral Cunningham decreed that RESERVIST would start two hours after the first landing craft touched down near Arzew. The British admiral did not elaborate upon this decision beyond noting his belief that “if we could land sufficient troops at the places we had chosen, I was sure that the French opposition, half-hearted as I expected it to be, would soon collapse.”<sup>37</sup> Dissatisfied with his role as a combined operations planner, Captain Peters had lobbied for command of the assault. Before he returned to Washington in early October, Cunningham granted the Canadian officer’s request.

After conducting a survey of U.S. Army forces in England to determine which unit would be available for RESERVIST, Eisenhower’s staff chose the 3d Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, under the command of Lt. Col. George F. Marshall, an element of Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward’s 1st Armored Division. Within a day of learning of his mission, Colonel Marshall left Newcastle, Northern Ireland, bound for Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, in London to obtain maps and other necessary data. On 9 October, Marshall’s battalion reorganized into a

specialized 393-man assault force built around Companies G and H, each augmented by a rifle platoon from Company I. The troops started intensive training in commando-type tactics, to include cross-country marches, hand-to-hand combat, bayonet fighting, combat firing, and wall scaling.<sup>38</sup>

Even as the components of RESERVIST were being assembled, Admiral Bennett’s lingering doubts about the soundness of the operation grew more pronounced. He lodged both verbal and written protests with Commodore Troubridge, Admiral Cunningham, and General Eisenhower, noting that, “if determined resistance is met from the French Navy, which seems to be the general opinion, it is believed that this small force will be wiped out before the Army can enter the city if they go in at H plus two.”<sup>39</sup>

Drafting of the formal order for naval operations in support of TORCH had been deferred until Cunningham’s return to England. As the British admiral later recounted, “I already had three members of my old Mediterranean staff in London with me. . . . I came to the conclusion that the only way to get the plan written was to augment these three knowledgeable officers with a fourth from my old Mediterranean team. . . . I believe he dictated for about four days without stopping with four Wren stenographers on duty and another four standing off and waiting to come on.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Cunningham’s

account intimates that Ramsay’s staff and Bennett had little opportunity to influence the production of the written order. Bringing in his own planners also suggests Cunningham wanted to ensure the order bore his personal imprint, as had every operation he commanded while head of the Mediterranean Fleet.

Unable to convince Cunningham to change the plan, Admiral Bennett sent a letter of protest to General Eisenhower on 17 October. In the memorandum, Bennett wrote, “The operation as originally conceived and as approved by you appears to me to be sound, but the idea of turning it into a frontal assault, as conceived by Captain Peters, is believed to be unsound.”<sup>41</sup> Bennett concluded with the observation that “I am not convinced . . . that Captain Peters means to wait for a favorable moment. . . . it appears that his intention is to enter the port at a pre-determined time regardless of the status of the progress of the Army. This attitude and conception of the mission is believed to be wrong and at variance with the mission approved by you.”<sup>42</sup>

Three days previously, General Eisenhower’s headquarters had issued Annex 5a to the Center Task Force operation plan to govern “Operation RESERVIST, Seaborne Assault on Port of Oran.” The document was signed by Eisenhower’s operations officer, Brig. Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, and approved on the commander’s behalf by his chief of staff, Brig.

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Gen. Walter Bedell Smith. It announced the operation's objective as seizing "the first favorable opportunity to enter the harbor, with a view to preventing the shipping and dock installations from being sabotaged." The order specified that the operation would be conducted on D-day, with its exact timing determined by the Center Task Force's naval commander.<sup>43</sup> After receiving Bennett's reclama, a very busy Eisenhower passed it to Cunningham for resolution.<sup>44</sup>

Unused to having his orders questioned, Admiral Cunningham reacted with dismay when he learned of Bennett's attempt to persuade Eisenhower to cancel the Oran harbor strike. His reaction is understandable in that Cunningham had very little operational experience working with Allies willing to forcefully express viewpoints contrary to British desires. In his memoirs, Cunningham recorded, "the timing of the assault upon the harbour defenses at Oran came under fierce criticism from Rear-Admiral A. C. Bennett U.S.N. . . . While not much caring for the method in which the matter was raised I considered there was something to be said for Bennett's criticisms. The time for the direct assault on the harbour was too rigidly fixed, so the orders were modified to give Commodore Troubridge a free hand as to the moment the attack should be launched."<sup>45</sup> The time chosen for entering Oran harbor, as events would show, remained unchanged.

On the morning of 17 October, Colonel Marshall's battalion left Northern Ireland for Rosneath. Upon the attack troops' arrival in Scotland, they spent several days training with the U.S. naval contingent and the crews of both the *Walney* and the *Hartland*. The two cutters sailed on 23 October with Commander Dickey's naval party aboard the *Hartland*.<sup>46</sup> First Lt. John S. Cole, a member of Colonel Marshall's staff, and an American correspondent, Leo S. Disher, were aboard the *Walney*.<sup>47</sup> Three kayak teams from No. 2 Special Boat Section, commanded by British Army Capt. Harold V. Holden-White, sailed with the *Walney*, while three kayak crews under Lt. E. J. A. Lunn were transported to Gibraltar on the



Commodore Troubridge

*Hartland*.<sup>48</sup> The 3d Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, embarked aboard the SS *Leinster* on the morning of 24 October for a twelve-day voyage to Gibraltar.<sup>49</sup>

At 2230 on 6 November, Colonel Marshall's troops debarked from the *Leinster* anchored at Gibraltar. Navy tugs ferried the soldiers and equipment to the *Walney* and the *Hartland*. The transfer went smoothly enough, but the *Walney* ran aground while shifting to a different anchorage. A tug arrived a few minutes later to pull the *Walney* off the rocks. As a result, "Peters sent out a call for a destroyer and ordered all troops to transfer." Just before the destroyer arrived, Captain Peters asked the chief engineer to report to the bridge. The engineering officer assured Peters that the *Walney* had not suffered enough damage to warrant replacement by another warship. Anxious to preserve the cover afforded by the cutter's distinctive American silhouette, Peters withdrew the request and canceled orders to offload the soldiers.<sup>50</sup>

Colonel Marshall's troops spent the following day, 7 November, preparing for the mission. Just before lunch, all of the officers and men were called together. As the unit history recorded, "Now we were to learn the situation, and what we were expected to do. When the conference was over, all else was forgotten, except pouring [*sic*] over the maps, and aerial photographs, so that when we got to Oran, each man would know what his part was and where he was supposed to go."<sup>51</sup> Upon learning of the task force's destination, correspondent Disher recorded, "Now two years after a great naval battle between the British and French at Mers-el-Kébir, the *Walney* and her sister-ship, the *Hartland*, and two launches, were going to carry the war again to the sprawling ant-hill port."<sup>52</sup> Two armed motor launches, HMMLs 480 and 483, joined the *Walney* and the *Hartland* as the vessels lay at anchor. The motor launches would accompany the cutters to Oran, where they were to lay down a smokescreen to cover the passage of the cutters

# “NO SHOOTING THUS FAR; LANDINGS UNOPPOSED. ... DON'T START A FIGHT UNLESS YOU HAVE TO.”

through the harbor entrance should the French resist.

The Center Naval Task Force elements at Gibraltar weighed anchor in the late afternoon and evening of 6 November and linked up with vessels sailing direct from England. Upon completion of the rendezvous, the ships re-formed into nine assault groups bound for four separate landing sites. The *Walney* and the *Hartland*, which had been escorting Group 5 bound for “Z” Beach near Arzew, took up a course for Oran harbor after detaching from the convoy.<sup>53</sup>

At 0001 on 8 November, the *Walney* and the *Hartland* went to action stations in preparation for entering Oran harbor. Final arrangements for launching the SBS kayaks and disembarking troops were made. The forward-mounted five-inch guns on both vessels were left unmanned because they could not be fired without endangering the crews of the dual-purpose cannon. The cutters, escorted by HMMLs 480 and 483, turned on a westerly course of six knots after making landfall at 0200 off Pointe de l’Aiguille, a prominent land mass twelve miles northeast of Oran. The motor launches cruised close to the shore, with the cutters keeping farther out to sea.<sup>54</sup>

The landings at Arzew, which began at 0116, alerted French military authorities in Oran to the Anglo-American invasion fleet’s arrival. Shortly before 0200, Seaman Jean Meirat awoke to the general-quarters klaxon aboard French Navy Cdr. Adrien de Feraudy’s destroyer *Tramontane*. Meirat ran to

the bridge, where he soon reported to de Feraudy that all anti-aircraft positions were manned and ready. As the crews of the Vichy warships stood at their duty stations, the men exchanged guesses on the cause of the unexpected alert. Some thought it merely an exercise while others voiced the opinion that the British were somehow behind the commotion.<sup>55</sup> When additional news of sporadic fighting at Arzew reached Rioult’s headquarters, the French admiral ordered all warships in Oran harbor to make preparations to sail.<sup>56</sup>

At 0230, lookouts on the *Walney* sighted a ship off Oran signaling “De Alerte” followed by the letters “DCA.” Fifteen minutes later, as the cutters passed Pointe Canastel, about seven-and-a-half miles northeast of Oran, the city blacked out as air raid sirens were sounded. At 0250, the *Walney* received a somewhat ambiguous message from Commodore Troubridge aboard the Center Task Force command ship. The message read, “No shooting thus far; landings unopposed. . . . Don’t start a fight unless you have to.”<sup>57</sup>

At 0255, a searchlight from Fort Lamoune briefly illuminated the *Walney* before shutting off. Immediately afterward a light machine gun on shore directed a burst of tracer bullets at the lead cutter. In response, Captain Peters ordered HMML 480 to begin making smoke. When other French positions started engaging the *Hartland*, HMML 483 also began laying a smokescreen to obscure it.<sup>58</sup> Both cutters then turned seaward to avoid the Vichy fire. On the bridge of the *Walney*, correspondent

Disher noticed Peters speaking with the vessel’s captain, British Lt. Cdr. Peter C. Meyrick. Disher watched as Meyrick called out, “Turn her . . . we’re going back!” In that moment Peters had made his decision and the orders were being carried out.<sup>59</sup>

As the *Walney* came about in a tight circle, Royal Navy Lt. Paul E. A. Duncan broadcast over a loudspeaker in French, which he spoke with an American accent, “Cease firing,” he said. We are your friends. We are Americans.<sup>60</sup> The volume of incoming fire did not decrease, probably because none of the Vichy gun crews heard or believed Duncan. The *Walney* steered toward the outer boom as it increased speed to fifteen knots. In the midst of the smoke and gunfire, HMML 480 ran onto the outer boom, causing HMML 483, which turned sharply to the right to avoid hitting 480, to slam into the side of the *Walney*. Seconds later, at perhaps 0305, the cutter sliced through both harbor booms.<sup>61</sup> Royal Navy Lt. Wallace D. Moseley, manning the aft steering compartment, remembered, “we stopped engines and broke through both booms with barely a noticeable tremor. . . . I went on deck and all [three Special Boat Section] canoes were slipped with their crews and stores in them. The three canoes were slipped in less than a minute, and all reported themselves clear and under way, though it is believed one had been damaged by enemy action before lowering and sank shortly afterwards.”<sup>62</sup>

While lowering the kayaks, the *Walney* endured “heavy but inaccurate

# “‘CEASE FIRING,’ HE SAID. WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS. WE ARE AMERICANS.”

# THE CUTTER CONTINUED TO TRADE SHOTS WITH THE FRENCH WARSHIP FOR ALMOST AN HOUR

close range fire” from several anti-aircraft guns mounted on the harbor jetties and moles. The artificial smoke generated by the motor launches off the harbor entrance, which had drifted westward parallel to the course followed by the *Walney*, cloaked the British ship sufficiently to prevent the port’s defenders from drawing a clear bead on it. While the French weapons did succeed in scoring several hits, damage was confined to the communications system linking the aft of the ship with the bridge.<sup>63</sup>

As the *Walney* crept further into the smoke enshrouded harbor, Commander Meyrick ordered the boarding parties readied. Several members of the crew started up the forward power winch as deck parties took up stations at the head and stern lines. Meyrick planned to winch his ship alongside the *Epervier* using grappling lines shot over the French destroyer’s superstructure. The boarding party, which was split into two groups each consisting of a British naval officer, six naval enlisted men, and seven American soldiers, manned the port lifeboats. As soon as the men were in place, the boats were swung out to allow the occupants to drop onto the deck of the Vichy warship after the *Walney* had been winched alongside the *Epervier*. Sixteen other soldiers, including Colonel Marshall, took up positions behind a sandbag parapet erected on the bow of the cutter. Their job would be to clear a way for the boarding parties huddled in the lifeboats by tossing hand grenades onto the deck of the French warship.<sup>64</sup>

As the *Walney* proceeded further into the harbor, it met the French minesweeper sloop *Surprise* departing to investigate reports of landings at Andalouses Bay. Commander Meyrick tried to ram the sloop but missed due to the cutter’s sluggish handling at slow speed. As the ships passed only a matter of yards apart, the *Surprise*, mounting a single 65-mm. gun, did

not engage the *Walney*. The *Surprise* would not be the only French vessel encountered by the *Walney*. As the cutter continued westward at low speed, it met the destroyer *Tornado* leaving Quai Beaupuy. The Vichy ship unleashed a full broadside at close range into the *Walney*. Two shells pierced the cutter’s hull, causing heavy casualties and destroying the lubricating oil tanks. The fusillade ended as suddenly as it began, as the *Tornado* continued toward the harbor entrance. The loss of lubricating oil meant that the *Walney* had only a few minutes before its propulsion system failed.<sup>65</sup>

The imminent loss of engine power proved the least of Meyrick’s worries as the damaged cutter drew closer to the western end of the harbor. As the *Walney* emerged from the smoke into view, the *Epervier* and the *Tramontane* opened fire. The portside forward gun of the British ship blasted off at least one round in return, just missing the *Epervier* before being silenced. The *Tramontane*, firing directly at the forward part of the *Walney*, scored hits on the ward room, bridge, captain’s cabin, and steering compartment. The shell that burst onto the bridge killed everyone except Captain Peters, correspondent Disher, and Lieutenant Cole, all of whom were severely wounded. Only Disher and Peters managed to make their way off the mangled bridge before flames swept through it. Moments later, a 5.5-inch shell from the *Epervier* penetrated into the boiler room and exploded, killing most of the engine room personnel.<sup>66</sup>

The soldiers of the 6th Armored Infantry waited in vain for orders to disembark. Seconds later, another shell exploded among the American infantrymen sheltering in the mess deck. Dozens of Company G soldiers were killed or severely wounded without an opportunity to fire a shot. On the bow of the cutter, Colonel Marshall and the detachment of grenadiers fired their

Tommy guns until a hail of shell fragments ended their lives. With its engines inoperable and many of its crew and passengers dead, the *Walney* began drifting helplessly toward the *Epervier*.

Although the cutter lacked propulsion, the crew of the *Walney* had not yet given up the fight. When the *Epervier* attempted to illuminate the crippled British ship, the cutter’s aft anti-aircraft mount extinguished the French searchlight with an accurate burst. As the crippled cutter drifted even closer to the *Epervier*, both French destroyers were forced to cease fire to avoid hitting shore installations. The anti-aircraft guns aboard the *Tramontane* and the *Epervier* took up the fight as the British ship approached within fifty yards of the Quai d’Alger. Two submarines anchored near the *Tramontane* also began firing machine guns at the *Walney*.

The *Walney* responded with a blast of automatic weapons fire to port that riddled the bridge, fire control director, and searchlight platform of the *Epervier*. British gunners manning the cutter’s starboard anti-aircraft position wounded six members of the *Tramontane*’s forward gun crews.<sup>67</sup> The latter then slipped its moorings and headed toward the harbor entrance, leaving the *Epervier* to deal with the drifting British vessel. As the *Tramontane* churned past the *Walney*, the British gunners stitched a burst across the French destroyer’s 37-mm. anti-aircraft mount, wounding the officer in charge.<sup>68</sup>

Under cover of the fire provided by the aft anti-aircraft position, Lieutenant Dempsey used a converted depth-charge carrier to heave a line across the *Epervier*. The lack of electrical power, however, prevented the *Walney* from winching itself alongside the Vichy ship. Dempsey and Captain Peters, who made his way from the bridge despite a head wound, then managed to tie a mooring line to the adjacent jetty. Their efforts were in vain because



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### HMS Aurora

none of the boarding parties had survived unhurt. The cutter continued to trade shots with the French warship for almost an hour before flames forced the surviving British gunners away from their guns. Lieutenant Dempsey, as the senior unwounded naval officer on the cutter, ordered the survivors to abandon ship.

The fate of the other cutter proved no less dramatic. When the *Walney* first entered the harbor, British Navy Lt. Cdr. Godfrey P. Billot, the captain of the *Hartland*, waited five minutes before steering his vessel toward the entrance. The delay proved costly as a rising westerly wind blew the smoke created by the motor launches away from the entrance. The *Hartland* became the target of a coastal battery and a French destroyer after a searchlight from Fort Lamoune settled on the ship. While Commander Billot ordered his men to return fire, the crews of the foredeck anti-aircraft weapons were mowed down after responding with only three shots. Bullets also riddled the SBS kayaks as the British commandos were preparing to launch them.<sup>69</sup>

Although the British cruiser *Aurora* sailing six thousand yards offshore knocked out the searchlight, French gunners scored several more direct hits as the cutter headed into the harbor. One shell severed a boiler pipe,

unleashing a shrill blast of steam that rendered inaudible any attempt to communicate. A second explosion sprayed the bridge with shrapnel, killing and wounding several. The *Hartland* slammed into the northern end of the jetty as Billot, half-blinded by blood streaming from one eye, misjudged his approach. After reversing its engine, the damaged cutter wrenched itself loose from the jetty. The encounter with the jetty, when coupled with the five-minute delay, resulted in the *Hartland* sailing into Oran ten minutes after the *Walney* first entered.<sup>70</sup>

Commander Billot's cutter lacked both the cover of smoke and the dose of good luck that enabled the *Walney* to transit almost the entire length of the harbor without serious damage. As U.S. Navy Lt. John M. Gill aboard the *Hartland* recorded, "Still under machinegun fire she [the cutter] came opposite the end of the mole and prepared to turn when a French destroyer on the west side of the mole (later found to be the *Typhon*) opened fire with two 4.7-inch [sic] stern guns, range approximately 100 feet."<sup>71</sup> One of the shells exploded in a compartment occupied by a combined Army-Navy boarding party. With all surviving members threatened by asphyxiation or burning to death, U.S. Navy Electrician's Mate 1st Class Stanley F. Kline

located a small overhead hatch leading to the upper deck. Kline wriggled through the opening and crawled along the deck swept by intense machine-gun fire until he came upon a larger hatch that he succeeded in opening. Kline helped forty-two men to safety, several of whom were unconscious. Kline then assisted a U.S. Navy chief petty officer in firing a Browning automatic rifle (BAR) at the *Typhon*. While loading clips for the BAR, Kline was killed by return fire.<sup>72</sup>

The Vichy destroyer *Tornado*, which, with the *Tramontane* and the *Typhon*,

### Lieutenant Gill



National Archives

was in the process of leaving the harbor to engage the Allied fleet, also opened fire on the *Hartland*. Both French ships scored direct hits on the forward messing compartment, aft living spaces, fire room, and the wardroom, which was being used as an emergency first-aid station, and set fire to the bridge. The *Tornado* ceased fire a moment later as *Hartland* drifted alongside the *Typhon*. Commander Billot, now suffering from three wounds, ordered his crew and the American soldiers to abandon ship. The SBS commandos and American sailors distinguished themselves by saving a number of wounded soldiers. Other infantrymen were less fortunate as the French continued firing at swimmers in the water. Upon making their way to shore or to French launches, however, the oil-soaked survivors were no longer fired on. Armed parties from the *Typhon*, aided by troops from the nearby coast defense batteries, began collecting those Americans and British who made their way ashore. All of the unwounded personnel from the *Hartland*, along with the remaining raiders and crewmembers from the *Walney*, were held briefly in the city jail before being taken into French Army custody.<sup>73</sup>

The parting shots of the battle of Oran harbor were not fired by a Vichy warship. Sheltering alongside one of the moles, two of the SBS kayaks from the *Walney* sighted the *Tornado* leaving the harbor. The No. 1 kayak commanded by Captain Holden-White paddled out to launch a mobile mine as the Vichy warship sailed past. Holden-White claimed a possible hit on the French vessel. The No. 2 kayak, crewed by Cpls. C. Blewett and R. W. Loasby, attempted to engage but decided against launching its mobile mines to avoid hitting the *Hartland*.<sup>74</sup> Whether because it swerved to avoid the threat posed by the kayak or due to poor visibility, the *Tornado* slammed into the entrance jetty. Sporting a crumpled bow, the Vichy destroyer reduced speed to six knots as it limped seaward.<sup>75</sup>

At 0525, a large explosion occurred aboard the *Hartland*, but

it remained afloat, burning furiously, with the American flag visible in the light of the flames. The *Epervier* finally disentangled itself from the *Walney*, which drifted several hundred yards before coming to rest against the seawall. Sometime after 0700, the *Walney* capsized after a large explosion. The French flotilla leader, which sustained a number of casualties and considerable damage to its upper works, did not join the other destroyers bound for Arzew Bay. Three hours after its consort capsized, a second large explosion resulted in the sinking of the *Hartland*.<sup>76</sup>

While the Anglo-American raid on the port failed, Vichy resistance had not ended. The British destroyer

*Brilliant* sank the *Surprise* when it attempted to interfere with Allied landing operations. The trio of Vichy destroyers heading for Arzew Bay suffered similar fates. The *Tramontane* received several hits from the British cruiser *Aurora*. Low in the water and with wounded and dead littering its decks, the ship ran aground near Cape de l'Aiguille. The damaged *Tornado*, a sitting duck at half-speed, suffered the same fate. The patrol vessel *Ajacienne* later recovered twenty-four wounded and four dead from the beached destroyers. Only the *Typhon* made it back to Oran, with one stack shot away and half its ammunition expended. On 9 November, the *Epervier* and the *Typhon* attempted to break through the

Fire engulfs the *Hartland* in Oran harbor, 8 November 1942.



