# ARMYHISTORY

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The Professional Bulletin of Army History

# **ARMY**HISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

### By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

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**Issue Cover:** Maj. Gen. Lloyd R. Fredendall, shown here while commanding the 4th Infantry Division, c. 1941 /U.S. Army

# **EDITOR'S** JOURNAL

In this Summer 2018 issue of *Army History*, we bring you two impressive pieces covering Army battles during World War I in France and World War II in North Africa.

In the first article, author Christopher Rein examines the Allied defeat by German forces at Kasserine Pass in Tunisia in February 1943. The author asserts that while historians have placed most of the blame for the loss on Maj. Gen. Lloyd R. Fredendall, the commander of the II Corps, other factors contributed to the corps' lackluster performance at Kasserine. These included poor working relationships with superiors and subordinates, personal biases of fellow commanders, and the excessive cannibalization of Fredendall's assigned forces.

The second article, from Jonathan D. Bratten, discusses one of the lesser-known battles of World War I that proved to be a turning point for U.S. forces against their battle-hardened German adversaries. The author argues that the doughboys succeeded at the Battle of Xivray in June 1918 because they quickly incorporated lessons learned just months earlier from their French allies and their German foes. Bratten writes that principles still in use by the Army today contributed to defeating a superior force of experienced enemy troops.

In his Chief's Corner, Mr. Charles Bowery describes the contributions of the Center of Military History's directorates in chronicling Army history events of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Jon Hoffman, in his Chief Historian's Footnote, discusses a recent review of the Army Publishing Directorate and the resulting efforts to make more efficient use of Army resources by operating more like a commercial publisher.

This issue also contains an Army Artifact Spotlight with the story behind a ceremonial sword presented to Capt. Benjamin Stone Roberts for his gallantry while commanding a sacrificial raiding party during the Mexican-American War in 1847. In addition, this issue contains eight excellent book reviews, a look at the "Army Theater" under construction at the National Museum of the United States Army, and a farewell to a former member of the CMH team who passed away on 14 April 2018.

As always, article submissions are encouraged, as are self-nominations for book reviews. The list of currently available review titles can be found on the CMH Web site (https://history.army.mil/armyhistory/books.html).

Bryan J. Hockensmith Managing Editor



Summer 2018

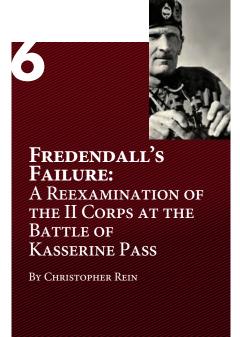


# **Features**

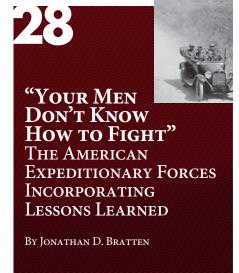


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# THE CHIEF'S CORNER

CHARLES R. BOWERY JR.

# Making, Gathering, Writing, and Telling Army History in the Twenty-First Century

It bears repeating that our directorates at the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) all play unique but interrelated roles as custodians of the Army's history. We are executing this important mission even as the events we chronicle happen before our eyes in the twenty-first century.

Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley has made it a priority to establish new Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs), a force structure decision with roots in the types of conflicts that have confronted the United States in the Middle East and Southwest Asia since the attacks of 11 September 2001. CMH is an important player in the creation of SFABs in two ways. Our Field Programs Directorate (FP) has advised leadership on the best lineages and battle honors to apply to these new units, showing FP's extensive expertise in these areas. The Institute of Heraldry moved mountains to advise on, design, and bring to production the insignia, flags, and heraldry, and all in time for the activation and deployment of these units. This team effort did not go unnoticed across the Department of the Army.

Our FP team is also helping units and command history offices across the Army to better assemble the operational record for our total force, while optimizing the command and control of our Military History Detachments (MHDs) in all three components to produce more effective enablers for this process. The HQDA Studies and Support Division, part of FP, continues to produce the annual Department of the Army Historical Summary, and responds to a myriad of requests for short studies and historical expertise across the Army.