# ONLY 47 SOLDIERS FROM COLONEL MARSHALL'S 393-MAN FORCE AVOIDED DEATH OR WOUNDS.

British naval forces screening Oran. The effort failed, with the *Epervier* suffering twelve killed and thirty-four wounded from shells delivered by the cruisers *Aurora* and *Jamaica*. It joined the other French ships aground outside Oran. The *Typhon* put back into port, but it was blown up at the entrance to the harbor when Admiral Rioult scuttled all of the French vessels in Oran shortly before the city surrendered.<sup>77</sup>

Oran harbor on 10 November, at least from the viewpoint of the American troops who captured the city, appeared to be a graveyard of ships. Twenty-five hulks, including the *Hartland* and the *Walney*, littered its waters, along with three floating docks. With a moral flexibility that might seem incomprehensible to Anglo-Saxon minds, the French immediately placed all of their salvage assets at Admiral Bennett's disposal. Unloading operations commenced as soon as Bennett's command opened a small channel into the harbor. Work progressed as fast as possible, with two dry docks and nine French merchant ships being salvaged by 9 December. Not until early January were all of the remaining obstructions in the harbor, to include the superstructure of the *Hartland*, removed or destroyed by demolitions.<sup>78</sup>

The losses suffered during Operation RESERVIST were as staggering as Admiral Bennett predicated. The 95-man crew of the *Hartland* lost 33 killed or died of wounds while the *Walney* suffered 79 fatalities.<sup>79</sup> Eighty-six members of the Royal Navy were also wounded. Nine U.S. naval personnel and three marines aboard the *Hartland* were killed or wounded. The 3d Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, lost 189 killed or missing and 157 wounded. Sergeant Gower was among the latter group. Only 47 soldiers from Colonel Marshall's 393-man force avoided death or wounds.

By comparison, the combined Anglo-American force that conducted a similar assault on Algiers harbor lost 23 killed or died of wounds and 51 wounded. Although the French compelled that raiding force to surrender, Vichy officials did not order the destruction of harbor facilities and shipping before Algiers surrendered.<sup>80</sup>

The final death suffered by the Operation RESERVIST force took place three days following the fall of Oran. On 13 November, Captain Peters departed Gibraltar aboard a Royal Australian Air Force Sunderland flying boat piloted by Flying Officer (1st Lt. equivalent) Wynton Thorpe bound for England. Lightning, hail, sleet, and forty-knot headwinds were encountered during the flight. Seven and a half hours later, Thorpe radioed a message to his base at Mount Batten, located near Plymouth, stating, "May force land outside breakwater." At 1956 that day, the Sunderland crashed into the sea approximately one and a half miles offshore. All five passengers, including Peters, were killed. The Sunderland's eleven-man crew survived, although three suffered serious injuries.<sup>81</sup>

The failed assault, in light of Admiral Bennett's prophetic criticisms, which were also sent to the upper echelons of the U.S. Navy, did little to solidify Anglo-American naval relations. In an immediate postmortem assessment of the failed *coup de main*, Lieutenant Moseley stated, "It is my opinion that the naval side of the operation might have been successful if carried out by two modern fleet destroyers and that even the cutters themselves could have accomplished it if they had entered the harbor two hours earlier."<sup>82</sup> Admiral Cunningham, no doubt in response to criticism by U.S. naval officers, took special pains in his official TORCH after action report to observe, in a statement that was not entirely accurate, "The direct assaults planned

against the harbour of ALGIERS and ORAN (Operations TERMINAL and RESERVIST) were in no sense planned as imitations of ZEEBRUGGE but were intended to be launched just before the surrender or capture of the ports with the purpose of preventing sabotage of ships and port installations."<sup>83</sup> In the same report, Cunningham conceded Bennett's point with regard to the timing of the assault when he admitted, "the moment chosen could hardly have been less fortunate, since the FRENCH alarm to arms was in its first full flush of Gallic fervour and they had not yet been intimidated by bombing or bombardment, whilst darkness prevented any American complexion to the operation being apparent."<sup>84</sup>

Repercussions and awards both followed in the wake of Operation RESERVIST. The latter issue proved to be an extremely delicate one as recognized by General Eisenhower. Aware that many French lives had also been lost during TORCH, he informed General Marshall that "in order to promote cooperative action between this expedition and available French units, particularly while we need their help in Tunisia, I have tried to avoid the creation of animosities. . . . Consequently I have deliberately used understatement in describing publicly some of the earlier operations, although in certain instances the fighting was quite sharp."<sup>85</sup>

The British, who had fought a quasi-war against the Vichy French for two years beginning in July 1940, were a little less concerned about French opinion. Less than one month after the assault, Royal Navy Lt. Cdr. Tommy Woodroffe related a detailed account of the operation to BBC listeners. While Admiral Cunningham recommended that "silence is the best policy" with regard to awards for Oran, he recommended Peters for Great Britain's highest decoration for valor, the

Victoria Cross. The Admiralty awards board noted relative to this honor, "As the story of this action, and the part played in it by Captain Peters, is now probably known both at home and in Oran, it will presumably not be possible to restrain the Press from comment." The award was published in May 1943.<sup>86</sup>

Initial reports submitted to the 1st Armored Division headquarters by the surviving officers of Colonel Marshall's unit included recommendations for a Medal of Honor and seven Silver Stars.<sup>87</sup> After much deliberation, Distinguished Service Crosses were posthumously awarded to Colonel Marshall, 1st Lt. Victor H. Karpass, Tg4c. Glynn W. Hicks, 1st Lt. A. Thomas Rowe, and Sgt. Billie S. Layton. Karpass and Hicks were both medical personnel, while Rowe and Layton were in Company H. Cpl. Francis J. Mulligan of Company I survived to receive his Distinguished Service Cross. All of their citations, in keeping with security regulations, mentioned only that the awards were earned for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy.<sup>88</sup> The 3d Bat-

talion, 6th Armored Infantry, underwent reconstitution from December 1942 to late January 1943 before receiving its baptism of fire at Kasserine Pass in mid-February.

Repercussions, whether symbolic or real, were limited to the U.S. chain of command as British service culture seemed inclined to accept that failed enterprises could be redeemed by the gallantry shown by participants. In late January 1943, General Eisenhower took it upon himself to apologize for RESERVIST to the Combined Chiefs of Staff during the Casablanca Conference. Captain Butcher recorded in his diary that "Harry [Hopkins] spoke especially of the Oran Affair in which Ike took the blame before the Combined Chiefs for delaying the RESERVIST Operation (the two sloops, destroyers, or corvettes that tried to rush the harbor, got shot up by close coastal batteries and 215 [sic] men lost) but Harry said Ike shouldn't blame himself for that as it was simply a part of a successful military operation."<sup>89</sup> Butcher's account, which did not appear in the published version, suggests fault was found only in

regard to the decision to wait two hours after the first landings before sending the cutters into the harbor.

Operation TORCH has been rightly described as one of the most complex amphibious operations of World War II. General Eisenhower, a gifted staff officer, found himself appointed supreme Allied commander based on his team-building approach to coalition politics, firm leadership, and organizational skills. Focusing on his strengths, which included operational planning, strategic guidance, and talent for building sound politico-military relationships, Eisenhower rightly deferred to a British naval component commander when it came to tactical planning. However, Admiral Cunningham, who relied on a small team of Mediterranean Fleet planners, did not seem predisposed to take suggestions from other British, U.S., or Canadian sources. Operation RESERVIST serves to remind us that the learning curve for newly minted generals, and very experienced admirals, can cost a great deal in blood and treasure.



**Brig. Gen. John T. Lewis, commander of the Military District of Washington, pins on the young son of Colonel Marshall the Distinguished Service Cross awarded him posthumously, as his widow watches, 15 March 1943.**





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# COMMENTARY

## TARNISHED BRASS

### Is the U.S. Military Profession in Decline?

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By RICHARD H. KOHN

Nearly twenty years after the end of the Cold War, the American military, financed by more money than the entire rest of the world spends on its armed forces, failed to defeat insurgencies or fully suppress sectarian civil wars in two crucial countries, each with less than a tenth of the U.S. population, after overthrowing those nations' governments in a matter of weeks. Evidence of overuse and understrength in the military abounds: the longest individual overseas deployments since World War II and repeated rotations into those deployments and the common and near-desperate use of bonuses to keep officers and enlisted soldiers from leaving. Nor is it only the ground forces that are experiencing the pinch. The U.S. Air Force has had to cut tens of thousands of people to buy the airplanes it believes it needs. The U.S. Navy faces such declining numbers of ships that it needs allies to accomplish the varied demands of power projection, sea control, and the protection of world commerce.

Why such a disjunction between enormous expenditures and declining capability? One factor is that the threats currently facing the United States, many of them building for a generation or more, do not yield to the kind of conventional war that our military is designed to fight. The challenges to global stability are less from massed armies than from terrorism; economic and particularly financial instability; failed states; resource scarcity (particularly oil and potable water); pandemic disease; climate

change; and international crime in the form of piracy, smuggling, narcotics trafficking, and other forms of organized lawlessness. Very few of these threats can be countered by the high-tempo, high-technology conventional military power that has become the specialty—almost the monopoly—of the United States, shaped and sized to fight conventional wars against other nation-states.

Another factor is the role the United States has assumed for itself as the world's lone superpower—the guarantor of regional and global stability and champion of human rights, individual liberty, market capitalism, and political democracy, even though promoting those values may simultaneously undermine the nation's security.

A third factor in the disjuncture between the needs of American security and the abilities of the military establishment is not much discussed: deficiencies in American military professionalism. This problem, hidden because our military regularly demonstrates its operational effectiveness in battle, is the focus of this essay.

The challenge to military professionalism in the twenty-first century lies in three interconnected areas. The first is *intellectual*: the ability to wage war successfully in a variety of circumstances without wasting the lives of soldiers or their equipment and supplies (which are always limited, even for a superpower at the zenith of its relative strength). The second is *political*: the absence from the officer corps of partisan political divisions, its subordination to the legally constituted civilian authorities in charge of the state, and its

ability to establish an effective working partnership or collaboration with the civilian political leadership regardless of party or faction. The third challenge to professionalism is what I would call *moral* or *ethical*: the honor, integrity, honesty, and self-sacrifice of the officer corps, the commitment of individual officers to the norms and values of personal and organizational behavior that permit them to lead, and their subordinates to follow, in the heat and stress of battle.

A failure in the first area—strategy—is obviously the most dangerous. After remarkable success prior to and during World War II in creating and executing strategy in the largest and most complex war in human history, the American military began a slow decline. Ironically, this decline came at a time when the military was gaining enormous influence in the making of foreign and national security policies in the government reorganization of the 1940s: the unification of the armed forces and the creation of the National Security Council, Joint Chiefs of Staff, the unified and specified commands, the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence organizations, and the various mobilization, munitions, and logistics boards and agencies.

While prior to the war military planners were reduced to poring over the newspapers and parsing public statements by the White House to discern foreign policy, afterwards uniformed officers were integrated into (and increasingly influential on) a complex interagency coordination and policy-making process. But the military never gained full control of



General Shalikashvili speaks to the Democratic National Convention in Boston, 28 July 2004.

nuclear weapons, and increasingly in the 1950s lost primacy in nuclear strategy to the new think tanks and to the private sector. At the same time, the services adopted business models of management and to some extent leadership that reflected a growing partnership with American industry. (Significantly, William Westmoreland was the first active-duty Army officer to graduate from the Harvard Business School.) The services also embraced operations research, systems analysis, and economic theory partly to defend themselves against Robert McNamara and his whiz kids. Nonetheless, the services began to use those disciplines, along with the traditional supports of science and engineering, to manage their institutions, formulate policy, and eventually to wage war.

The result was the withering of strategy as a central focus for the armed forces, and this has been manifest in a continual string of military problems: a Vietnam War in which Americans won every single battle and campaign and lost the war almost from the very beginning; failed interventions like Lebanon in 1983 and Somalia in 1993; the Gulf War, which ended, contrary to American wishes, with Saddam Hussein still in power and his most lethal armed forces intact; and initially successful campaigns in Afghanistan (designed by the CIA) and the Iraq War, which metastasized into interminable and indecisive guerrilla wars of attrition that have tried American patience and will.

Iraq has become the metaphor for an absence of strategy. The theater commander brilliantly overthrew the

Saddam government in three weeks but failed to provide for occupying or securing the country, or even to advise the Defense Department adequately about his needs in that regard. His successor on the ground in Iraq failed to partner with civilian authorities, devise operations and tactics to prevent the onset of an insurgency, and then to combat it effectively. The American forces failed to train Iraqi security forces or to oversee contracts competently or to rebuild Iraq—and even the tactics and operations of the American forces have come under withering criticism. In effect, in the most important area of professional expertise—the connecting of war to policy, of operations to achieving the objectives of the nation—the American military has been found wanting. The excellence of the American military in operations, logistics, tactics, weaponry, and battle has been manifest for a generation or more. Not so with strategy.

Now there are many other factors in the Iraq War about which the American civilian leadership was even more derelict than the military. But for all of the pronouncements about preparing for “full spectrum conflict,” and the discussions about Operations Other Than War, the American military since the end of the Vietnam War has been focused like a laser on organization, weapons, doctrine, training, and the assignment and advancement of officers—on high-tempo, technology-rich conventional warfare. Discovering the so-called operational level of war in the 1970s, the Army seemed to lose interest in strategy. Even the Army War College, dedicated to the mission of educating

“strategic leaders,” teaches “about strategy,” in the words of a faculty member there, but not “how to develop strategy.”

From the introduction of nuclear weapons in the 1940s, the Navy seems actually to have subordinated strategy to the capabilities of its fleets rather than designing its fleets to fit the larger needs of American foreign policy and national security strategy. The Air Force continued its torrid love affair with strategic bombing to the point of blinding itself to the application of any kind of warfare other than total war against another nation-state. Even after Vietnam, when it finally got the message that obliterating whole societies from the face of the earth was not going to be American national policy, the Air Force has had difficulty adapting aviation to the full suite of possible military conflicts the nation might experience. The most adaptable American service has been the Marine Corps, but only at the operational and tactical levels; it remains relentlessly a light infantry shock force whose officer corps seems to understand strategy almost wholly in terms of figuring out when and where they can insert their men into the fight.

The Iraq War is not the only example of strategic deficiency. In October 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asked his chief military and civilian subordinates for an assessment of the “Global War on Terrorism,” noting that “we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing” and asking numerous broad yet focused questions, all of which came down to the question of strategy. It took several years, and still the Joint Chiefs of Staff required help from contractors—*contractors*—to come up with a system to measure what is clearly the most pressing security threat facing the United States in a generation.

Contracting has been a growing trend for nearly two decades throughout the defense establishment: in the Army, for example, not simply for kitchen police or security for stateside bases, which makes eminent sense, but increasingly for core military functions like doctrine, after-action analysis, and the training of foreign armies. Some of this has resulted from the pressure of too many missions and too few people. But whether because of resources or convenience, too much

has been willingly given up by the armed forces. A profession that surrenders jurisdiction over its most basic areas of expertise, no matter what the reason, risks its own destruction.

The second area of diminished professionalism in the armed forces is in politics, and by that I mean the officer corps' understanding of its proper role in government and society. For a century, at least, officers understood that they must be completely apolitical: neither for nor against any party or creed, to the point where most officers in the first half of the twentieth century even abstained from voting. Not that the military eschewed politics altogether; throughout their history, the American armed forces have maneuvered for budgets, roles, and missions—policies that benefited their war-fighting capacity—and officers, obviously, have lobbied for personal advancement. A few top leaders ran for office after retirement, an old American practice. But officers on active duty understood their role to be not only non-partisan but un-partisan—completely outside party politics—and their function purely to be advisers to civilian leaders on matters of policy and strategy from a military perspective, and to execute the decisions of those leaders in peace and in war.

In the last generation, however, this understanding has become so compromised that Secretary of Defense Robert Gates felt constrained to instruct officers graduating from the Naval and Air Force Academies in 2007 about the necessity for being “non-political.” Officers now vote, in substantially higher percentages than the general population; they identify themselves as Republican or Democrat, and less as independent or non-partisan, much more than the American people as a whole.

The most glaring manifestation of partisanship has been the sudden emergence of endorsements for presidential candidates by retired four-star generals and admirals, begun most notably in 1992 when retired chairman of the joint chiefs, Admiral William Crowe, and several other retired flag officers endorsed Bill Clinton, an act that bolstered Clinton's fitness to be commander in chief. It was a direct intervention in politics that, while legal, violated a



**General Franks gestures as he addresses the Republican National Convention in New York, 2 September 2004.**

very old, and significant, tradition. In its aftermath, Generals Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf declared as Republicans and played prominent roles in the election of 1996. In 2000, even more retired four-stars backed George W. Bush, and in 2004, retired chairman General John Shalikashvili appeared with other flags to speak at the Democratic National Convention, as did retired General Tommy Franks at the Republican gathering.

In April 2006, several retired generals attacked Donald Rumsfeld's handling of the Iraq War, calling for his ouster, again violating a tradition that retired officers do not criticize an administration they served until it leaves office, and most certainly not when American forces are still engaged in combat. They appeared over two dozen times in the press; two of them participated in video advertisements attacking the president and Iraq policy, in effect joining the Democrats' war opposition in Congress. In the fall of 2007, retired Army Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, who commanded the Multi-National Force in Iraq in 2003–2004, attacked the Bush administration's handling of the war in explicit, incendiary language in a luncheon speech to military reporters and editors. Weeks later, he delivered the same message in the Democrats' reply to the president's weekly radio address, introducing himself “not as a representative of the Democratic Party, but as a retired military officer.”

More disturbing than partisanship have been the calls, in the wake of Rumsfeld's abusive and intimidating

leadership, for the military to stand up to civilians who are ignoring or deciding against military judgment—to the point of speaking out or otherwise preventing a decision from going forward, or resigning to alert the public to a disaster in the making. The roots of these impulses extend back to Vietnam when officers accused their leadership of going along with policies and decisions they knew would fail. Out of that conflict came a generation that, in Colin Powell's words, “vowed that when our turn came to call the shots, we would not quietly acquiesce in halfhearted warfare for half-baked reasons that the American people could not understand or support.” Powell's predecessor as chairman of the joint chiefs admitted in his memoirs that he schemed to achieve policies of his own choosing even when his own secretary of defense opposed them. The head of U.S. Central Command, Admiral William Fallon, spoke so often and so freely to the press that he was forced to retire abruptly in March 2008 after airing his disagreements over Iraq strategy, boasting privately that he would try to stymie any unprovoked attack on Iran, and criticizing the Congress for considering a resolution that labeled the Turkish massacre of Armenians in 1915 genocide.

Just how politicized some of the military's leading members have become is illustrated by General David Petraeus. Aide or assistant to three different generals during his career and with a doctorate in political science from Princeton, the general published an op-

ed in the *Washington Post* lauding the progress of the Iraqi Army just before the 2004 presidential election. Pushed front and center by the president as the person who would decide force levels and strategy and define success or failure in Iraq, Petraeus became for a time the virtual public face of the Iraq War. No matter how carefully he phrased his assessments or hedged his predictions of future conditions in that stricken country in his congressional testimony and public statements, some in the press and in Congress labeled him a “front man” for the administration.

Partisan politicization is a cancer in the military, particularly inside the officer corps. It has the potential to divert soldiers from their tasks and to affect their morale, and thus their fighting ability. Surely partisanship undermines public confidence in the objectivity and loyalty of the military, and, by association, in the policies of their civilian masters. A number of senior officers recognized these dangers. On taking office in 2008, the new Air Force chief of staff warned his generals explicitly: “You will deal with politics . . . but you must remain apolitical . . . now and in retirement.” Whether politicization can be contained in an age of instant worldwide communication remains to be seen. As the prominent military lawyer Eugene Fidell, head of the National Institute of Military Justice, says of Iraq, “This is the first post internet, post digital American war.”

Related to these strategic and political failures are possible moral deficiencies among the officer corps, which have arisen in the last few years. At its heart is a growing careerism that has led to micromanagement from above and a sense that any defect will derail a career, which in turn leads to risk aversion and sometimes to cover-ups, avoidance of responsibility, and other behaviors that harm the ability of the armed forces to succeed in battle. These failures of professional conduct have appeared in such cases as the misrepresentations of Pfc. Jessica Lynch’s battlefield experiences; the handling of the death of Cpl. Pat Tillman (the altered reports, changing stories, and botched investigations); the scandalous treatment of wounded soldiers at Walter Reed; the

aborted career of Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba, who investigated the Abu Ghraib prison horror; and of course Abu Ghraib itself. Twice the Army has suppressed its own studies of the Iraq War in fear that the conclusions would anger Donald Rumsfeld, an egregious breach of honesty that threatens the indispensable after-action feedback loop upon which success in future battle depends.

Such incidents occurred in the past and will undoubtedly occur again; malfeasance and breaches of ethics occur in every profession. What is troubling is the lack of accountability and the fact that these ethical lapses go unpunished. The military has well-developed systems of criminal investigation and justice and other investigative channels that are designed to expose and punish crime, misbehavior, and violations of rules and regulations. But in recent years, few if any senior officers have been identified, punished, or held to account. As Lt. Col. Paul Yingling wrote, in a stinging attack on the Army brass, “A private who loses a rifle suffers greater consequences than a general who loses a war.”

That two Air Force and two Army generals had to be reprimanded in 2007 for appearing in uniform in a video promoting evangelical religion indicates a decline in the understanding of proper professional behavior. This was not a big thing, one might say; but these individuals were at the top of their services, role models as well as leaders. The fact that they did not “get it” suggests a lack of understanding that may extend more widely in the officer corps than heretofore thought. That the secretary of defense in his first eighteen months in office had to replace several top generals and an admiral (along with a service secretary) suggests that those most knowledgeable about the military also recognize these problems.

There is a longstanding argument among scholars about the ability of military institutions to reform themselves. To some degree, I think that the services do recognize their weakness. The Air Force in the 1990s began a school of advanced air power (and now space power) studies to produce officers who could think through the

uses and limitations of such power in war. A few years ago, the Army War College created an advanced strategic arts program for a select group of officers in each class. The Army chief of staff has noted publicly the complexities that will challenge the cultural comprehension of Army leaders in future war and recently opened up a Center for Professional Military Ethics at the U.S. Military Academy.

The American military has certainly demonstrated in the past an ability to transform, particularly in response to changes in technology. One only has to go back to the introduction of steel and steam in the Navy, the adoption of aviation by both services, and the development of strategic bombing, amphibious doctrine and practice, combined arms and armored land warfare, and carrier and submarine forces in the 1920s and 1930s to see all of the armed services innovating in organization, weapons, doctrine, operations, and tactics. Indeed, in what I have argued is the most important area of special expertise—strategy—American officers performed magnificently during the interwar period and in World War II in dealing with what was perhaps the most dangerous foreign threat the country has ever faced.

But if the military is to repair its professionalism without a massive (and inevitably messy) intervention by civilian authorities, piecemeal approaches will not suffice. Almost any academic would immediately target professional military education (PME) as the point of leverage, focusing on curriculum in an attempt to renew among officers critical expertise and the norms and values of their professional world. But the services are far too action-oriented, too busy and strained, too focused on recapitalizing and modernizing their weapons systems, and in truth too anti-intellectual for PME to suffice. Most treat “schooling” as something distinct from serving, therefore making it for most officers an experience only to be endured. (Only very recently has the Navy made war college a prerequisite for flag rank.) Rather, a more systematic, comprehensive solution is needed, imposed from the top by either the civilian or military leadership in ways

that cannot easily be undone by bureaucratic sloth or subsequent leadership.

First, the uniformed chiefs and civilian secretaries of each of the services should together instruct promotion boards for flag officers to choose a greater proportion of candidates with demonstrated intellectual as well as operational and command ability: people who have advanced civilian schooling in disciplines particularly suited to the formulation of strategy; who have demonstrated moral as well as physical courage and a willingness to take risk; who are original, innovative, and indeed conceptual in their thinking; and who may not have pursued typical careers or served in assignments that in the past would be necessary for promotion to flag rank.

Second, each of the services should be ordered to review its promotion and assignment policies to ensure that officers of this type will be attracted to the services, educated properly, retained, and assigned in such a way as to develop the desired characteristics while at the same time rising competitively into the leadership. Specifically, the top civilian and military leadership of each of the services must undertake a systematic effort to eradicate the careerism, anti-intellectualism, and politicization of their officer corps—in other words, to change the organizational culture, particularly in their flag ranks.

Still another indispensable reform concerns the officer evaluation system, specifically diluting the “top-down” system of officers being judged by their superiors only. Fitness for promotion—and particularly the characteristics recommended here—requires assessment by peers and subordinates as well as supervisors and commanders. However, such an innovation must be carefully crafted, for it can and will be “gamed” by officers, itself a commentary on professionalism and its challenges.

Third, the services need to institute programs of continuing education to be pursued by officers on their own, separate from and in addition to intermediate and advanced professional military education in residence or by correspondence. Other professions possess self-administered systems of continuing education. Officers should

be required to apply to staff and war colleges, passing entrance examinations to qualify, or writing a statement of interest and submitting an essay on a professional subject to demonstrate their seriousness of intent. Professional readings should be part of the preparation, with officers allowed to take the examination again if they fail, as a certain percentage will if the tests are demanding enough.

Fourth, the service academies and ROTC (Reserve Officers’ Training Corps) should revise their curricula to make certain that officers at commissioning are fluent in a foreign language and conversant with a foreign culture, and senior service schools should revise theirs so that strategy, leadership, and command are the focus of a war college education. This may require further de-emphasis of mathematics, science, and engineering at the academies, on the grounds that war is first and foremost a human phenomenon, not a technical or engineering problem. While it is critically important, the operation of complex equipment is not more important than an understanding of war in all of its uncertainty and complexity or of the basic norms and values of the military profession. At all levels these ideals and ethics need to be emphasized.

Professions that cannot change themselves from within, cannot respond to the needs of their clients, and cannot enforce standards of behavior so as to maintain the confidence of their constituencies while also inspiring the admiration and loyalty of their own members are in trouble. Just how deeply these problems extend into the officer corps of the American armed forces is hard to tell. Certainly the Army and Marines have fought bravely and served faithfully in Iraq without complaint, perhaps the most important test of military professionalism. Few people suggest that the Army’s (or the other services’) organizational climate is pervaded by the kind of moral decay discovered in the famous “Study on Military Professionalism” completed at the Army War College in 1970, although some echoes are disturbing.

Yet even before the stresses introduced by the current campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, knowledgeable ob-

servers of the military raised questions of strategic competence, politicization, and integrity in the officer corps. Part of the current strain on the American military has roots that reach back a generation at least, and in some ways into the very culture of each of the armed services. (Some may be endemic to military organization.) The civilian and military leadership must address these problems in a holistic way, treating them as connected, part of a pattern that threatens professionalism. To the extent that the leaders of each of the services avert their eyes from these problems, it jeopardizes not only the national defense but the long-term health of our military. Sooner or later the adulation of the American people, and the fear and respect shown our services by Washington, will revert back to something closer to the historical norm. Our military leaders should conduct a rigorous professional self-inventory now before the politicians decide that they must step in and perform this task for them. Professions that rely on outsiders to correct their own deficiencies are in decline—and unlikely to survive in their present form.



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Richard H. Kohn, “Tarnished Brass: Is the U.S. Military Profession in Decline,” *World Affairs* 171, no. 4 (Spring 2009): 73–83, Copyright © 2009, is reprinted with permission of the World Affairs Institute, [www.WorldAffairsJournal.org](http://www.WorldAffairsJournal.org).

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Frederick Douglas, c. 1870



# ENEMY COMBATANTS



## Black Soldiers in Confederate Prisons

BY THOMAS J. WARD JR.

**I**n the final scene of the 1989 film *Glory!* the black enlisted men of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and their white officers valiantly, but fruitlessly, storm Fort Wagner, the Confederate outpost defending Morris Island at the entrance to Charleston Harbor. While the film leaves the viewer with a powerful and historically accurate image of the sacrifice of African American soldiers and their white officers, it does not address the fate of those members of the 54th Massachusetts who were not killed but still did not return from the attack with their unit, having been captured on that South Carolina island in July 1863. The entrance of black troops—most but by no means all of whom were escaped slaves—into the Civil War following the Emancipation Proclamation created a dilemma for the Confederate authorities—what to do with black soldiers in Union blues taken prisoner on the battlefield?

In his almost two-year battle to convince the United States government to allow African Americans to fight for the Union, Frederick Douglass stated that “once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters

U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on the earth or under the earth which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States.”<sup>1</sup> Douglass’ assertion, equating military service with both manhood and citizenship, was not lost on Confederate authorities. If African Americans could serve as U.S. soldiers (as, of course, they had before), the ideological foundations of slavery and racial inequality would be flawed. The Confederacy could therefore not treat captured black soldiers in the same way that it treated white soldiers, for to do so would be to legitimize them as both soldiers and men and to implicitly accept the Emancipation Proclamation. Therefore, Confederate President Jefferson Davis included in an aggressive proclamation against perceived unlawful behavior by the Union Army that was issued on 24 December 1862, eight days before President Abraham Lincoln’s proclamation would take effect, a chilling warning to potential African American soldiers. He instructed the Confederate Army “that all negro slaves captured in arms be at once delivered

over to the executive authorities of the respective States to which they belong, to be dealt with according to the law of said States.” A joint resolution adopted by the Confederate Congress and signed by Davis on 1 May 1863 adjusted this policy to provide that all “negroes or mulattoes,” slave or free, taken in arms should be turned over to the authorities in the state in which they are captured and that their officers should be tried by Confederate military tribunals for inciting servile insurrection and be subject, at the discretion of the court and the president, to the death penalty.<sup>2</sup>

Despite efforts by the Confederate government to articulate the status of captured black soldiers, the treatment of African Americans in Confederate custody varied tremendously throughout the war, depending on the time, the place, and the commander into whose hands they fell. Atrocities committed against black soldiers during the war, such as the infamous massacre of surrendering black troops at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, have been well documented. Indeed, some Confederate officers encouraged the killing of African American soldiers rather than taking them prisoner,

# all blacks were assumed, by law, to be slaves unless they could prove otherwise

and there are numerous accounts of captured black soldiers being executed by Confederate forces. In Alabama, Col. John Tattnal reported in November 1862 that “I have given orders to shoot, wherever & whenever captured, all negroes found armed and acting in concert with the abolition troops.” In June 1863, Lt. Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith, commander of the Department of the Trans-Mississippi, wrote a subordinate that he had been “informed, that some of your troops have captured negroes in arms—I hope this may not be so, and that your subordinates . . . may have recognized the propriety of giving no quarter to armed negroes and their officers, in this way we may be relieved from a disagreeable dilemma.” Smith was uncertain about the Confederate government’s policy, however, and sought clarification. In response, the Confederate War Department advised the general to consider captured black troops as “deluded victims” who had been duped into serving the Yankee

cause and recommended that they be “received to Mercy & returned to their owners.”<sup>3</sup> There is little way of knowing exactly how many black soldiers were executed after surrendering to Confederate forces, but, at least by the summer of 1863, official Confederate government policy disapproved of the practice of executing black prisoners.

One of the difficulties for the Confederacy in establishing a policy for captured black soldiers was dealing with the distinction between Union soldiers who were runaway slaves and those who were freemen when the war began. Officially, neither Davis nor the Confederate Congress dealt with the question of free blacks, as in many Southern states, like South Carolina, all blacks were assumed, by law, to be slaves unless they could prove otherwise. As for the question of what to do with free blacks captured by Confederate troops, on 23 August 1863 Confederate Secretary of War James Seddon stated that “free negroes should be either promptly executed or

the determination arrived at that and announced not to execute them during the war.” However, Seddon asserted at this point that no black soldier should be treated as a prisoner of war.<sup>4</sup>

The black soldiers captured around Charleston during the summer of 1863 illustrate the difficulties Confederate authorities faced in determining the status of captured African American soldiers. The assault on Fort Wagner and related actions on the South Carolina coast that summer resulted in the capture by Confederates of between fifty and a hundred troops of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry; four black sailors were also captured and interned in Charleston. Confederate authorities had to scramble to figure out what to do with their black prisoners. On 16 July 1863, Brig. Gen. Johnson Hagood, who commanded Confederate forces on Morris Island, reported to his superior headquarters, “Thirteen prisoners Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, black. What shall I do with them?” Hagood also stated

Castle Pinckney

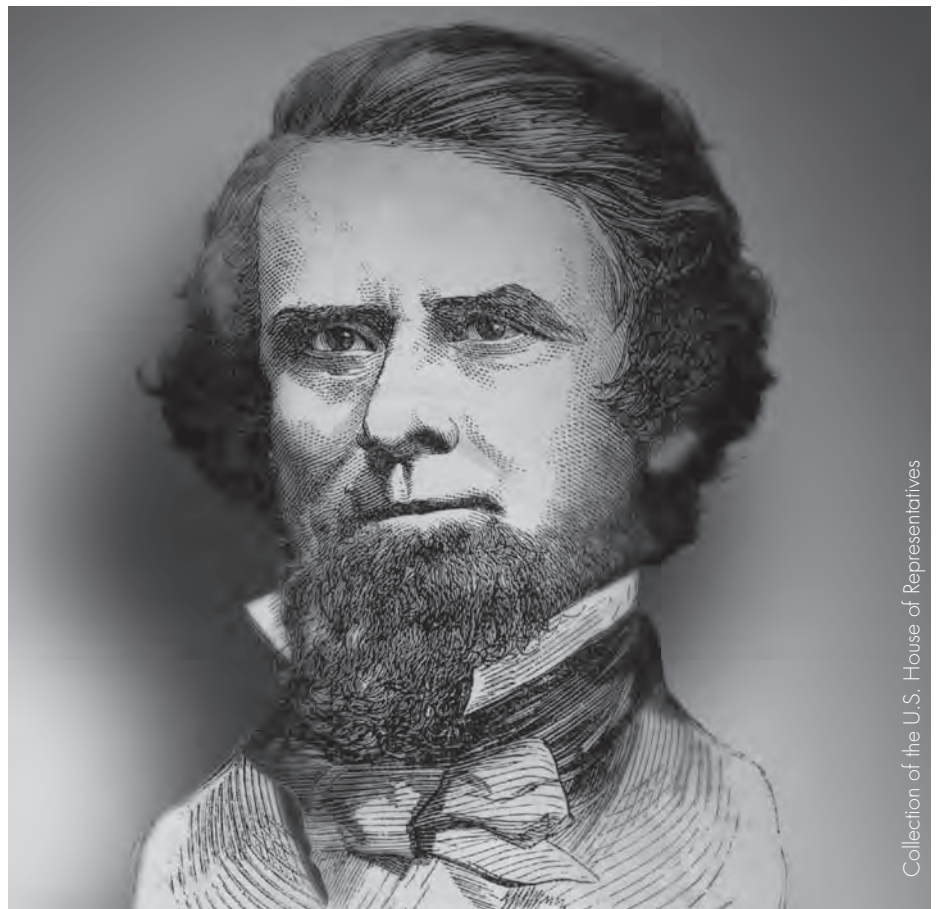


National Archives

that all but two of the captured blacks were freemen, not escaped slaves. Also unsure what to do with the captured Massachusetts soldiers, General Pierre G. T. Beauregard, commander of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, ordered that, although they had been stripped of their uniforms, they would be held at the military prison at Castle Pinckney on an island in Charleston Harbor.<sup>5</sup>

The Union prisoners—both white and black—were marched through the streets of Charleston, where they were taunted by the citizenry, before the badly wounded were separated and taken to a hospital. The *Charleston Courier* reported, “A chief point of attraction in the city yesterday was the Yankee hospital in Queen Street, where the principal portion of the Federal wounded, negroes and whites, have been conveyed.” One of the members of the 54th Massachusetts captured at Fort Wagner, Pvt. Daniel States, was brought to the hospital where, he recalled, he received good treatment and food but the black prisoners were separated from the whites and received treatment last.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, a debate raged between General Beauregard and South Carolina Governor Milledge L. Bonham, who wanted the captured black soldiers turned over to him. The general understood that Davis’ instruction that captured slaves should be turned over to the state in which “they belong” remained in effect and that this referred to the state in which they had been bondsmen, not where they had been captured. There was no evidence that any of the prisoners were South Carolina slaves. Beauregard, however, looked to Richmond for direction about the free black soldiers that had been seized, asking, “Shall they [the black prisoners who claim to be free] be turned over to State authorities with the other negroes?” Four days later, he



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Governor Bonham

inquired again, “What shall be done with negro prisoners who say they are free?” Confederate Secretary of War James A. Seddon informed Beauregard that the Confederate Congress had ruled that all captured blacks should be “delivered to the authorities of the State or States in which they shall be captured, to be dealt with according to the present or future laws of such State or States.” Beauregard therefore turned twenty-four black prisoners over to the state of South Carolina, and they were transferred from Castle Pinckney to the Charleston jail.<sup>7</sup>

Governor Bonham, acting independently of the Richmond government, which on 1 September 1863 recommended that “the captured negroes

be not brought to trial” for fear of Union retaliation, made the decision to try the four captured Union soldiers who were alleged to have been slaves. The trial turned out to be an embarrassment for the governor, as the court ruled that, as a civil court, it lacked jurisdiction to try the cases of individuals alleged to have committed offenses as soldiers in the forces of the enemy, and it remanded the men back to Charleston jail. “About fifty of the colored troops are at the jail in Charleston,” wrote one black prisoner. “They are not confined in cells, but volunteering to work they are permitted to go into the yard. Most of the men have hardly enough clothing to cover them. Their food consists of one pint

**“What shall be done with negro prisoners who say they are free?”**

# “They took me to . . . Rust, Tex., where they kept me at work for a long time.”

of meal each day. They receive nothing else from the Confederate authorities but this meal, and some of them say they never have enough to eat.” The prisoners remained in Charleston jail, under state control, until December 1864, when they were turned over to the Confederate military and placed in the prison camp at Florence, South Carolina. At least three of the more than forty imprisoned members of the 54th Massachusetts died during their year and a half in the Charleston jail,

and eight more died at Florence, which housed as many as fifteen thousand Union prisoners of war (POWs) at one time and where the poor conditions rivaled those of the notorious Confederate prison camp at Andersonville, Georgia.<sup>8</sup>

The confusion in Charleston over the status of black prisoners was emblematic of the lack of uniformity in treating black prisoners throughout the Confederacy. Unlike white POWs, a number of African American prison-

ers were put to forced labor on behalf of the Confederate military. Pvt. Robert Jones was captured at Milliken’s Bend, Louisiana; he later recalled that, “They took me to . . . Rust, Tex., where they kept me at work for a long time. . . . They had me at work doing every kind of work, loading steamboats, rebuilding breastworks, while I was in captivity.”<sup>9</sup> One black prisoner at Mobile, Alabama, testified that he and other black prisoners “were placed at work on the fortifications there. . . .