The CMH team of research and writing historians in our Histories Directorate is about to embark on our first new

official history series in almost fifteen years. This series of more than twenty volumes will eventually comprise three subseries covering Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan, and the Institutional Army since 11 September 2001. It will take a team effort across the Army to gather the documentary record for these volumes, develop manuscripts, and declassify them for timely publication.

Finally, our team of museum professionals in the Army Museum Enterprise is engaged daily in using our materiel culture to tell the Army's history to audiences in innovative ways. In doing so, we educate the force and foster greater connections between the Army and society. We are dependent on our field historians, MHDs, and unit and branch museums to work to keep our collection updated with equipment from current operations. The National Museum of the United States Army will feature a gallery called "Changing World," a space that will tell the story of post-11 September 2001 operations around the world, right up to Operation Inherent Resolve. As an example of the synergy that can happen between field historians and our museum community, a command historian in Iraq was able to obtain a captured Islamic State in Iraq and Syria flag from the battlefield and arranged for its accession into the Army Historical Collection. That flag will be on display in the "Changing World" gallery when the museum opens in two years. Let's continue to educate, inspire, and preserve!

# NEWSNOTES

# **NEW PUBLICATION FROM CMH**

The Center of Military History recently published Into the Fight, April-June 1918, by Mark E. Grotelueschen. This pamphlet is the fourth installment of the U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I series and covers the American Expeditionary Forces' role in countering the German Spring Offensives of March-June 1918. The arrival of the American forces on the Western Front in early 1918 coincided with a series of major German pushes intended to break through the Allied lines. The crisis of the German offensives provided an opening for multiple American divisions to enter the lines. They worked with British and French units to resist the German advances, took command of their own sectors of the front, and increasingly engaged in their own offensive operations. The

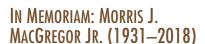
narrative of this volume spans the brutal fighting at Cantigny, Château-Thierry, Belleau Wood, and Vaux, where the inexperienced and untried American soldiers and marines received their first exposure to the grim realities of combat. Yet as the actions of these early campaigns show, both allies and enemies soon learned that the Americans who reached the front in the spring of 1918 were willing and able to fight with the grit and determination needed to achieve victory. This booklet is seventy-nine pages and contains numerous maps, illustrations, and a list of recommended further readings. It has been issued as CMH Pub 77-4 (paper) and is available for purchase by the general public from the U.S. Government Publishing Office.

Caspar W. Weinberger. He later coauthored Soldier-Statesmen of the Constitution, published in 1987, and United States Army in World War II: Reader's Guide, published in 1992.

MacGregor also authored several works outside CMH, including Blacks in the U.S. Armed Forces (1977); A Parish for the Federal City: St. Patrick's in Washington (1994); The Emergence of a Black Catholic Community (1999); and Steadfast in the Faith: The Life of Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle (2006).

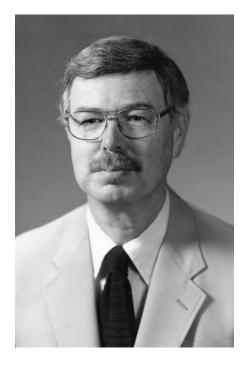
A lifelong Catholic, MacGregor was the coeditor of the quarterly publication of the Catholic Historical Society of Washington. He passed away on 14 April 2018 of complications from a stroke. He is survived by a sister, brother, and numerous relatives and friends.

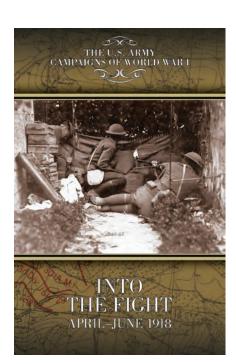




Morris J. MacGregor Jr. was born in 1931, grew up in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was a lifelong resident of the Washington, D.C., area. He attended the Catholic University of America and completed graduate studies at Catholic University, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Paris, where he was a Fulbright scholar.