A soldier in the 103d Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, which served in South Carolina and Georgia in 1865 and 1866



Library of Congress

General Butler



National Archives

We were kept at hard labor and inhumanly treated; if we lagged or faltered, or misunderstood an order, we were whipped and abused; some of our men being detailed to whip others.”<sup>10</sup> Near Fort Gilmer, Virginia, captured black troops were forced to work under enemy fire in the trenches. In retaliation, Union Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler placed an equal number of Confederate POWs on forward trenches as well. Within a week, the black prisoners were removed from the front lines, and Butler withdrew the Confederate POWs as well.<sup>11</sup>

Slave owners were also encouraged to retrieve their former slaves or receive restitution for those in service to the Confederacy. In October 1864, the Mobile, Alabama, *Advertiser and Register* listed the names of 575 black prisoners of the 106th, 110th, and 111th U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) who “are employed by engineer corps at Mobile, Ala. The owners are notified in order to receive the pay due them.”<sup>12</sup> It is unknown if anyone actually answered the newspaper’s call, but there were instances where soldiers were returned to their former owners. Pvt. William Rann was captured at Athens, Alabama, in October 1864. “They started with us to Mobile,” he later recalled, but “at Tuscumbia my old master [John Rand, a physician] found me and took me away from the soldiers and took me home and kept me there. Whenever soldiers would come there they would run me out into the mountains. They kept me at home until the surrender.”<sup>13</sup> Historian Walter Williams recounts a number of other instances where black prisoners were enslaved, stating that “One Confederate colonel reported . . . that with his general’s permission he ordered the sale of black captives, with the proceeds to be divided among the soldiers,” and that at Andersonville, “prison commander Henry Wirz allowed local planters to go inside the pen and inspect black prisoners, claiming any they thought to be theirs.”<sup>14</sup>

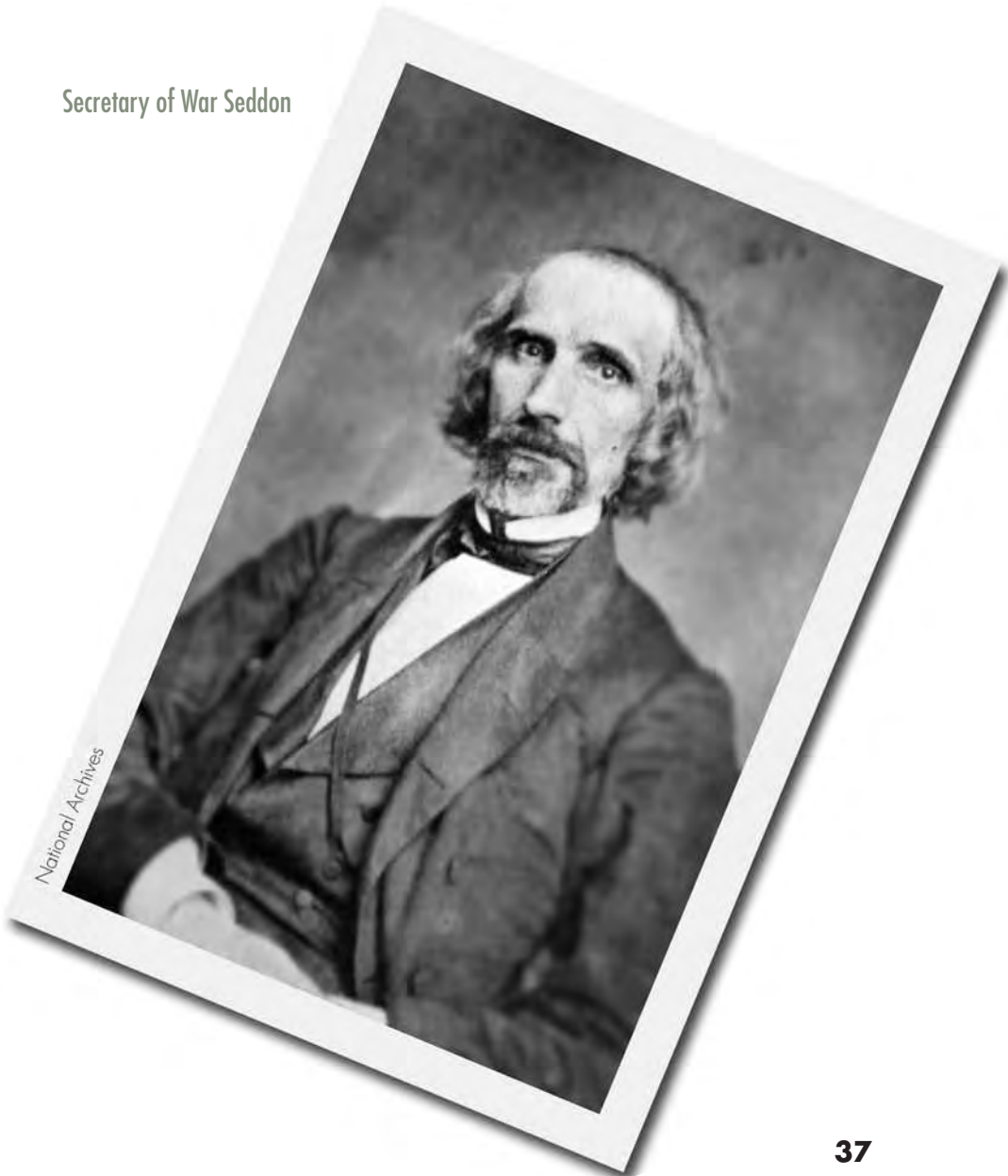
Confederates hoped that threats of enslavement or death to captured blacks (and their white officers) would serve as a deterrent to black troops.

Following the massacre of black troops at Fort Pillow, Confederate Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest stated that the results of the battle there “will demonstrate to the Northern people that Negro soldiers cannot cope with Southerners.” The opposite, however, seems to have been true. Historian Joseph T. Glatthaar asserts that the Confederate policies actually had a positive effect on the U.S. Colored Troops: “Black troops . . . realized that these white men were voluntarily placing their lives in grave jeopardy by serving in the U.S.C.T. And the white officers, realizing the perils of surrender, had to depend even more on the performance of their troops in battle, which forced them to work a little harder to improve the fighting ability of the men.” As the commander of one U.S. Colored

Troops regiment stated, “We all felt that we fought with ropes around our necks.” Believing that surrender would most likely bring death, numerous African American units fought under a black flag, warning rebels that they should expect no quarter from them, and would expect none in return. Indeed, there were incidents, such as one at Fort Blakely, Alabama, where black troops killed Confederate soldiers who were attempting to surrender.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the fact that many black soldiers vowed to fight under the black flag, hundreds of African American troops were taken prisoner during the course of the war and ended up in Confederate prisoner-of-war camps throughout the South. Ira Berlin argues that by 1864 Confederate policy toward captured blacks had softened

Secretary of War Seddon



considerably from the bombastic rhetoric of 1862, observing that “while never officially granted the rights of prisoners of war, black freemen seem to have been treated much as were captured white soldiers.” Records mention black soldiers being held in at least nine Confederate prison camps. In some cases, blacks were kept segregated from white prisoners. At Mobile, an old cotton warehouse was converted into a prison that held over five hundred black prisoners, where they were attended by a Confederate surgeon who treated the wounds of many of the men.<sup>16</sup>

The decision to effectively treat many captured black soldiers as POWs—while still denying them official POW status—came in part because of the U.S. government’s response to Confederate policies on black prisoners. President Lincoln was concerned about the fate of captured black soldiers, whom he planned to enlist in more substantial numbers beginning in 1863. The

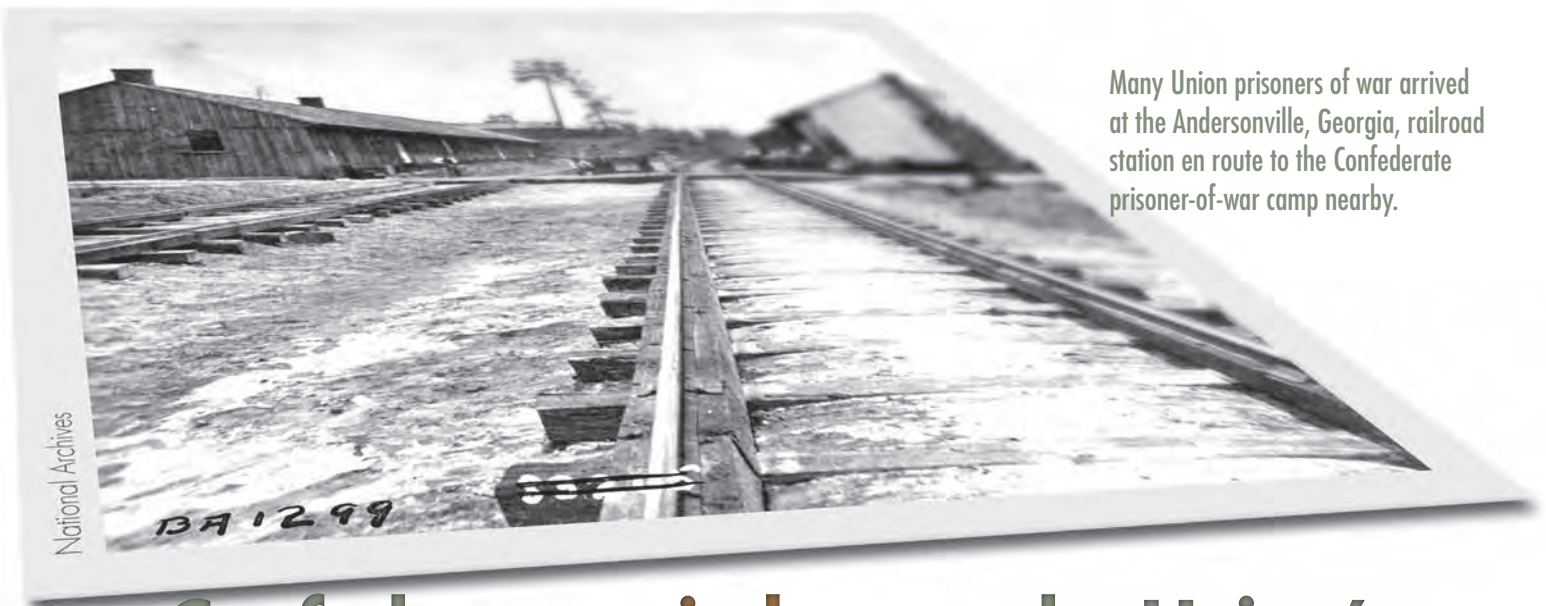
Emancipation Proclamation thus stipulated specifically that former slaves “will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.” Lincoln included the limitations to the military service of these African Americans hoping to keep them from falling into enemy hands. As early as 10 January 1863, Lincoln summoned the secretaries of war and the Navy to the White House and instructed them to station black soldiers and sailors in areas where they would not likely be captured, such as Memphis. The officers commanding black soldiers, on the other hand, sought to get their units into the fight and pressed the issue of combat duty throughout the first half of 1863, resulting in the assault on Fort Wagner. While the men of the 54th Massachusetts were hailed as heroes for their courageous assault, the casualties and prisoners taken there confirmed Lincoln’s fears.<sup>17</sup>

Following Fort Wagner and the adoption of the joint resolution of the Confederate Congress providing that captured black soldiers “be put to death or be otherwise punished at the discretion” of a military court rather than be held as prisoners of war, Lincoln was convinced that more had to be done to protect the Union’s black troops. On 30 July 1863, he issued an order, which was published the next day in War Department General Orders 252, declaring that “the law of nations . . . permit no distinction as to color in the treatment of prisoners of war. . . and if the enemy shall sell or enslave any one because of his color, the offense shall be punished by retaliation upon the enemy’s prisoners in our possession.” If the Confederacy executed a Union soldier, the Union would retaliate in kind; if the Confederacy enslaved a Union soldier, a Confederate prisoner would “be placed at hard labor.” While Jefferson Davis publicly denounced Lincoln’s order, it did, for the most part, have the desired effect, as most black prisoners were treated much the same as their

Charleston city jail, built in 1802, as it appeared c. 1888



South Carolina Historical Society



Many Union prisoners of war arrived at the Andersonville, Georgia, railroad station en route to the Confederate prisoner-of-war camp nearby.

## Confederates tried to use the Union's refusal to exchange prisoners for their own propaganda purposes

white counterparts during the rest of the war, although the Confederacy never officially acknowledged African Americans as POWs.<sup>18</sup>

In 1864, following the Confederate victory at the Battle of Olustee, Florida, numerous black soldiers were taken prisoner and seventy or more of them were then confined at Andersonville. One white POW observed the presence in the stockade of “a dozen or more Negroes, all prisoners of war. . . . Nearly all are minus an arm or leg, and their wounds are yet unhealed. Many of them are gangrened and they will all surely die. They keep by themselves and are very quiet. The Rebels have removed every vestige of any uniform they once wore, and they have nothing on but old cast off jean trousers and cotton shirts. All are bareheaded, barefooted, and as thin as skeletons.”<sup>19</sup> At the camp, the black prisoners—and their white officers—established their own, segregated area near the south gate—the “Negro Squad”—because they were discriminated against by both their rebel guards and white Union POWs. The guards at Andersonville were notoriously hard on the black prisoners. “Some of these [black prisoners] were wounded, and the rebels refused to do anything for them;

they received no medicine or medical treatment,” recalled one white POW. “They were compelled to load and unload the dead who died daily in the stockade. . . . They were treated worse than dumb brutes, and the language used toward them by the rebels was of the most opprobrious character.” Another white prisoner recalled that the guards “seemed to have a particular spite toward the colored soldiers, and they had to go without rations several days at a time on account of not daring to go forward and get them.”<sup>20</sup>

Black prisoners also faced the scorn of most of their white compatriots. This animosity was rooted in both racial attitudes and the belief that African American prisoners were the reason for the Union's refusal to conduct prisoner exchanges, a belief that had merit and was continually propagated by their captors. During the first two years of the war, captured soldiers from both sides were paroled and exchanged regularly, and there was no POW crisis on either side of the line. However, because the Confederacy refused to acknowledge African Americans as prisoners of war, it would not exchange black prisoners for Confederate soldiers held by the Union. Confederate leaders argued

that the United States had no right to arm slaves against their masters and believed that the Confederate Army was under no more obligation to return slaves than captured cannons or mules.<sup>21</sup> As General Robert E. Lee wrote Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in 1864, “negroes belonging to our citizens are not considered subjects of exchange.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, to exchange a black prisoner for a white one would imply a racial equality that was anathema to Confederate leaders.

By the summer of 1863, Union leaders were becoming disenchanted by the strategic benefits the Confederacy was deriving from the paroling and exchanging of prisoners. The widely publicized Confederate unwillingness to exchange black prisoners thus played right into Union hands, allowing the Lincoln administration to suspend prisoner exchanges until the Confederacy agreed to exchange black prisoners equally with whites. As Richmond refused to negotiate on this basis, the numbers held in both Union and Confederate prison camps grew exponentially in the fall of 1863. By the autumn of 1864, Davis' government, realizing that it could neither adequately care for Union prisoners nor replace its depleted



Men of the 107th Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, which served in Virginia in 1864 and in North Carolina in 1865

ranks, offered to acknowledge black soldiers who were freemen before the war began as POWs and make them eligible for trading. The Union would have none of it, as General Grant opposed all prisoner exchanges, realizing that the moratorium on exchanges was working greatly in his favor. Because of the Union's manpower advantage, Grant did not need POW swaps to replenish his ranks, but Lee did. Lincoln, of course, could not state that it was military policy to leave tens of thousands of Union soldiers starving at Andersonville, Belle Isle, and Salis-

bury, especially in an election year. By refusing to exchange all black prisoners, the Confederate government in effect gave Lincoln and Grant political cover to bleed the Confederate Army white, in the name of protecting black soldiers.<sup>23</sup>

Confederates tried to use the Union's refusal to exchange prisoners for their own propaganda purposes, especially in the camps. According to Edward Roberts, the Confederacy "began a campaign of disinformation," where POWs "were routinely told by Confederate officers that it was Abraham Lincoln's concern for Black soldiers that was the reason for their misery." In his study of Andersonville, William Marvel reported that a Confederate surgeon there "found the Union prisoners damning their own government up and down for abandoning them in the name of racial equality." Diary en-

tries confirm the idea that many white POWs blamed Lincoln and black soldiers for their situation. William F. Keys, a prisoner at Andersonville, reflected these sentiments, stating "it appears that the federal government thinks more of a few hundred niggers than of the thirty thousand whites here in bondage."<sup>24</sup>

The ostracism of their brothers in arms further contributed to the misery of black prisoners. One black Massachusetts soldier, imprisoned in Charleston, wrote, "The privations of the white soldiers are nothing in comparison to ours . . . being as it were, without friends, and in the enemy's hands, with an almost hopelessness of being released, and not having heard from our families or friends since we were captured." A white Union officer imprisoned at Danville, Virginia, concurred with this assessment, writing, "the negro soldiers suffered most. There were sixty-four of them living in prison when we reached Danville, October 20, '64. Fifty-seven of them were dead on the 12th of February, '65, when I saw and talked with the seven survivors."<sup>25</sup>

Not until the spring of 1865 would the black prisoners' torment end. As Sherman's troops closed in and the Confederacy began to crumble, Union POWs, black and white, were put on the move as well. Pvt. Alfred Green, who had been captured in the assault at Fort Wagner, recalled, "We were taken to Florence Stockade [from Charleston] and remained over winter, and from there we were brought

Troops of the 1st South Carolina Infantry (African Descent) parade in Beaufort, South Carolina, 1863.





to Raleigh, N.C., and were then taken to Wilmington, N.C., and from there to Goldsboro. . . . We were there when our army came up.” After almost two years as a Confederate prisoner, Green was paroled at Goldsboro, North Carolina, in March 1865. With the demise of the Confederacy, black POWs were either paroled from the remaining Southern prison camps or simply walked away as their guards abandoned them. While it is unknown how many black troops may have been executed after they surrendered, according to a congressional committee report (which undoubtedly underestimates the number of captured black soldiers), 79 black Union soldiers died in Confederate prisons, 77 escaped, 384 were recaptured by Union forces, 236 were paroled at the end of the war, and “not one enlisted in the service of the enemy, or deserted the flag of the country.”<sup>26</sup>



## NOTES

This article is a revised version of a paper read at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association held in San Diego, California, in January 2010.

1. Frederick Douglass, “Address for the Promotion of Colored Enlistments,” 6 Jul 1863, quoted in Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), p. 219.

2. Proclamation of Jefferson Davis, Dec 1862, printed in “Important from Richmond: Terrible Retaliatory Proclamation of Jeff. Davis,” *New York Herald*, 28 Dec 1862, and, as copied in Adj. and Insp. General’s Office, Richmond, Va., GO 111, 24 Dec 1862, reprinted in *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (hereinafter cited as *OR*), 128 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1880–1901), ser. 2, vol. 5, pp. 795–97, first quote, p. 797; Joint Resolution of the Confederate Congress, approved 1 May 1863, in *OR*, ser. 2, vol. 5, pp. 940–41, second quote, p. 940.

3. Ltr, Col John R. F. Tattall to Capt S. Croom, 8 Nov 1862, first quote; Ltr, Lt Gen E. Kirby Smith to Maj Gen Richard Taylor, 13

Jun 1863, second quote; portion of Ltr, H. L. Clay, Asst Adj Gen, to Smith, third and fourth quotes, all printed in Ira Berlin, ed., *The Black Military Experience*, Freedom, A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 571, 578–79.

4. Howard C. Westwood, “Captive Black Union Soldiers in Charleston—What to Do?” *Civil War History* 28 (1982): 28–44, quote, p. 37.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29, 33, 39, quote, p. 28.

6. Luis F. Emilio, *A Brave Black Regiment: The History of the Fifty-Fourth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, 1863–1865*, 2d ed. (1894; New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), pp. 399–401.

7. Westwood, “Captive Black Union Soldiers,” pp. 29–32; *OR*, ser. 2, vol. 6, pp. 125 (first quote), 134 (second quote), 159 (third quote), 169.

8. Westwood, “Captive Black Union Soldiers,” pp. 35–36, 38–40, 43–44, first quote, p. 38; Emilio, *Brave Black Regiment*, pp. 398–99, 411, 418–19, second quote, pp. 418–19.

9. File XC–2,536,702, Pension for Robert Jones, Civil War Pension Application Files, Record Group (RG) 15, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Archives (NA).

10. Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), p. 88.

11. Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861–1865* (1956; Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987), p. 178.

12. *Ibid.*; *OR*, ser. 2, vol. 8, pp. 26–27, 109, quote, p. 27.

13. File XC–2,460,295, Pension for William Rann, Civil War Pension Application Files, RG 15, NA.

14. Walter L. Williams, “Again in Chains: Black Soldiers Suffering in Captivity,” *Civil War Times Illustrated* 20 (May 1981): 36–41, quotes, p. 40.

15. Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Free Press, 1990), pp. 157 (first quote), 158, 203 (second quote), 204 (third quote); *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 49, pt. 1, pp. 288–90; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, 1870); Ms, William A. Dobak, Freedom by the Sword: The U.S. Colored Troops, 1862–67, chapter 5, Historians files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C.; James M. McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War:*

*How American Negroes Felt and Acted during the War for the Union* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), p. 225.

16. Berlin, *Black Military Experience*, p. 568, quote; Williams, “Again in Chains,” p. 41; File 404,448, Pension for Henry Everly, Civil War Pension Application Files, RG 15, NA.

17. Cornish, *Sable Arm*, pp. 161–62; Benjamin Quarles, *Lincoln and the Negro* (1962; New York: Da Capo Press, 1990), p. 174; Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln, 1 Jan 1863, published in War Dept GO 1, 2 Jan 1863, and printed in *OR*, ser. 3, vol. 3, pp. 2–3, quote, p. 3; final draft of the proclamation, 29–31 Dec 1862, printed in Guelzo, *Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation*, pp. 257–58.

18. Quarles, *Lincoln and the Negro*, p. 175; Berlin, *Black Military Experience*, p. 583, quotes.

19. Robert Knox Sneden, *Eye of the Storm: A Civil War Odyssey*, ed. Charles F. Bryan Jr. and Nelson D. Lankford (New York: Free Press, 2000), p. 225, quote; John David Smith, “Let Us All Be Grateful That We Have Colored Troops That Will Fight,” in *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era*, ed. John David Smith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 49.

20. Arthur W. Bergeron Jr., “The Battle of Olustee,” in Smith, *Black Soldiers in Blue*, p. 145; Emilio, *Brave Black Regiment*, p. 429, quotes.

21. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, p. 89.

22. Ltr, General Robert E. Lee to Lt Gen Ulysses S. Grant, 3 Oct 1864, printed in *OR*, ser. 2, vol. 7, p. 914.

23. *Ibid.*; Quarles, *Lincoln and the Negro*, pp. 175–76; Charles W. Sanders Jr., *While in the Hands of the Enemy: Military Prisons of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), pp. 133–62.

24. Edward F. Roberts, *Andersonville Journey* (Shippensburg, Pa.: Burd Street Press, 1998), p. 16, first and second quotes; William Marvel, *Andersonville: The Last Depot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 148, third and fourth quotes.

25. Emilio, *Brave Black Regiment*, p. 412, first quote; Williams, “Again in Chains,” p. 43, second quote.

26. Westwood, “Captive Black Union Soldiers,” p. 44; Emilio, *Brave Black Regiment*, pp. 398, 412, 422–23, 431, first quote, p. 423, second quote, p. 431.

# NEWSNOTES

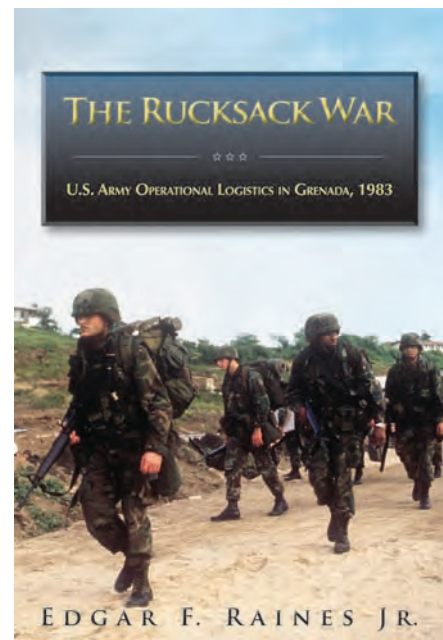
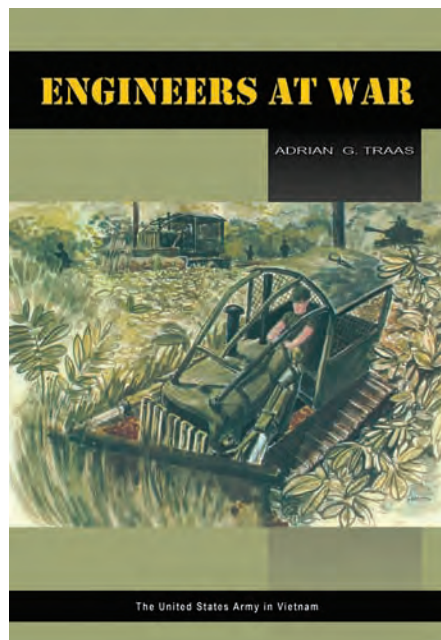
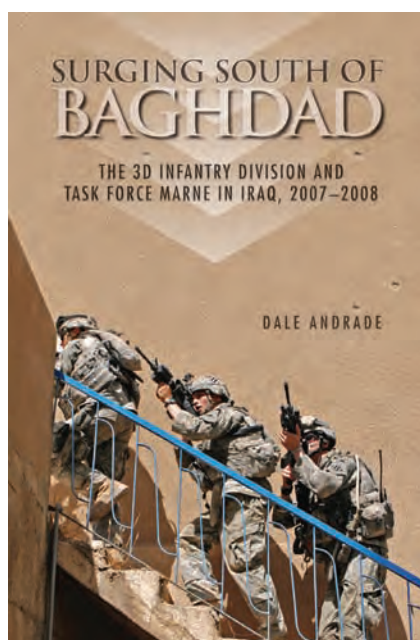
*Continued from page 5*

would serve among a mixed Sunni and Shi'ite population, where they were joined in Task Force Marne by two brigades of other U.S. Army divisions already in Iraq. The book describes the significant progress made by this more robust force in preventing insurgent elements in the area from recruiting fighters or constructing bombs for use in Baghdad, as had previously been common. Andrade relates how a combination of aggressive combat actions and vigorous civil reconstruction efforts left the region significantly more secure upon the division's departure. This 429-page book has been issued in paperback in the Center's Global War on Terrorism series as CMH Pub 59-2-1. Andrade is a senior historian in the Center's Military Operations Branch, and he lived with the division in Iraq for several months in 2007 and 2008.

*Engineers at War* by Adrian G. Traas, a volume in the United States

Army in Vietnam series, describes the role of military engineers, especially those of the U.S. Army, in the Vietnam War. These engineers built ports and depots, carved airfields and airstrips out of low-lying jungles and upland plateaus, improved roads and erected bridges, and constructed bases. Although most of their construction was temporary in nature, many roads and facilities were designed to be durable assets in the economy of South Vietnam. The book also describes the engineers' contribution to combat missions in support of the South Vietnamese government. The Center has issued this 647-page work in a cloth cover as CMH Pub 91-14 and in paperback as CMH Pub 91-14-1. Traas, a retired Corps of Engineers lieutenant colonel who served two tours in Vietnam, began the book while assigned to the Center of Military History, where he currently holds the title of visiting professor.

*The Rucksack War: U.S. Army Operational Logistics in Grenada, 1983*, by Edgar F. Raines Jr. provides an account of how Army logistics affected ground operations during the Grenada intervention and, in turn, of how combat influenced logistical performance. The narrative ranges through all levels of war—the strategic level where President Ronald Reagan grappled in meetings of the National Security Council with the question of whether to intervene in the wake of a bloody coup, the operational level where the commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps sought to ensure that the needed supplies and appropriate logistical units could be dispatched to the area of operations when needed, and the tactical level where a sergeant in combat in Grenada coped successfully with a Cuban ambush despite a lack of hand grenades. In addition to furnishing a fascinating account of a complex operation, *The Rucksack*



*War* identifies problems that the U.S. Army continues to face as it prepares for possible future calls to participate in overseas operations. This 649-page book has been issued in cloth as CMH Pub 55-2 and in paperback as CMH Pub 55-2-1; it is an entry in the Center's Contingency Operations Series. Its author is a senior historian in the Center's General Histories Branch.

The three Operation IRAQI FREEDOM posters feature maps, chronologies, and major-unit insignia for the periods March to May 2003, June 2003 to May 2004, and June 2004 to May 2005. The first map was published in 2008 but has not been previously announced in *Army History*. It depicts the movement of large troop units in the drive that led to the capture of Baghdad and the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Hussein. The two successive maps show the major commands that served in each of seven regions of the country and how those military jurisdictions evolved. Each poster is twenty-four inches tall and thirty-six inches wide. These maps are CMH Pubs 58-1, 58-2, and 58-3.

Army publication account holders may obtain these items from the Directorate of Logistics-Washington, Media Distribution Division, ATTN: JDHQSVPAS, 1655 Woodson Road, St. Louis, MO 63114-6128. Account holders may also place their orders at <http://www.apd.army.mil>. Individuals

may order the materials from the U.S. Government Printing Office via its Web site at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>. The first map poster may be purchased for \$5; the prices of the books and the remaining posters should be announced by the end of December 2010.

### COMBAT STUDIES INSTITUTE PRESS RELEASES NEW BOOKS

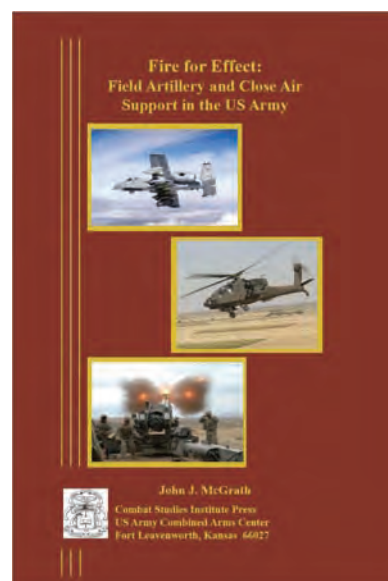
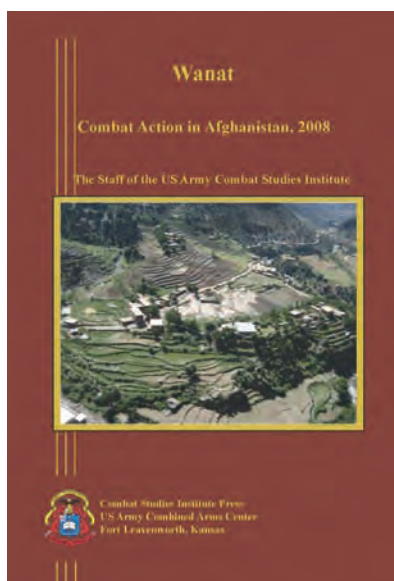
The Combat Studies Institute Press has issued two new books, one on a recent combat encounter in Afghanistan and the other on alternative means of providing heavy weapons support to infantry forces. Both books were authored in whole or in part by John J. McGrath.

*Wanat: Combat Action in Afghanistan, 2008*, examines the battle fought at the isolated village of Wanat in the Hindu Kush mountains of Nuristan Province in northeastern Afghanistan on 13 July 2008. Nine U.S. soldiers died while defending a newly established combat outpost there against a determined insurgent force armed with rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons. The attack was repulsed by a garrison of forty-nine U.S. soldiers and twenty-four members of the Afghan National Army after a difficult four-hour battle that is narrated in detail in this book. The volume also examines the history of conflict in this part of Afghanistan. The study

was initiated by two successive contract historians, Matt Matthews and Douglas Cubbison. Donald Wright assisted McGrath with the writing of the 257-page work. McGrath is a retired Army Reserve officer who has been a historian at the U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute since 2002. Wright is the chief of the institute's Research and Publications Team.

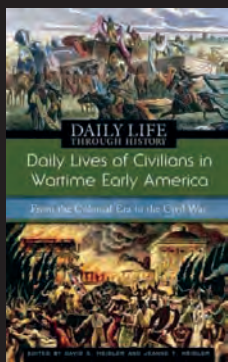
*Fire for Effect: Field Artillery and Close Air Support in the US Army*, of which McGrath is the sole author, surveys the assistance given by field artillery and close air support to U.S. Army infantry forces and allied elements in combat operations, focusing on the period since World War I when the contribution of air power became available. This 185-page monograph evaluates the effectiveness of each type of aid. It discusses evolving military organizations and their relationships as well as developments in equipment and weaponry.

Digital copies of each of these publications may be downloaded from <http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/resources/csi/csi.asp>. Military personnel and federal employees may request printed copies by following the instructions posted at <http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CSI/PubRequest.asp>.



# BOOKREVIEWS

## *Daily Lives of Civilians in Wartime Early America: From the Colonial Era to the Civil War*



Edited by David S. Heidler and  
Jeanne T. Heidler  
Greenwood Press, 2007  
Pp. xxix, 248. \$65

### Review by Lincoln Mullen

A recent trend in military history connects the events and institutions of warfare to broader themes in social and cultural history. This book on the *Daily Lives of Civilians in Wartime Early America*, coedited by David Heidler and Jeanne Heidler, follows in that trend. By studying the home front during the wars of early America, the essayists examine what the wars reveal about society and culture at war.

This volume is a collection of essays on the colonial wars, the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, and the Civil War. It is a part of the *Daily Lives of Civilians in Wartime* series, which is in a still larger series from Greenwood on *Daily Life Through History*. This publication is a reference work, intended more for academic libraries and students of these specific conflicts than for the general reader. Each essay includes a helpful annotated bibliography. To describe this book as a reference work, however, is not to say that the

essays are mere reworkings of secondary sources. Rather, each piece is an original contribution from primary sources.

An introduction by the editors ties the essays together. The editors argue that the experiences of civilians during the wars covered by this volume were so varied that only two generalizations can be made: “that American civilians experienced war” in every generation, and “that the lines between civilians and combatants were usually blurred” (p. xi).

Armstrong Starkey writes the first essay on “Wartime Colonial America.” Starkey describes the experience of colonists and Indians, both of whom experienced atrocities and brutal fighting firsthand. The colonists were often not merely civilians because the militia system expected most male civilians to be soldiers, responsible for their own defense. In the colonial wars in particular, the line between home front and battle front, civilian and soldier, was often indistinguishable. This reviewer wishes that the plan for the volume provided for more than one essay on the colonial wars. This single essay has to cover two-thirds of the total time span and at least half the conflicts within the scope of the book.

Wayne Lee’s essay discusses “The American Revolution.” Numerous civilians in this war faced the problem of maintaining neutrality. Many were neutral, out of political indifference or religious conviction, but the Patriots and the Loyalists often compelled them to choose a side so that those that chose neutrality often endured as much as or more than combatants. For both Patriots and Loyalists, combat took place close to home, and both groups suffered due to the necessity of provisioning large armies.

In his essay titled “America’s War of 1812,” Richard Barbuto connects an earlier campaign fought by William Henry Harrison against the Indians at Tippecanoe to the Indian fighting during the War of 1812, which includes the offensive against the Creeks in the South and the disastrous fighting at Forts Detroit and Dearborn in Michigan. Through its focus on Indian fighting, this essay covers numerous conflicts on the frontier that do not fit the more formal wars among Europeans and Americans. However, during the War of 1812, only civilians living on the fringes of the United States were caught up in the fighting, and Barbuto only briefly describes the effects of British raids on cities and towns in the Atlantic theater. Most American civilians, he argues, experienced the war mainly through economic difficulty.

Gregory Hospodor’s essay, “The American Home Front in the Mexican War,” examines how the Mexican War was different from every other war in this period because nearly all of the fighting took place in a foreign country, away from most American civilians. This distance meant less direct suffering by noncombatants. It also meant that they experienced the war primarily through newspapers and letters. The war was often celebrated by politicians and clergymen, yet it also gave rise to significant dissent from the likes of Henry David Thoreau and Abraham Lincoln.