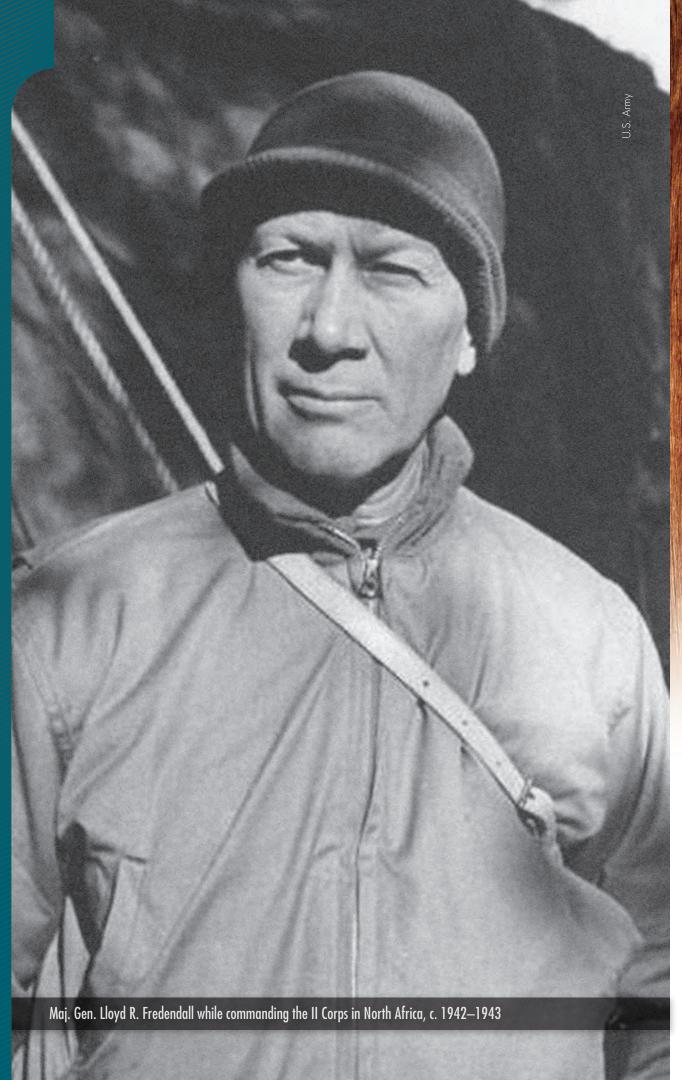
MacGregor was a career historian, first with the Joint Chiefs of Staff History Office from 1960 to 1966 and with the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) from 1966 to 1991. While at CMH, he served as Director of Special Collections and Contracts and as Acting Chief Historian. His book *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 1940–1965 was published by CMH in 1981, and he received a commendation from then-Secretary of Defense

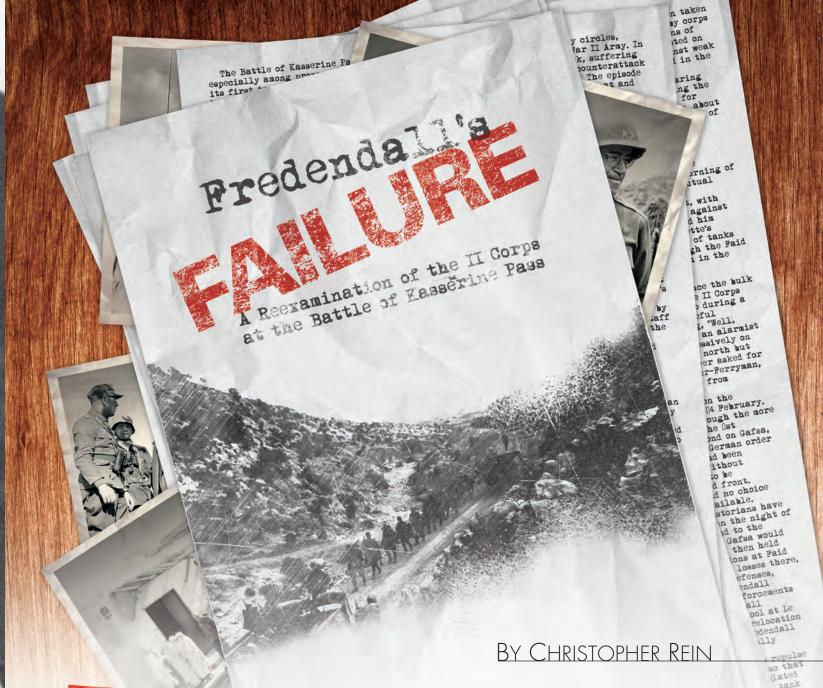




# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher Rein is a historian with the Combat Studies Institute, **Army University Press** at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Kansas, where his dissertation and first book, The North African Air Campaign (Lawrence, Kans., 2012), argued for an operational use of airpower rather than strategic pursuits that have dominated the U.S. Air Force for most of its history. His second book, Alabamians in Blue, scheduled for release in 2019, examines the linkages between environmental history and southern dissenters in northern Alabama during the Civil War. He has served as an associate professor of history and the **Deputy for Military** History at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and as an associate professor at the Air Command and Staff College in Montgomery, Alabama, where he directed the Modern Airpower course and instructed courses on leadership.





he Battle of Kasserine Pass has become legendary in American military circles, especially among proponents of peacetime preparedness in the post-World War II Army. In its first test against the Germans, the Army endured a significant setback, suffering hundreds of casualties and losing thousands of men captured in a German counterattack engineered by the vaunted Desert Fox himself, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. The episode serves both progressive narratives, of an Army that picked itself up off the mat and went on to vanquish its opponent, as well as advocates of greater peacetime preparedness and training, to avoid repeats in future wars, where the first battle might be the only bat-

tle.1 It also serves to reinforce the Army's emphasis on leadership, as one man, Maj. Gen. Lloyd R. Fredendall, has suffered the lion's share of the blame for the reverses, fitting neatly within a service narrative that prizes heroic combat leadership as an arbiter of battle. Focusing on American failure at Kasserine also helps the star of Fredendall's replacement, Maj. Gen. George S. Patton Jr., shine brighter by comparison, Patton's principal biographer, Martin Blumenson, has become Kasserine's preeminent chronicler. But Kasserine defies easy explanation. Extenuating factors degraded the II Corps' performance in the battle and deserve detailed analysis to examine how organizations function in successful operations

and how leaders handle the many challenges faced—not least among them personnel management—when things do not go according to plan.

# BACKGROUND: THE II CORPS

The U.S. Army II Corps' history dates back to the First World War when the corps was part of the British Third Army in the "Hundred Days" offensive that culminated in the breach of the German Hindenburg Line. This joint service is represented on the corps' insignia, an American eagle and a British lion flanking a roman numeral "II."

The II Corps, after serving as a National Guard headquarters during the interwar years, was reactivated by the

Dwight D. Eisenhower, shown here as a four-star general, stops for a noontime mess during an inspection tour in Tunisia in 1943.



War Department at Fort Jay in New York Harbor in August 1940. The corps' mission was commanding the divisions being mobilized to raise the Army's level of preparedness in light of the conflict then raging in Europe. The unit participated in the Carolina maneuvers in the fall of 1941, "during which the Corps, by now under command of [Maj. Gen.] Lloyd R. Fredendall, gained a reputation for able staff planning."2 During the maneuvers, Fredendall faced an almost identical scenario as the one the Allies would later see in Tunisia: a large, infantryheavy army (of which Fredendall was a part) advancing against a smaller but more heavily mechanized and therefore more agile foe, with his notional opposition then provided by the same 1st Armored Division later assigned to his command.

By virtue of its proximity to ports of embarkation, planners selected the II Corps, now under the command of Maj. Gen. Mark W. Clark, to be the first corps headquarters shipped overseas to command the American divisions slated for the buildup in the United Kingdom in preparation for the eventual cross-channel attack onto the European continent. Fredendall, disappointed not to be going overseas, took command of the newly formed XI Corps in Chicago. Realizing how disappointed Fredendall was, the Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, wrote to him explaining that the II Corps was destined for a special project which Clark had been instrumental in planning.3 Clark ascended to become the deputy to Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the commander of the North African Theater of Operations; Marshall objected to Clark's projected replacement, Maj. Gen. Russell P. Hartle, because the II Corps commander would lead the invasion forces destined for Oran, Morocco. Marshall offered Eisenhower the services of "practically anyone you name" from among the corps commanders currently in the states: Maj. Gens. William H. Simpson, Courtney H. Hodges, John P. Lucas, and Fredendall. From that list, Eisenhower selected Fredendall. It has been suggested that Marshall and Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, then commanding the