The Confederate civilian’s experience during the Civil War is described in James Marten’s “A Very Sad Life: Civilians in the Confederacy.” Southern civilians witnessed the majority of the fighting because most of it took place in the South. The proximity of the combat often necessitated that Southerners support large armies fighting nearby. The comparatively

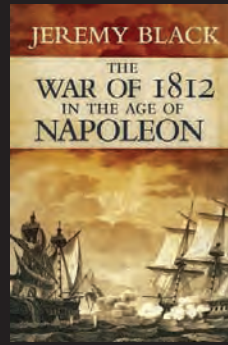
small population of the South often meant that women and children were left behind throughout the Confederacy and that they had to keep farms and plantations running despite food shortages and severe inflation. The morale of Southern civilians was high during the first several years of the war, but the sieges of cities like Vicksburg and Atlanta brought the battle even closer to home. Southerners became increasingly embittered with the Union Army and this bitterness severely hampered Reconstruction after the war. Slaves, too, were a type of refugee from the war, as many escaped to the freedom offered by the Union Army.

Paul Cimbala closes the collection with an essay on “The Northern Home Front During the Civil War.” Northern civilians did not experience much of the war firsthand, but the mounting casualty lists and returning wounded soldiers made them keenly aware of the suffering they were being spared. Civilian life changed dramatically, though it was not as disrupted or as terrifying as in the South. Women had to carry on at farms or businesses. Industry changed to support the war effort; commerce was handled with Union greenbacks. This war, too, had its share of dissidents at home. The volume ends at a fitting place, for the Civil War was the final major American war fought on U.S. soil, and so the last experienced directly at home.

**Lincoln Mullen** is a Ph.D. student at Brandeis University. He studies the history of early America and religion in America.



### *The War of 1812 in the Age of Napoleon*



By Jeremy Black  
University of Oklahoma Press, 2009  
Pp. xv, 286. \$32.95

### Review by Roger D. Cunningham

In just over a year, Americans will begin to stage the first ceremonies commemorating the bicentennial of the War of 1812. As Jeremy Black, a professor of history at the University of Exeter, points out in his book *The War of 1812 in the Age of Napoleon*, the United States conducted that war poorly, but it is “etched into the American memory, with the heroic defense of Baltimore in 1814 and New Orleans in 1815” (p. 3). In spite of the war’s great importance in determining the fate of North America, however, it is widely forgotten in the author’s homeland, Great Britain, where it is totally overshadowed by the Napoleonic Wars.

For the British, the War of 1812 “was an aggravating sideshow to the much larger conflict in Europe” (p. 32). About six thousand British troops were sent to North America in 1813, but more soldiers than that had been dispatched to Spain. Because the British had major military commitments elsewhere, they launched no major North American offensive in 1813, which gave the Americans a chance to consolidate and develop their military system. After a provisional French government deposed Napoleon Bonaparte, forcing his abdication in the spring of 1814, the British no longer required troops and ships for action against France, and forty-eight

thousand of their soldiers were deployed to North America, more than the number of British troops at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. The War of 1812’s “far-flung nature,” however, “ensured that there was no major concentration of this force” (p. 165).

In the war at sea, Black maintains that the United States had very good ships, while many of the British ships were in bad condition and their crews short of sailors. Also, most of the British Navy was required for the blockade of France and French-occupied Europe. The Americans fought well—faring better than the British government had anticipated—and their naval victories helped to offset their losses on land. Speaker of the House Henry Clay of Kentucky said of these victories at sea: “Brilliant as they are however they do not fill up the void created by our misfortunes on land” (p. 128).

As far as the fighting on land is concerned, the author devotes an inordinate amount of text discussing the famous Battle of New Orleans, which was fought two weeks after American and British envoys had agreed to peace terms at Ghent, Belgium, on Christmas Eve, 1814. Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson assembled a ragtag force of less than five thousand regulars, militiamen, and pirates (under Jean Lafitte) and established a strong defensive position behind a rampart and canal, with his right flank anchored on the bank of the Mississippi River. Jackson was able to defeat a larger British force under the command of Maj. Gen. Sir Edward Pakenham (the Duke of Wellington’s brother-in-law), who was mortally wounded during the attack. The Treaty of Ghent was unanimously accepted by the Senate (35 to 0) and finally ratified in February 1815, but, as the author points out, the Battle of New Orleans was not the last fight between the two sides. News of the peace took quite a long time to reach warships that were sailing on distant stations, and on 30 June 1815 the American sloop *Peacock* captured the British East India Company brig *Nautilus* in the Sunda Strait near the East Indies.

Black argues that the political consequences of the War of 1812 were

more significant than its military engagements and outcomes. Among other things, the war ensured that the United States would not “liberate” Canada—unfinished business from the previous conflict—which was of great importance to the fate of North America. The postwar history of the United States “would have been very different had it included Canada and the Canadians” (p. xii).

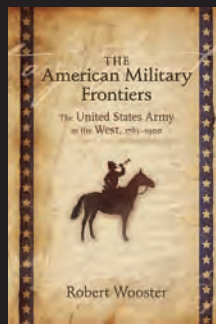
The book could have been improved in terms of illustrations and maps. Of the former, there is but one—a frontispiece painting of the 1812 victory of the American frigate *United States* over the British frigate *Macedonian*. As far as the maps are concerned, there are three depicting the Northern, Chesapeake, and Southern theaters of the war. These maps include symbols locating several battles that are not named, and they also exclude some significant battles. One example is the map of the Southern theater that fails to identify General Jackson’s 1814 victory over the Creek Indians at Horseshoe Bend in the Mississippi Territory (modern-day Alabama), which is discussed on the same page (p. 192).

These shortcomings are quite minor, however, and they do not prevent this book from making a significant contribution to the historiography of the War of 1812. For those readers who hope to understand the conflict in its international context, this volume is highly recommended.

**Roger D. Cunningham** graduated from West Point in 1972 and retired from the U.S. Army in 1994. He is the author of *The Black Citizen-Soldiers of Kansas, 1864–1901* (Columbia, Mo., 2008), as well as numerous articles and book reviews, many of which have appeared in this journal.



*The American Military Frontiers:  
The United States Army in the  
West, 1783–1900*



By Robert Wooster  
University of New Mexico Press, 2009  
Pp. xvi, 361. \$39.95

### Review by Frank N. Schubert

From the founding of the Republic to the end of the nineteenth century, the United States expanded and spread across the continent and beyond. This “manifest destiny,” or westward and southward movement, through emigration, negotiation, purchase, and war, was a dominant theme of the period. The United States armed forces, mainly the Army and to a lesser extent the Navy, stood at the center of this movement. As Robert Wooster notes at the beginning of his excellent survey of the role of the Army in this critical development, “that military affairs, in their varied dimensions, were of fundamental importance to the American frontiers and that the United States Army, as the federal government’s most visible agent of empire, was central to that experience” (p. xii).

The Army, as historian Robert Utley put it, was “the child of the frontier.”<sup>1</sup> It emerged in the last years of the eighteenth century in response to two related matters, the conflict between settlers and the native peoples who resisted their encroachment, and the inability of short-term volunteer organizations to cope with the problem. Wooster covers a whole century of frontier warfare, in Florida and other parts of the Southeast as well as in the West. He traces the policies that drove

it, the various strategies designed to carry it out, and the specific operations that it entailed. Along the way, he describes the ongoing tension between the needs of the frontier mission and the desires of officers to create a military establishment that could succeed against European foes. Organization and doctrine, he shows, tended to emphasize the latter, while constabulary operations tended to dominate the mission, presaging in some ways the debate over missions that took place in the 1990s, the decade after the end of the Cold War. He also traces the political disagreements between the proponents of regular forces and citizen militia, the interplay between the military and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the role of military forces in law enforcement, and the life of the soldier and officer on the frontier.

Frontier operations mainly revolved around the ongoing conflict with the Indians. Sometimes they included protecting the Indians and their lands from settlers and miners who thought they did not have to respect Indian title under any circumstance. Army administration of Indian policy also involved the regulation of trade, the halting of the private purchase of Indian land, and efforts to stamp out the illicit liquor trade; but mainly frontier duty was about forcing the natives onto reservations and keeping them there. Between 1790 and 1900, Army units of varying size fought in more than eleven hundred combat engagements against native foes who tried futilely to resist expansion. This is a large number but amounts to just over ten engagements a year. Otherwise, frontier military operations included a mind-numbing routine of garrison chores and patrols. As Maj. Gen. Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, the Continental Army’s inspector general, accurately predicted, frontier operations “will be . . . so much more trying to patience than to valour” (p. xiv).

Wooster makes clear that while the Army was the child of the frontier it was also a parent of what evolved in its wake. Federal money may have been, as Wooster claims, “an especially important economic multiplier in the arid Southwest” (p. 121), but, throughout

the borderlands, Army posts in the heart of Indian country embodied the government's commitment to frontier development. These posts furnished work and business opportunities for civilians, while troops linked forts and the towns that grew alongside with the rest of the country by building roads and telegraph lines. The forces also protected railroads and provided a modicum of security to frontier civilians. Federal money ebbed and flowed, as William Dobak showed in *Fort Riley and Its Neighbors* (Norman, Okla., 1998), sort of like rainfall, sometimes plentiful and sometimes a trickle but always beyond the control of local residents, as it fluctuated with nationwide economic and political changes as well as with the strategic needs of the Army. Although unpredictable as the prairie rain, federal outlays remained "a cornerstone of many frontier economies."

The Army's presence represented a substantial public investment in the borderland economy, and western forts, as Wooster notes, became the focal points of economic activity. But the outcome of this largesse was not uniformly positive, and local personalities could influence its impact. Wooster's own study of Fort Davis, Texas, *Crossroads: Fort Davis and the West* (College Station, Tex., 2006), illustrates a case where expenditures never proved sufficient to raise a community out of its backwater status. Elsewhere, such as the vicinity of Fort Robinson, Nebraska, local choices about milking the military presence had the effect of promoting vice and of dooming whatever slim chance might have existed for a brighter future. Overall, these outlays set a precedent for military support of the regional economy that persists to this day.

When the frontier moved overseas to former Spanish possessions at the turn of the twentieth century, U.S. units persevered in the constabulary roles that they had performed in North America. American soldiers served as explorers, road builders, customs officers, teachers, sanitation workers, relief experts, and governors. Wooster ends his narrative at the time of the war in the Philippines, observing that "the heritage of the frontier army was

... apparent in the soldiers who now occupied a new global empire" (pp. 269–70). But these responsibilities continued to be significant throughout the entire century, from the occupation of Hispaniola in 1915 to the post–World War II military government of defeated enemies, road construction in Afghanistan during the Cold War, and most recently the enforcement of peace in the Balkans.

When Frederick Jackson Turner articulated his concept of the frontier process in 1893, he emphasized the trapper, the trader, the scout, and cattlemen and farmers—private individuals all—as representing the vanguard of American expansion. The Turnerian model had no place for a number of key frontier participants, among them women, ethnic minorities, and the Army, which was the key agent of the national government in the advance across the continent. Even in the second half of the twentieth century, the Turnerian mythology endured, embodied in the slogan "The West Wasn't Won with a Registered Gun." But it was indeed won with a registered gun, and a U.S. Army soldier carried it. Robert Wooster's excellent history of the Army on the frontier leaves no doubt about that.

## NOTE

1. Robert M. Utley, "The Contribution of the Frontier to the American Military Tradition," in *The Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History, 1959–1987*, ed. Harry R. Borowski (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1988), p. 533.

**Dr. Frank N. Schubert** retired from the Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, in June 2003. He now divides his time between his homes in Virginia and Győr, Hungary, about halfway between Budapest and Vienna.



## *On the Western Front with the Rainbow Division: A World War I Diary*



By Vernon E. Kniptash  
 Edited by E. Bruce Geelhoed  
 University of Oklahoma Press, 2009  
 Pp. xiii, 236. \$29.95

## Review by Brian F. Neumann

The war memoir is a staple of military history, littering the bookshelves of enthusiasts and academics alike. The usefulness of such works, however, often depends as much on what readers are searching for as on the specific details covered. Whether a memoir is by a commanding general or a private, each offers varying degrees of insight into the experience of war. Rarely are they comprehensive, nor should they be. Instead, memoirs allow students of history to develop a general understanding of war through a variety of personal perspectives. In this sense, Vernon Kniptash's diary of his service with the 42d "Rainbow" Division during the First World War is a valuable addition to the literature of that increasingly forgotten conflict.

Packed away in storage for years, Kniptash's diary was lost and forgotten for all intents and purposes. Only after his death was the diary discovered by his son and made available to historians. *On the Western Front with the Rainbow Division* is the product of one historian, E. Bruce Geelhoed, who researched Kniptash's words and compiled this annotated diary for publication. The end result is a solid look into the less-glamorous life of an ordinary soldier who spent most of the war behind the front lines.

Born in 1897 to German immigrants in Indianapolis, Indiana, Vernon Kniptash showed a clear distaste for all things Prussian and enlisted in the National Guard soon after the American declaration of war. Desiring to serve in the artillery, he eventually joined the 150th Field Artillery, which was combined with guard units from other states to form the Rainbow Division. He began his diary at the time of his enlistment and maintained it through his release from service two years later. In the interim, he experienced the awkward transition to a soldier's life, deployment to Europe, the strains of living at the front, service with the Army of Occupation after the war, and the eventual return home. Thus, Kniptash's diary is a rarity in a field where most people think the story ends when the shooting stops, providing insight into all phases of the American intervention. As editor, Geelhoed has created artificial partitions to the diary to improve readability but has otherwise faithfully reproduced the original manuscript.

The story of the Rainbow Division is well known. James Cooke's *The Rainbow Division in the Great War, 1917-1919* (Westport, Conn., 1994) and numerous biographies of General Douglas MacArthur supply detailed material on the division's exploits. Likewise, there are published diaries from other members of the 150th Field Artillery, such as Elmer Straub's *A Sergeant's Diary in the World War* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1923) and Elmer Sherwood's *Diary of a Rainbow Veteran* (Terre Haute, Ind., 1929). Additionally, the unit's commanding officer, Col. Robert Tyndall, kept a diary that has been mined by several historians. These works furnish views of the war from the perspective of either soldiers closely engaged in combat or a commanding officer concerned with the regiment's overall performance. Where Kniptash's diary breaks new ground is in its description of not only life in the rear areas, but also the broad scope of his service. The initial enthusiasm that accompanied his enlistment is tempered somewhat by the transition to military service and the grind of training as well as by the long delay between his enlistment and the division's arrival at the front. Like Straub and Sherwood, Kniptash feared

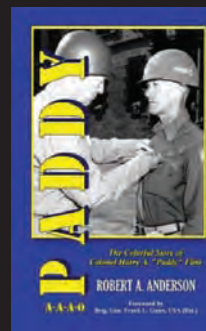
the constant artillery bombardments and attacks by German aircraft. However, his focus generally shifts between describing his unit's progress and the daily preoccupations of a soldier: mail from home; the varying quality of food and billets; and the continual stream of rumors, or "snow" as he calls it, which abounds in any situation where reliable information is scarce. When the others were limited in their understanding of events, Kniptash's position as a radio operator gave him access to increased information regarding other parts of the front. He displays a keen awareness of circumstances and comments regularly on the overall state of affairs for the American Expeditionary Forces and its allies. Kniptash also conveys weariness with postwar occupation and in relations with civilians in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany and the growing disdain for the regimentation of Army life as the soldiers await their return home.

Despite its strengths, the historical value of Kniptash's diary is largely dependent on the reader. If one is looking for an engaging combat narrative, there are better alternatives (two of which are mentioned above). If, however, readers want to broaden their understanding of the experiences of those who served by looking to the rear areas rather than the front or to gain the perspective of an enlisted soldier working on a regimental staff, then the present piece has real merit. As the First World War's centennial anniversary approaches it is refreshing to see an overall upswing in the publication of material dealing with a conflict that was of critical importance to this nation's development.

**Dr. Brian F. Neumann** is a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Previously, he was an assistant professor in the Department of History at the United States Military Academy. He received his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in 2006 and is currently working on a biography of Maj. Gen. James G. Harbord.



*Paddy: The Colorful Story of Colonel Harry A. "Paddy" Flint*



By Robert A. Anderson  
Heritage Books, 2006  
Pp. xvii, 189. \$30

**Review by David R. Gray**

Every war produces heroic officer leaders who inspire emulation on and off the battlefield. While soldiers tend to gravitate toward the more charismatic officers to direct them, they really follow those officers who exhibit superb military professionalism in all areas. Acquired over a lifetime of study and practice, officer professionalism involves the exercise of special military expertise, notably the use of organized violence in combat on society's behalf. The subject of this review demonstrated both charisma and professionalism in abundance. In a lively and readable biography, author Robert Anderson examines the life of Col. Harry A. "Paddy" Flint, a little-known World War II regimental commander whose character, competence, and leadership exemplified the best attributes of the professional officer.

Robert Anderson, coauthor of *Low Level Hell: A Scout Pilot in the Big Red One* (Novato, Calif., 1992) as well as several other articles on World War II, has produced a lucid and interesting biography of Harry Flint. In reconstructing Flint's life and career, he tapped into unpublished letters to family and friends, interviews with family and surviving unit members, and unit reports. A number of scholarly secondary sources rounded out his research.

Born and raised in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, in 1888, Harry Flint's pursuit



of a military career stemmed from his small-town upbringing and his intense interest in military affairs. Flint's personality and value system derived from a local environment that stressed the importance of hard work and perseverance; participation in outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and horseback riding; patriotism; and the Progressive ideals of the time. Military service offered the logical path to satisfy his childhood's romantic notions of leading a courageous, manly life where he could earn fame. After a year of study at both Norwich College and the U.S. Naval Academy, Flint received an appointment to West Point in 1908 and graduated in the middle of the class of 1912 as a second lieutenant of cavalry.

Anderson sketches out three themes that affected Flint's subsequent career. Flint's determination to pursue professional goals is the book's most prominent theme. As a member of the profession of arms, Flint desperately wanted to command troops in battle. He vigorously sought out any opportunity to serve with cavalry in action where he might prove his courage and leadership abilities. He was often frustrated in this endeavor. Early in his career, Flint missed being part of Pershing's expedition into Mexico in 1916. He did not deploy overseas until the very end of World War I and missed active combat while serving as a training officer for replacements in a field artillery unit. In 1919, he returned to the United States to work in a number of command and staff positions in the peacetime Army.

During the interwar period, Flint learned that professional officership involved lifelong learning in more areas than just purely military technical matters. Like many officers of his time, Flint performed duties away from tactical units. He taught cadets as a professor of military science at two Reserve Officers' Training Corps detachments, oversaw the students' horsemanship at Fort Leavenworth, and served as a staff officer in the Chief of Cavalry's Office in Washington, D.C. He added further to his political-cultural knowledge and military technical expertise by attending France's *l'Ecole Supérieure de Guerre* in Paris (1926–1928),

graduating from the Army Air Corps Tactical School at Langley, Virginia (1930–1931), and serving as an instructor at Maxwell Air Base, Alabama (1931–1933). Though not all directly related to war fighting, these assignments did provide Flint with an excellent professional education, leadership experience in a variety of settings, and the decision-making skills essential for success as an Army officer.

Throughout his career, Flint cultivated personal and professional relationships that would assist his advancement in the Army, a second theme of the book. As a West Point cadet, Flint established a circle of close friends drawn from several classes, most notably George S. Patton Jr. (1909) and Dwight D. Eisenhower and Omar N. Bradley (1915). These relationships played a key role in advancing Flint into career-enhancing positions at just the right times. Patton had a direct hand, for example, in Flint, a 52-year-old colonel, being assigned to a staff job in London in 1942, despite an Army policy that prohibited officers over the age of fifty from deploying overseas. Patton and Bradley later handpicked Flint to command the 39th Infantry Regiment during the Sicily campaign in 1943.