Army Ground Forces, pushed Fredendall on Eisenhower. But Fredendall's reputation, largely gained in training the 4th Infantry Division and in corps command in the Carolina maneuvers, likely tipped the scales.<sup>4</sup>

In the Second World War, the strength of the bond that formed between the British and their II Corps allies would be sorely tested when General Fredendall suffered a humiliating defeat that, after the war, he blamed on the commander of the British First Army, Lt. Gen. Kenneth A. N. Anderson. According to Fredendall, Anderson had micromanaged II Corps and repeatedly divided it into so many parts and dispersed it so widely that it was incapable of action, especially when facing the strong German counterattack at Kasserine.<sup>5</sup> After the war, even the British official history agreed, admitting that Fredendall's "freedom to act was in many ways restricted by 1st Army [sic]."6

Indeed, if there is anything to be learned about corps command and leadership from the II Corps, it is in managing relationships with senior and subordinate commanders. In addition to the tension between the corps and army commanders, serious rifts also developed between division and corps commanders, most notably between Fredendall and Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward, who commanded the 1st Armored Division. The dispute was mostly over the way Fredendall, at Anderson's direction, had dispersed and detached Ward's command, leaving him little more to command than a division headquarters with support units. This friction was exacerbated by supposedly neutral observers sent by Eisenhower, third parties who were themselves ambitious and anxious for a combat command. This led to an almost complete breakdown within II Corps and the eventual relief of both Fredendall and Ward.

## **OPERATION TORCH**

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill approved the Operation Torch landings in North Africa for November 1942, the II Corps, as the only corps headquarters then in the United Kingdom, became the planning organization for one of the three landings, designated the Center Task Force and destined for Oran. General Patton's Western Task Force sailed directly from the states for Morocco, while a British headquarters led the Eastern Task Force at Algiers.

At the same time, the II Corps underwent a series of levies on its personnel, with staff officers siphoned off to man Eisenhower's Allied Force head-quarters, including General Clark. As one historian of early mobilization efforts put it, "Expansion on such a scale entailed the cannibalization of the field-ready armies, corps, and divisions so laboriously built up in the course of the 1941 training and maneuvers program."

As a result, the II Corps staff had to be rebuilt under the new commander,

General Fredendall, who reported less than a month before the landings. Most of the staff replacements were new and all were inexperienced. The chief of staff, Col. John A. Dabney, was a 1926 graduate of the University of Kentucky Reserve Officers' Training Corps program and the G-3, Col. Robert A. Hewitt, was a 1932 graduate of West Point. The G-2, Col. Benjamin A. Dickson, also a West Point graduate, spent most of the interwar period as a reservist, and Fredendall's aide, Capt. James R. Webb, was a civilian the summer before. The staff became known as "Fredendall's kindergarten," and the corps commander himself remarked, "By God, I am going to war surrounded by children!"8 Despite this, Fredendall took over an advanced planning effort, and successfully directed the corps headquarters in the landings, functioning as an embarked Task Force headquarters aboard the command ship HMS Largs.

Center Task Force's objective was the city of Oran, which was defended by the Vichy French garrison. Two airfields just beyond the city, La Senia and Tafraoui, were scheduled for assault by an airborne battalion, the 2d Battalion of the 509th Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division, flying directly from the United Kingdom under the command of Lt. Col. Edson O. Raff. The airborne landings largely miscarried, due to the aircraft being scattered enroute and confusion over whether a "peace plan" (no French resistance, air-landed on the airfield) or "war plan" (active resistance, combat drop over the airfield)



and 18th Infantry Regiments of the 1st Infantry Division, backed by the remainder of CCB at Arzew, east of Oran. After establishing themselves ashore, both elements marched inland and assaulted the city from the rear. Despite some early setbacks, the landings achieved their objectives by the third day, enabling Fredendall and his staff to land and enter the city, with Fredendall riding in one of the first tanks. For the next two months the II Corps would command a rear area, feeding corps units into the fighting farther east in Tunisia and administering the Allied-controlled territory on behalf of the French.

Initially, American forces, especially those under General Patton in Morocco, were to watch Spanish Morocco and prepare to respond to any attempts to close the Strait of Gibraltar by Spain's ostensibly neutral, but in reality pro-Fascist, leader Francisco Franco, which would cripple the Allied logistic situation. But by early January, as more American units joined the fighting farther east in Tunisia, Eisenhower elected to send a corps headquarters forward to direct the growing number of American units assigned there. In Eisenhower's memoirs, he suggested that Patton would have been his first choice but, because most of the units had initially belonged to the II Corps and because Fredendall's staff was then over a thousand miles closer to the front than Patton's. the II Corps won the job. Patton was busy training U.S. units and planning for what would become the Operation Husky landings in Sicily—undertaken less than two months after the end of combat operations in Tunisia—but was bitter at being passed over for the combat command.9

### TUNISIA

Field Marshal Rommel (third from left) and members of his staff, c. 1943

Fredendall established his corps headquarters in a narrow canyon near the Algeria-Tunisia border, in what became known as "Speedy Valley" after the corps' radio call sign. In an effort to protect against frequent air attacks, Fredendall ordered two companies of engineers to blast tunnels deep into the canyon walls, which later led to charges that Fredendall lacked courage. Fredendall's aide, Captain Webb, offered a different interpretation, suggesting that Fredendall ordered the tunneling primarily to keep idle engineers busy, but that the new quarters would provide additional protection against the elements. The corps staff suffered terribly in poorly heated tents while

blasting was underway, with several, including Webb, contracting serious and debilitating illnesses during the coldest months of the year. American forces were operating at the end of a logistical shoestring, and quartermasters had shipped few winter supplies to counter the chilly days and snowy nights high in the Atlas Mountains, to what they assumed was a warm desert in Africa. Fredendall began rotating staff members through an advanced headquarters further south in Gafsa, in a broad valley reaching to the edge of the Sahara, in part to give his staff an opportunity to "thaw out" from the chill encountered in Speedy Valley.

The II Corps mission was to protect the right flank of the British First Army's line, facing the German and Italian forces defending Tunisia. At the same time as the TORCH landings, General Bernard Montgomery's British Eighth Army had defeated Field Marshal Rommel's forces at the Battle of El Alamein, beginning a three-

month-long pursuit that culminated in the capture of Tripoli in January 1943. The II Corps was to link up with the Eighth Army when it arrived on the Libya-Tunisia frontier and provide flank protection, but Fredendall hoped for a more active role, planning a series of probes in preparation for what he hoped would be a larger-scale offensive that would drive through to the coast, preventing Rommel from uniting with the Axis forces farther north in Tunisia. Eisenhower presented the plan, named Operation SATIN, at the Casablanca conference in January, but the combined chiefs of staff felt it was too ambitious and that the II Corps lacked the strength to hold what would be an exposed salient jutting into Axis lines.

As a result, the corps assumed a defensive mission with units widely scattered across a broad front. The Germans, demonstrating the advantages of an active defense, counterattacked at the weakest sector of the Allied lines,

where a poorly equipped French corps linked the main British forces in the north with the II Corps in the south. As a result of Allied advances at both Faid and Fondouk Pass in late January, General Anderson detached elements of the II Corps, including CCB of the 1st Armored Division to support the French and placed a second unit, Combat Command Romeo, in reserve to clear up any penetrations. By early February the II Corps controlled only two battalions of the 168th Infantry of the 34th Infantry Division as Anderson placed the other two regiments and the division headquarters in the French sector, along with Combat Command Alpha (CCA) of the 1st Armored Division and a French Division. All along the Allied line General Anderson had mixed units by type and nationality, complicating logistics and preventing the concentration of either a powerful striking force or, as Eisenhower particularly desired, a mobile reserve.