The book's final theme examines Flint's command style. Flint had earned a reputation as an effective and efficient leader and manager of resources. A "fixer" with a flair for the dramatic, he was placed in command to improve the effectiveness of the 39th, which had delivered a lackluster performance during the North African campaign. Like Patton, Flint relied on a few flamboyant gimmicks as well as his personal charisma to inspire his troops. As a cadet, he had adopted the nickname "Paddy," a symbolic and romantic moniker that highlighted his great admiration for the Irish immigrants who had served in the frontier cavalry in the West. (Flint was not of Irish origin.) Flint always wore a black scarf around his neck as a "battle tie" so he could be readily identified by his troops. Once in command, Flint also instituted the motto "Anything, Anywhere, Anytime, Bar Nothing" as the 39th's rallying cry, and he had every soldier paint AAA-0 on his helmet.

Flint purposely devised these methods to build morale and unit cohesion through a shared sense of mission.

Perhaps most important, Flint exercised dynamic leadership at the front. At the height of his professional skills and expertise, Flint took command of the 39th in Sicily as it fought its way toward Messina. Within hours of arriving, Flint went to his farthest forward unit to observe the situation. Due to his personality, preference, and experience, Flint gravitated toward the front in order to share his troops' dangers. Roaming between his forward battalions, he spent the next several days leading and cajoling his troops to the regiment's objective, the town of Troina. Flint contemptuously ignored enemy fire, telling his troops the Germans could never shoot straight. The chain of command acknowledged the 39th's superb performance and credited Flint's leadership by awarding him a Distinguished Service Cross for his actions. But his "ride to the sound of the guns" leadership style had risks. Prior to the Normandy invasion, Omar Bradley, First Army's commanding general, recognized his friend's courage but repeatedly cautioned Flint to "be careful as a dead or wounded Colonel is of very limited value and the 39th needs your presence" (pp. 117, 119). Flint would have none of it and, after going forward to oversee fighting in the Normandy bocage, was mortally wounded while engaged in a small-unit firefight. At the price of his life, Paddy Flint had accomplished the most important mission of his life: rejuvenating the fighting spirit of a combat unit that had lost its edge, for which he posthumously received a second Distinguished Service Cross.

The author succeeds in his purpose to illuminate Flint's life and remarkable exploits. He could, however, have cast his net a bit wider and used Flint's career to make some broader points about the profession of arms in the first half of the twentieth century. The work would have benefited from a more in-depth placement of Flint's career in the context of the era's military culture and standards of professionalism. Prior to World War I, America's overseas imperialism and Progressive idealism shaped Flint's motivation to serve the

nation as a soldier where he could achieve martial glory and fame. But the slaughter of troops during World War I altered these cultural norms, which certainly would have challenged Flint's personal value system. Moreover, Flint participated in some pivotal experiments to convert his beloved horse cavalry into mechanized formations, including participation in the Louisiana Maneuvers in 1941. How these changes influenced Flint's development and outlook as an officer deserved further analysis.

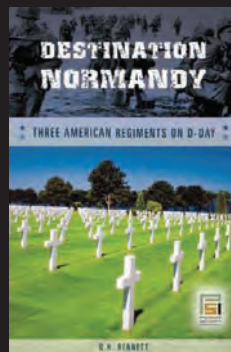
Anderson's *Paddy* is an excellent portrait of a dedicated career officer of character that is worth reading. This book is recommended for those with a general interest in World War II and officer professionalism. Officers looking for an inspirational role model will find one in Paddy Flint.

In an age of persistent conflict, full-spectrum operations, and agile and adaptive officers, one could easily believe that the current officer corps is significantly different than in Flint's day. Anderson's portrait of Flint argues that there is more continuity in the officer corps' collective historical experience than we generally believe. Today, as in Flint's time, character, competence, and leadership, exercised in a variety of circumstances, remain the hallmarks of officer professionalism.

**David R. Gray** is a retired Army colonel and is currently the president of Valley Forge Military Academy and College in Wayne, Pennsylvania. A career infantryman, he served in a number of command and staff assignments in the United States and overseas. Prior to his retirement, he served as chair and professor of officership at the United States Military Academy. He commanded the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), in Iraq, 2005–2006.



### *Destination Normandy: Three American Regiments on D-Day*



By G. H. Bennett  
Praeger Security International, 2007  
Pp. xx, 222. \$49.95

### Review by Thomas W. Spahr

G. H. Bennett enhances the historiography of the Normandy campaign of June 1944 in his operational history of three U.S. Army regiments. *Destination Normandy* examines the roles of the 116th Infantry, the 22d Infantry, and the 507th Infantry surrounding the D-Day invasion. Bennett's goal is to provide new insight on Operation OVERLORD by focusing on three diverse units and to correct the sometimes inaccurate portrayal of the landings by popular works of history and Hollywood films. He takes aim at the perception of World War II, particularly the Western Front, as a clear conflict of good versus evil and as a moral bar against which modern wars can be judged; it was in fact a war that contained many complexities and breaches of morality on both sides. Using archival research from three countries and including extensive use of newspapers and several oral histories, the book is valuable for World War II scholars. Likewise, military history enthusiasts will enjoy the numerous accounts of individual soldiers. On the other hand, this is not the place to go for an overview of the Normandy campaign because Bennett remains focused on the U.S. infantry regiments.

An obvious strength of *Destination Normandy* is the author's discussion of the regiments' experiences as they prepared for the invasion. Bennett concludes, "In planning for a success-

ful invasion of Europe, the supreme headquarters had to fight on military, political, and social fronts" (p. 48). U.S. units, particularly those such as the 116th that were stationed in England for almost two years prior to the invasion, integrated into British society, married British women, and fathered a remarkable 24,000 babies out of wedlock. They created their own society that included baseball and football leagues, dances, and charitable organizations.

Bennett makes a notable contribution to the social history of the invasion when he describes the great distraction that racism internal to the U.S. Army caused the command. Racial attitudes of U.S. soldiers were intensified as they interacted with the more tolerant British society. British women associating with black American soldiers frequently ignited a reaction from intolerant white GIs. An example of one remedy employed by U.S. leadership was to segregate units and alternate nights when black and white soldiers could go into towns.

*Destination Normandy* offers an evenhanded analysis of mission training. Bennett does not leave out the harsh realities of combat-simulating exercises, including casualties and destruction of civilian property. He reveals shortfalls with amphibious tanks and difficulties hitting drop zones, both of which were problems on D-Day. He describes the gritty details of the Operation TIGER training tragedy, when German E-boats penetrated the protective barrier and torpedoed three American LSTs, causing 749 deaths. The scenes of head-down floating bodies and mauled survivors are powerful.

The author's focus then shifts to the landings and their immediate aftermath. His discussion of the 507th contains material about the experiences of small groups of paratroopers and demonstrates how they delayed and decreased the number of German forces reacting to the D-Day landings. For example, the "Timmes Group" of approximately one hundred and seventy-five men under the command of Lt. Col. Charles Timmes held a strategically located orchard for four days and prevented thousands of German reinforcements from moving through the region. He also includes stories of smaller groups of paratroopers

fighting for their lives and sometimes suffering horrible deaths.

*Destination Normandy* contains little new material on the 116th Infantry but does provide insightful and well-supported analysis. Bennett defends the command decision to land at OMAHA Beach but argues that overconfidence led to mistakes that might have been avoided. Examples of errors are landing directly on the objectives without the cover of darkness or smoke, and sending smaller waves of troops first followed by overwhelming numbers in subsequent echelons. The author goes further and discusses poor leadership decisions made by individual company-level officers that cost many soldiers their lives. In the end, he concurs with the interpretation that the battle was won by the initiative of small groups of soldiers willing to deviate from the plan in order to accomplish the mission. Unfortunately, his valuable examination of the 116th is marred by the adoption of Stephen Ambrose's exaggerated assertion of the number of casualties sustained in the unit by those hailing from the town of Bedford, Virginia. A recent piece appearing in the *Journal of Military History* makes the valuable point that it is time to put the overblown contribution of Bedford to rest and report the truth—which is still remarkable.<sup>1</sup>

The author spends less energy on the last of his three regiments: the 22d Infantry, which led the UTAH Beach invasion. He emphasizes that while the casualty figures were not as shocking as those on OMAHA Beach, the men who landed on UTAH were deeply affected; this, not the OMAHA Beach disaster, was the type of engagement that most World War II veterans remember. Bennett's view is valid, but this reviewer wishes he had done more. The 22d's advance inland, a point the author highlights as critical in the introduction, remains underdeveloped. The relief of Col. Hervey Tribolet, the regimental commander, comes as a surprise with little explanation. Additionally, this section is under sourced when compared to the more popular stories of the 507th and the 116th; the chapter on the 22d's fight inland (Chapter 11) has seven footnotes versus the twenty-nine in the 507th's chapter (Chapter 12). Hence, the book feels disproportional.

*Destination Normandy's* greatest contribution may be the author's inclusion and analysis of the moral issues on the Allied side of the conflict. Bennett does not shy away from addressing the American atrocities and cites evidence of massacres on the beaches and orders given to paratroopers not to take prisoners. He skillfully puts these incidents in context for the reader and largely exculpates the average soldier forced to choose between his own values and survival, particularly paratroopers behind enemy lines. He is less sympathetic to the officers who commanded their men to take no prisoners, noting that German officers were later put on trial for similar actions.

Bennett assumes the reader has a basic understanding of World War II and the Normandy invasion, especially by the unfortunate absence of any maps. Despite this and other minor shortcomings mentioned, serious World War II scholars will benefit from this work, and military history enthusiasts will enjoy its captivating soldier stories. *Destination Normandy* augments our understanding of the D-Day invasion and helps cut through the mythology built up around it.

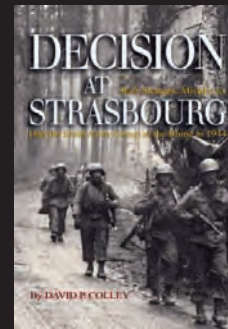
## NOTE

1. George D. Salaita, "Notes and Comments Embellishing OMAHA Beach," *Journal of Military History* 72 (April 2008): 531–34. Salaita argues that only fourteen soldiers from the town of Bedford were killed, while the other thirty or so were from the county and other nearby regions.

**Maj. Thomas W. Spahr** is an active duty Army officer currently assigned as the S-3, operations officer, of the Army Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT) Battalion at the Washington Navy Yard. He holds a master's degree in military history from Ohio State University and is working on his Ph.D. dissertation on the Mexican-American War and the antebellum Army. Major Spahr led the West Point staff ride to Normandy in March 2009.



## *Decision at Strasbourg: Ike's Strategic Mistake to Halt the Sixth Army Group at the Rhine in 1944*



By David P. Colley  
Naval Institute Press, 2008  
Pp. xiii, 251. \$34.95

## Review by Mark T. Callhoun

David P. Colley, a former U.S. Army ordnance officer and journalist, claims in his introduction to *Decision at Strasbourg* that his book reveals the Allies' lost opportunity, "virtually ignored" by other historians, to end the war with Germany in late 1944 (p. xi). The perpetrator of this strategic mistake, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, canceled a planned crossing of the Rhine into Germany in late November 1944 by the Sixth Army Group, commanded by Lt. Gen. Jacob Devers. Colley argues that the crossing, had Eisenhower approved it, would have preempted Hitler's December Ardennes offensive by forcing him to reposition thousands of troops to counter Devers' assault. Furthermore, Colley asserts a large-scale Allied assault into Germany in late 1944 would have dealt a crushing blow to German morale, possibly leading to an early end to the war and saving thousands of Allied soldiers' lives.

Readers familiar with the Sixth Army Group's operations in the Vosges will realize Eisenhower's decision to halt Devers at the Rhine is not as obscure to history as Colley suggests. Many sources describe the Sixth Army Group's operations and the aborted crossing, including the Army's official history by Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert R. Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine* (Washington, D.C., 1993); Russell F.

Weigley's *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* (Bloomington, Ind., 1981); Keith E. Bonn's *When the Odds Were Even* (New York, 1994); and, most recently, Harry Yeide's and Mark Stout's *First to the Rhine* (St. Paul, Minn., 2007). These earlier accounts also do not depict Eisenhower's decision to halt Devers as particularly controversial. Rather, they describe his judgment as one based on sound tactical reasoning and adherence to a consistent strategy. In it, he emphasized the importance of maintaining contact between Sixth Army Group's left flank and Third Army's right, eliminating pockets of German resistance in the rear before proceeding eastward, and avoiding the risk of Devers' forces getting bogged down in the heavily forested terrain east of the intended crossing site. Regardless of the fact that the events explained in Colley's book may have been covered before, Colley's analysis is unique both in its specific focus on the canceled crossing and in its counterfactual assessment of the potential outcome of the operation had Eisenhower allowed it to go forward.

While Colley's novel analysis is the cornerstone of his book, this is not a purely speculative work. He provides a detailed exposition of the Sixth Army Group's operations within the larger context of the struggle against Germany in the European theater. His narrative contains familiar themes: Eisenhower's strict adherence to a broad-front strategy of attrition, relying on overwhelming Allied materiel superiority to defeat a qualitatively superior German Army; fierce rivalry and animosity among the Allied generals; and the imperative of keeping the coalition together, which often led Eisenhower to make suboptimal or controversial decisions. Colley's account reflects the standard interpretation of operations in the European theater that held sway for decades after the war, but which has come under criticism in recent years by revisionist historians seeking to restore the reputation of America's combat troops. However, Colley furnishes a more detailed chronicle of Sixth Army Group's planning for the Rhine crossing than that available in any of these

previous sources, including a lengthy extract from the staff's final report on its plans for the operation. This report, published in October 1944, demonstrates that, while Eisenhower may have been surprised that Devers' army group was the first to reach the Rhine, Devers' recommendation to cross the river and continue the attack into Germany in November 1944 was no hasty improvisation. Rather, Devers presented a well-developed plan to Eisenhower, and his forces were ready to conduct the offensive. His staff had not only made extensive preparations, but it also possessed sufficient amphibious assault vehicles, equipment, and supplies to enable a large-scale crossing at a point where reconnaissance patrols had already traversed the Rhine and found the eastern side essentially undefended.

Nevertheless, Eisenhower issued a last-minute order canceling the operation. Colley devotes a chapter to the possible outcome of the Seventh Army's planned crossing, had Eisenhower approved it, and another to the question of whether the French First Army could have accomplished the mission instead of the Seventh Army. While these arguments are purely speculative and the author states he has merely presented the facts, leaving it up to his readers to draw their own conclusions, Colley is unambiguous in his conviction that Eisenhower made a tragic mistake. In relating the events leading up to the moment of decision, Colley relies mostly on well-known secondary sources to paint a familiar picture of high command in the European Theater of Operations, but he pays particular attention to Eisenhower's animosity toward Devers, the result of a grudge stemming back to the campaign in North Africa. He describes Bradley and Patton as Eisenhower's favored lieutenants during the war and perceptively characterizes the sway these three men held over post-war interpretations, both in histories and the popular media. Meanwhile, the ever-reserved and humble Devers faded into obscurity after the war, neglecting to publish a memoir of his own or speak out against the popular misconception that Bradley's Twelfth

Army Group first reached the Rhine in March 1945, four months later than Devers' Sixth Army Group.

Colley's counterfactual analysis makes *Decision at Strasbourg* stand apart from earlier studies of Sixth Army Group operations. This is a method that may repel some historians, but it is sure to spark debate among those willing to follow his logic and confront his conclusions. Colley is strident in his portrayal of Devers as an outstanding commander who was deprived of a singular opportunity to bring the war to an early end, due purely to Eisenhower's personal animosity, and was thereby denied his rightful place alongside the war's great captains. By contrast, Colley depicts Eisenhower as "cautious and indecisive" (p. 212) and unable to learn from his mistakes and adapt, flaws demonstrated throughout his service on the Western Front, and in particular by the strategic mistake of halting Devers' Sixth Army Group at the Rhine in November 1944. Colley's unique argument and provocative conclusions will likely invoke strong reactions among his readers, but regardless whether he convinces them that Eisenhower made a "strategic mistake," Colley has added an engaging and thought-provoking entry into a lesser-known aspect of the history of Allied operations on the Western Front.

**Mark T. Calhoun** is an assistant professor at the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies. He is a retired Army lieutenant colonel who served over twenty years as an aviator and plans officer. He holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry and master's degrees in history and advanced operational art and is a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Kansas.



*Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945–1975*



By John Prados  
University Press of Kansas, 2009  
Pp. xxvii, 550. \$34.95

### Review by Erik B. Villard

Few scholars are as qualified as John Prados, a senior fellow and director of the Vietnam Documentation Project at the National Security Archive, to write a comprehensive survey of the Vietnam War. Having already published more than a dozen well-received books on topics ranging from Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Accords, the Pentagon Papers, the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the siege of Khe Sanh, the author goes for the biggest prize of all with his latest book, a sweeping synthesis of the thirty-year conflict in Vietnam. As Prados puts it, his intention is to overcome the “atomization of the literature [which] has impeded a full understanding” of the war (p. xiii). While the product of his labors deserves a respected place alongside other important survey histories such as Stanley Karnow’s *Vietnam* (New York, 1983) and George C. Herring’s *America’s Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950–1975* (New York, 1979), the book spends too much time discussing the colorful but ultimately marginal antiwar movement and the author’s own experiences as a young protester to feel like a truly objective and canonical work.

It is no easy task to bring analytical coherence to thirty years of politics and war. For the most part, Prados succeeds quite admirably. He deftly

sorts through the fragmented strands of the Vietnam story and weaves them together into a clear and compelling narrative. His arguments are well-reasoned and superbly annotated; his prose style is easy to digest. The author brings to life a rich cast of characters, the dominant political figures of the era as well as a host of smaller figures who play walk-on roles in the great drama. We hear from presidents and generals as well as from student protesters and combat soldiers, from Americans as well as from Vietnamese, the voices on “the Right” and those on “the Left,” the defenders of “the Establishment” and their rivals in the antiwar movement. Readers looking for a panoramic view of the conflict and a cogent examination of why the United States became embroiled in Vietnam’s wars many years ago will find much to admire in this book.

The author’s analytical footing is typically quite sure; a glance through his extensive footnotes and handsomely annotated bibliography attest to the depth of his scholarship. He is particularly strong in the area of presidential politics and national intelligence. The only weakness Prados displays in terms of the source material is in the area of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong military affairs. For example, in the period covering 1960 to 1964, he does not sufficiently acknowledge the nearly absolute control that North Vietnam exerted over the growing Viet Cong movement. The National Liberation Front (NLF) that came to life in Tay Ninh Province in December 1960 was far more than “a leadership council that included many people from many regions and occupations” (p. 71) who disliked the policies of Ngo Dinh Diem, the autocratic president of South Vietnam. The NLF and its associated military wing, the *People’s Liberation Armed Forces*, were formed at the direct behest of the North Vietnamese politburo after a long and heated internal debate about how best to foment armed insurrection in the South. Soon after, when the politburo reestablished the *Central Office for South Vietnam*, a military headquarters that had guided the southern Viet Minh forces during the

First Indochina War, its leading staff members consisted almost entirely of North Vietnamese officials including several members of the politburo. At no time was there an autonomous southern insurgency, a point worth making. Later on in his discussion of the Tet offensive, Prados has some trouble with the enemy’s order of battle; he identifies the *2d NLF Battalion* and the *Go Mon Battalion* as being different units when they were in fact one and the same. Much to the author’s credit, however, he is one of the few historians to properly appreciate the central role that student demonstrations were to play during the attacks on Saigon. The failure of those students to gather at various Viet Cong targets around the city on the night of 30–31 January 1968 goes a long way toward explaining why the enemy sapper attacks at the U.S. Embassy and other locations seemed so suicidal but were never intended to be.

If the book has a structural flaw, it is this: Prados wants to write a magisterial history of the war while at the same time to tell his own personal story, that of a young graduate student in the early 1970s who played a small but spirited role in the antiwar movement. The fact that the author participated in peace demonstrations, actively supported organizations such as the Vietnam Veterans Against the War and the Winter Soldier movement, and campaigned for George McGovern in 1972 does not in any way negate his authority as a scholar (though some politically conservative readers may feel otherwise). Prados is one of the deans of the “New Left” school of Vietnam War historians, and it should come as no surprise that he still displays a strong affinity for what he calls “the Movement.” One objection is that the author spends far too many of his valuable pages discussing the antiwar movement when even he acknowledges that it had only a marginal impact on the course of the war. Likewise, the author’s personal memories from his time in the peace movement were colorful but rather jarring. One cannot help but feel that his book would have been more authoritative if he had refrained from

interjecting himself so directly into the story. Moreover, the occasional barbs he throws at former President George W. Bush for his admittedly flawed rationale for invading and then occupying Iraq in 2003 may be accurate in substance but seem too sporadic and arbitrary to deserve inclusion in a book otherwise entirely focused on Vietnam.

Those quibbles aside, Prados deserves praise for tackling such an enormous subject with such a clear and practiced eye. He does a particular service by challenging revisionist scholars, such as Mark Moyar, author of *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965* (New York, 2006), who have argued, in essence, that the United States could have won the war if the majority of liberals in the media, academia, and Congress had not lost their nerve, poisoned the well of public opinion, and cut off funding to South Vietnam. Prados skillfully demolishes that line of reasoning by contrasting the persistent weakness

of the South Vietnamese government with the iron determination of the North Vietnamese government. Even at the lowest point of North Vietnam's fortunes in 1969, the Communists still had more than enough willpower and resources to keep fighting indefinitely; the records that have emerged from Vietnam in recent years show that the enemy was in no sense defeated. The South Vietnamese state, on the other hand, continued to struggle. When the last American combat troops went home in late 1972 and U.S. aid began to dry up not long afterward, North Vietnam only had to bide its time until it was ready to deliver the killing blow. Whether that happened in 1975, as it did, or another five or ten years later, the Communist North was simply not going to give up. As for the influence of the antiwar movement in the United States, a supposedly fatal virus in the American body politic according to some conservative scholars, Prados determines, with obvious regret, that

it was simply too inchoate to have had a decisive impact on U.S. policy. In the end, the author rightly concludes that the war was unwinnable not because of American attitudes but because of those of the Vietnamese.

**Erik B. Villard** has been a historian in the Histories Division of the U.S. Army Center of Military History since July 2000. He received a bachelor's degree in history and in English literature at Occidental College, Los Angeles, and a master's degree and a Ph.D. in history at the University of Washington, Seattle. He is currently writing a volume in the United States Army in Vietnam series tentatively entitled "The Tet Offensive: U.S. Army Combat Operations in South Vietnam, November 1967–October 1968."



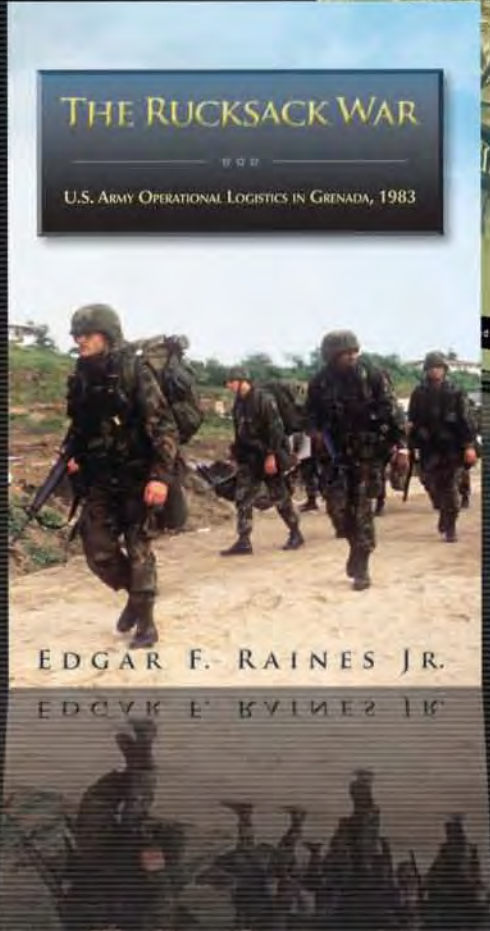
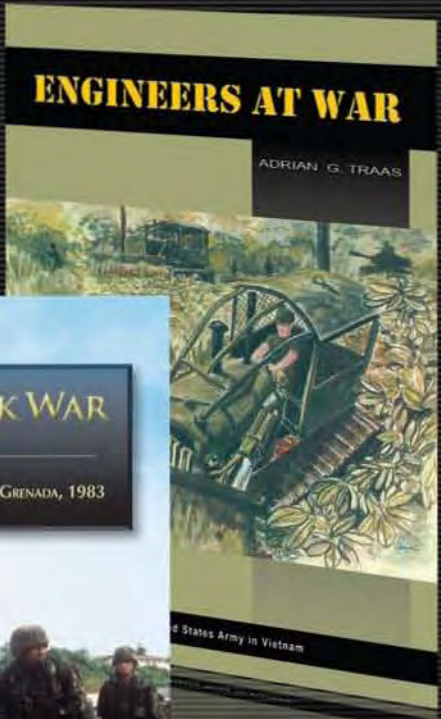
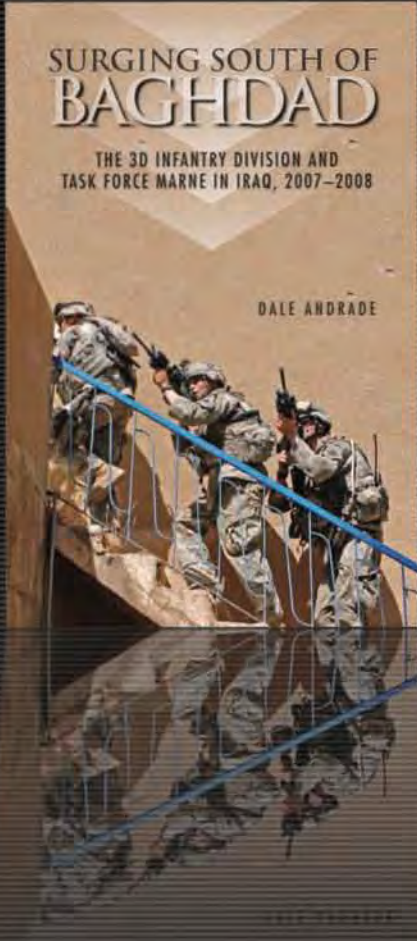
## ARMY HISTORY

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**A** *Army History* welcomes articles, essays, and commentaries of between 2,000 and 12,000 words on any topic relating to the history of the U.S. Army or to wars and conflicts in which the U.S. Army participated or by which it was substantially influenced. The Army's history extends to the present day, and *Army History* seeks accounts of the Army's actions in ongoing conflicts as well as those of earlier years. The bulletin particularly seeks writing that presents new approaches to historical issues. It encourages readers to submit responses to essays or commentaries that have appeared in its pages and to present cogent arguments on any question (controversial or otherwise) relating to the history of the Army. Such contributions need not be lengthy. Essays and commentaries should be annotated with endnotes, preferably embedded, to indicate the sources relied on to support factual assertions. Preferably, a manuscript should be submitted as an attachment to an e-mail sent to the managing editor at [army.history1@conus.army.mil](mailto:army.history1@conus.army.mil).

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# New CMH Publications

See page 5 for more information.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In its summer 2010 issue, *Army History* reprinted from the U.S. Naval Institute's *Proceedings* magazine an article by retired Maj. Gen. Robert H. Scales entitled "Too Busy to Learn." Putting forth a compelling argument based on his experiences as a historian, educator, and soldier, General Scales opines in this article that now is the time to reform professional military education (PME). Comparing today's U.S. military with the armed forces of the United Kingdom in 1914, the general also highlights an analogy that senior leaders should heed. Unfortunately, in championing the cause of PME reform, General Scales makes two assertions concerning military learning institutions that are incorrect.

First, in arguing that the military prefers action over intellect, General Scales states, "But sadly, atrophy has gripped the school house, and what was once the shining light of progressivism has become an intellectual backwater, lagging far behind the corporate world and civilian institutions of higher learning." How can this statement be accurate? The author points to past accomplishments of Defense Department learning organizations such as the case-study method pioneered by the U.S. Army War College, as well as the services' responsibility for advancing distance learning, diagnostics, and assessments. But as most investment professionals will tell you, past results do not indicate future performance.

The service schools must first be jointly accredited as detailed in Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1800.01D, *Officer Professional Military Education Policy*, 15 July 2009. Additionally, the National Defense University, Marine Corps University, Air University, and other service schools are accredited through organs of the Higher Learning Commission, the same bodies that evaluate and accredit Ivy League universities and business schools (including the institutions where General Scales received his undergraduate and graduate degrees, the U.S. Military Academy and Duke University). Have any of the accrediting bodies identified intellectual atrophy at these service schools?

The substance of General Scales' argument is that because of anti-intellectual bias in the military, the services are in this era of persistent conflict substituting combat experience for education and reflection. This leads to his second assertion that requires correction: "The insidious creep of the civilian contractor must be reversed by requiring that virtually all ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps), service academy, and staff and war college faculty positions be filled by uniformed officers."

If General Scales intended to include the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) in this list of PME institutions, his inference that most faculty members are contractors is patently false. All civilian instructors who teach the common core and advanced operations courses of intermediate level education (ILE) at CGSC are Title 10 Department of the Army civilian term employees, quite a different entity. Under Title 10, the Army does not have to renew a civilian who performs poorly. Because CGSC is an adaptive, learning organization, Title 10 assignments, promotions, and retention are based on instructor performance, scholarship, service to the community and nation, and understanding of current military practices.

A significant portion of CGSC faculty hold doctorates, but, regardless of academic credentials, all instructors must go through a rigorous certification program, periodic reviews, and annual evaluations, and they must be recertified every five years. In addition to teaching and participating in curriculum development, instructors must perform service to the community and nation. They must conduct research, write, and be published in peer-reviewed or professional publications. Finally, CGSC faculty members maintain currency ("re-green") either by augmenting Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) missions as observers and trainers during unit mission rehearsal exercises or by accompanying other agencies during unit visits.

With the exception of a handful of technical electives offered at CGSC, no courses there are taught to officers by contractors or subcontractors. Prior to 11 September 2001, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) decided to transition to Title 10 civilian instructors as part of the transformation from the legacy course to universal ILE. The transition to Title 10 civilian instructors was not the result of the Global War on Terrorism or increased operational tempo. The driver for this change was the PME component of Army transformation, preceded by the 2000 Army Training and Leader Development Program. TRADOC completed ILE transformation in 2004, and today's CGSC proudly represents the Army as a dynamic, adaptive organization. Its Title 10 civilian faculty is almost exclusively composed of retired lieutenant colonels. Many, if not most, have substantial combat experience in command and leadership positions and are eminently qualified to teach all subject areas within the ILE curriculum.

The U.S. Army Command and General Staff College's Title 10 instructors are employees of the United States Army, not a company. Their allegiance is to the armed forces, not to a corporation. They conduct academic operations in accordance with the college's mission and the commandant's intent, not a statement of work. Their customers are commanders in the field and field-grade officers in the classroom, not stockholders or a board of directors.

In his article, General Scales proposes numerous PME reforms that are worthy of continued discussion and consideration. As a recognized champion of PME reform, General Scales finds that people listen when he speaks. Correcting shortcomings in PME demands a proper framing of the perceived problem and correctly identifying root causes. Labeling the institutions of military education as an "intellectual backwater" requires qualification, and accurately describing faculty composition demands informed sources. Perhaps General Scales should visit the Army's Command and General Staff College to observe firsthand what happens in its classrooms and to meet the faculty in person.

Roland M. "Mike" Edwards  
Brian C. Leakey  
Assistant Professors  
Department of Army Tactics  
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College  
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Continued from page 3

on a battle, oral histories by the battle's participants, visual interactive maps showing the progress of the action, artifacts throughout the Army's Museum System relating to the clash, and a videotape of a staff ride conducted by a foremost expert on the engagement? This concept is not far from becoming a reality because in many cases the raw material discussed above already exists in various places in the Army's collection, as does the technology needed to bring it all together.

Some will undoubtedly feel newer historical techniques threaten more conventional methods and represent an assault on the printed word. I do not subscribe to that school of thought; more modern methods and techniques must complement traditional writing for the long-term health of our field. We must, however, be attentive to identify any pitfalls to the use of new media, and we must not allow them to erode our high standards of research and publishing.

The Center of Military History is expanding its use of new technologies and learning tools. The Center made substantial investments in information management equipment and personnel at the end of fiscal year 2010. We look forward with anticipation to being able to supply new products to complement to our printed work.

One great legacy of Dr. Clarke's leadership is his decision that this journal be provocative. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the presentation in this issue of *Army History* of Professor Richard Kohn's views on the state of professional standards within the Army's officer corps. The Center does not side with or against Kohn's thesis, but it does assert the importance of historians, soldiers, and

citizens reflecting upon and debating such topics. Military historians have a responsibility to help their commanders frame subjects such as the status of military professionalism within the context of the Army's past. If military historians are loath to delve into what is considered social history, they would do well to remember that the Army as an institution is made of people who must function within the context of the greater American culture.

The issues discussed in Kohn's article have been dealt with before. In 1950, Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall directed the publication of *The Armed Forces Officer*, a short work based on Marshall's conviction that officers of all services founded their professional commitment on a common moral or ethical grounding. Nearly thirty years later, the challenges of an all-volunteer force and changes in America's culture led the department to revise and reissue this book, as it did again in 2006 as a result of the current war on terrorism. This book, one of many on the subject of professionalism within the officer corps, demonstrates the importance of further evaluation and discussion of a topic that has been debated since the founding of the Army in 1775. As you read Richard Kohn's article, I challenge you to examine your personal beliefs and judge where our military stands within the context of the greater profession of arms. I encourage you to ponder as well the thought-provoking issues posed by the other great articles in this professional bulletin.



## ARMY HISTORY

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# THE CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

DR. RICHARD W. STEWART



## DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM— Twenty Years After

**A**lthough Iraq's shocking invasion of Kuwait seems to have occurred only a short time ago, twenty years have passed since the U.S. Army found itself rushing to defend Saudi Arabia in late 1990 and then to liberate Kuwait in early 1991. Operations DESERT SHIELD (August 1990–January 1991) and DESERT STORM (January–March 1991) thrust the United States into the Middle East in a major way, setting the stage for more than a decade of containment of a still-dangerous Saddam Hussein. This has now been followed by nearly another decade of virtually continuous struggle, first to overthrow Hussein's vile regime (done rather quickly) and then to try to establish a stable and more moderate government in its place. (We still don't know how that will come out.) Yet, perhaps as a result of the more recent developments, the military response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait appears to many Americans as a mere shadowy footnote to the end of the Cold War, barely worth remembering.

However, those operations in the desert twenty years back are much more than just a footnote to history, of interest only to a handful of military historians. At the time, those events were a series of dramatic milestones on a long journey towards war for an anxious American public. The entire country was enthralled for months by the drawn-out mobilization and deployment of almost half of the active duty U.S. Army and thousands of reservists to the desert. In 1990, the American public's direct knowledge of war and, to a certain degree, of its own volunteer Army was either minimal or drenched in the memory of the Vietnam War, which had cost so much and ended in disaster only fifteen years earlier. Even today, when the U.S. engages in military operations around the world in defense of its interests, the ever-watchful media and their eager and ill-informed readers often fret that we have become enmeshed in "another Vietnam." (So far, we have been told that we were witnessing another Vietnam in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Colombia, Bosnia, Iraq, and now Afghanistan. None of these experiences were anything like that of Vietnam, but a nervous public can't seem to shake the syndrome.)

The U.S. Army, superbly equipped and trained over the previous decade for high-intensity conflict in Central Europe, moved XVIII Airborne Corps to Saudi Arabia in near-record time in August and September 1990. There, the soldiers sat and watched and trained and trained again for months in miserable conditions. President George H. W. Bush, working slowly but patiently through the United Nations while laying the political groundwork for war in Congress, moved carefully to build and maintain a coalition of nations. That coalition, which included longtime friends such as the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and France, as well as some truly unlikely allies as Egypt and Syria, joined together, first simply to protect Saudi Arabia and later to force Hussein out of Kuwait, seeking throughout to preserve the rule of international law and the West's access to oil.

After months of deployment, XVIII Airborne Corps was joined by VII Corps, which deployed from Europe with its armored and mechanized infantry divisions. Alerted in November 1990 and still moving in January 1991, when the initiation of air attacks marked the end of DESERT SHIELD and the start of DESERT STORM, VII Corps would provide the heavy "mailed fist" to punch through the Iraqi military and join in liberating Kuwait at the end of February 1991. That mission was accomplished in record time with forty days (and the biblical forty nights) of precision air strikes and four days (and four nights) of lightning-fast ground warfare. U.S. and allied air and ground units destroyed much of the Iraqi Army, and coalition forces incurred only minimal casualties as they freed Kuwait from occupation.

Those stirring events of twenty years ago, now overshadowed by over nine years of persistent conflict against an elusive terrorist organization, are important for another reason, one of direct impact on the Army's historical community. For the first time since the Vietnam War, the Army deployed a substantial number of its Military History Detachments (MHDs) to a major conflict. (The 44th Military History Detachment—the U.S. Army's only active duty MHD—had in 1983 deployed briefly to Grenada along with a Combat Studies Institute team to document the his-

tory of that brief operation.) In a test of the entire concept, the Army sent at least five MHDs and deployed a number of individual historians to live with units in the field, conduct oral history interviews, collect documents, and prepare the groundwork for writing the history of that conflict. A partial listing of these Army pioneers of historical collection and their units includes Col. Rick Swain, who served with the Third Army; Lt. Col. Pete Kindsvatter, VII Corps; Maj. Bob Wright, XVIII Airborne Corps; Maj. Bill Epley, 22d Support Command; Maj. Larry Heystek, 44th MHD; Lt. Col. Wes Manning, 90th MHD; Maj. Robert Honec and S. Sgt. LaDonna Kirkland, 116th MHD; Maj. Dennis Levin and Sgt. Dorothy McNeil, 130th MHD; Maj. William Thomas, 317th MHD; Maj. Glen Hawkins, CMH; and two guys who hung out with special operations and almost count as Army deployed historians, Dr. John Partin with the Joint Special Operations Task Force and yours truly as a young Maj. with Special Operations Command Central. Desert Warriors all! I am also sure there are others who should be on the "Army Historians' Roll of DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM Service," and so, on this twentieth anniversary, please let me know who you

are. We have a need to know. After all, we are historians. You can trust us.

As always, you can reach me at Richard.Stewart2@us.army.mil

Building on the work of these individuals, the Center has published an array of books and other materials on the history of this conflict. Frank N. Schubert and Teresa L. Kraus compiled the Center's initial account, *The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM*, published in 1995. The Center then issued two detailed studies, *From the Fulda Gap to Kuwait: U.S. Army, Europe and the Gulf War* (1998) by Army historian Stephen P. Gehring and *Jayhawk! The VII Corps in the Persian Gulf War* (2002) by Stephen A. Bourque, who was an Army major during the war. Those wishing a shorter account can now read the Center's recently published 20th anniversary commemorative pamphlet, *War in the Persian Gulf: Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, August 1990–March 1991*.



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