General Ward, in particular, resented having two-thirds of his division taken from him and having the defensive positions for the remainder dictated to him by corps headquarters. In a similar manner, General Anderson directed that two battalions of the 168th Infantry, of Maj. Gen. Charles W. Ryder's 34th Infantry Division, be posted on isolated hills in the rear of Faid Pass where they would be able to defend against weak German patrols. However, they were also at risk of being cut off and surrounded in the event of a strong thrust through the pass.<sup>10</sup> Both Ward and Ryder later blamed Fredendall for the dismemberment of their divisions, as the order came down bearing his name. At the very least, they felt he was guilty of insufficiently protesting the action to Anderson and, if necessary, the American theater commander. However, for Fredendall, the first choice risked precipitating another British-American row, about which Eisenhower had already counseled him. The latter required jumping the chain of command, which was also unlikely to bring about harmonious relations between the British and American commanders.





# THE BATTLE OF KASSERINE PASS

Unfortunately for the men of the 34th Infantry Division, their worst fears were confirmed when a German armored thrust broke through the Faid Pass on the morning of 14 February, surrounding the isolated positions that were too far apart for mutual support and brushing aside the armored units intended to link them together. Fredendall immediately ordered a counterattack to clear up the situation but, with only a tank battalion under his direct control, General Ward could do little against elements of two battle-experienced German armored divisions that outnumbered him two-to-one. Fredendall also asked for the release of Brig. Gen. Paul M. Robinette's experienced CCB from the British First Army but received only one battalion of tanks from General Anderson, who remained convinced that the German attack through the Faid Pass was only a diversion and that the main attack would come farther north in the French or British sectors.

Fredendall's staff had correctly divined the Germans' intentionscombining intelligence gleaned from aerial reconnaissance and radio intercepts—to place the bulk of the enemy armor opposite the II Corps. Unfortunately, Colonel Dickson, the II Corps G-2, had been unable to convince Anderson of the likelihood of this scenario during a lengthy meeting at the II Corps headquarters on 13 February. 11 Dickson's forceful arguments had no effect on Anderson, who emerged from their meeting saying, "Well, young man, at least I can't shake you," but later told Fredendall, "You have an alarmist and a pessimist for a G-2."12 Anderson and Eisenhower both tended to rely excessively on ULTRA intercepts, which had revealed an earlier plan for an attack in the north but had been superseded by events.<sup>13</sup> After the Battle of Kasserine Pass, Eisenhower asked for a replacement for his British intelligence chief, Brigadier Eric E. Mockler-Ferryman, belatedly realizing that he should have placed greater

trust in estimates from Fredendall's young but capable staff.

After meeting with Anderson and Eisenhower at the II Corps headquarters on the evening of 13 February, Fredendall left for Gafsa arriving around 0100 on 14 February. Rommel's twin thrust was set to jump off in just a few hours; the first through the more distant Faid Pass, blocked by elements of the 34th Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division sufficient to delay the Axis in that sector, and the second on Gafsa. the more critical area. As reports came in, including one confirming the German order of battle opposing him, Fredendall ordered the remainder of CCA, which had been blocking the road at Gafsa, to rejoin its parent command farther north. Without sufficient forces, Gafsa and the vital airfields at Thelepte would have to be abandoned, initiating a long overdue contraction of the II Corps' overextended front.

Having apprised Anderson of his estimate of the situation, Fredendall had no choice but to continue to defend his exposed position with the limited troops available. Rather than brood in his headquarters throughout the battle, as some historians have implied, Fredendall made several trips to the front. His first visit was on the night of 14 February to Gafsa in the south, the site of the main German attack, and to the defensive line in front of vital Allied airfields at Thelepte. The loss of Gafsa would open a shortcut to the Allied supply dumps at Tebessa through Bou Chebka, then held only by a French division and a few American Rangers. While the penetrations at Faid and Kasserine would attract the most attention, due to the heavy American losses there, the back door to Tebessa remained a critical vulnerability in the Allied defenses, and—largely as a result of his personal reconnaissance in that sector—Fredendall wisely gambled on leaving it only lightly defended in order to funnel reinforcements into the battles further east. After the loss of Gafsa and Thelepte, Fredendall actually shifted his headquarters forward, from Speedy Valley to an old

school at Le Kouif, centrally located to the fighting along the contracting front. This relocation facilitated another visit to the threatened area behind Kasserine, where Fredendall personally placed General Robinette's CCB in the positions from which it finally halted the German drive.<sup>14</sup>

Upon arriving back at Speedy Valley and hearing of the 1st Armored Division's repulse at Faid, Fredendall lobbied Anderson for the return of CCB to the 1st Armored so that Ward could make a stronger counterattack the next day and relieve the now isolated battalions of the 34th Infantry Division. Anderson refused, but did release one tank battalion, which would only be enough to replace Ward's losses thus far and was unlikely to rescue the situation. In fact, the piecemealing of units was a significant factor in the mismanagement of the entire Kasserine battle defeat and one of the principal lessons learned. The preeminent historian of Kasserine, Blumenson, pointed out that, in subsequent battles, "commanders decided to employ units as units instead of parceling them out in small segments," and future corps commanders, including Patton and Maj. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, with the theater commander's support, established that "the policy of [the] II Corps was to keep the division concentrated."15

Fredendall's aide, Captain Webb later related, "There was no sleep in Speedy Valley that night. Staff officers were going and coming in jeeps, checking personally on troop movements and visiting the command posts of the troops in position." With two widely dispersed threatened sectors, Fredendall remained in his central position to direct the withdrawal in the south. General Anderson ordered the withdrawal to take place over two nights, but Fredendall wisely amended it to just one given the speed of the German force's advance and the need to counter the attacks to the east. Webb continued, "Their chiefs, under the CG's direction, were planning a counterattack for the relief of the surrounded battalions. It was

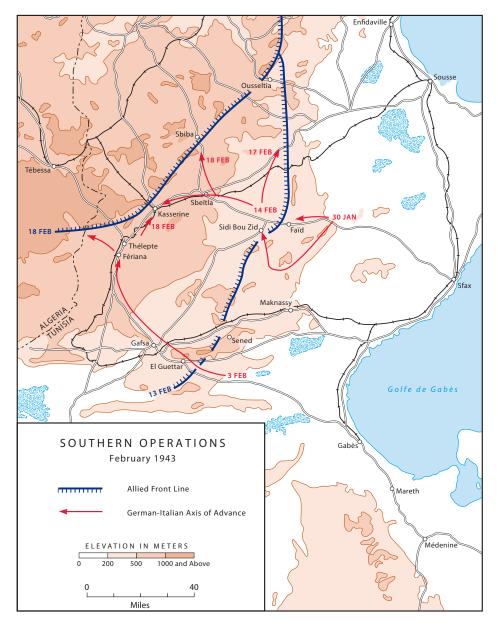
a forlorn hope, but along with the battalion of tanks from CCB had come an Army directive to restore the situation, so Corps was going to make the attempt."<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, the second attack by the 1st Armored Division was equally disastrous, resulting in the wrecking of the division and the loss of Sbeïtla, the main town between Faid and Kasserine Passes. The defeat also opened the road west to Tebessa and north to Sbiba, the right flank of the French sector, then held by elements of the 1st Infantry Division and new British reinforcements belatedly rushed south. As the Army's official history noted, "With the loss of Sbeïtla, the II Corps had

experienced the consequences of an overextended defense and a successful concentration of enemy force."17 The II Corps began hastily organizing a defense of Kasserine Pass but had only the shattered remnants of 1st Armored Division, plus one battalion of the 1st Infantry Division and a regiment of engineers. Fredendall rushed this stopgap force into the breach. Anderson also swung into action, pushing reinforcements to both Sbiba and Thala in the north. Fredendall's request for reinforcements also shook loose the divisional artillery of the 9th Infantry Division, then far to the rear in Algeria, which would have a decisive impact on the defense of Thala. However, at Kasserine there were simply too few Americans to hold the pass. The engineers and 1st Infantry Division troops, named "Stark Force," successfully delayed the Germans for two days at the pass, inflicting casualties and slowing the enemy's timetable. Though Rommel's forces would eventually push through the pass on the morning of 20 February, almost a full week had elapsed since the beginning of the offensive. The II Corps had covered the vital approaches into the Army's rear and bought time for reinforcements to reach the threatened area.

### HALTING THE BREAKTHROUGH

By 19 February, "General Fredendall's corps was split into three forces along the Western Dorsal with a fourth in a supporting position on the south flank and a fifth being brought into position during the following night."18 As the Germans broke through, the II Corps organized another defensive line at Djebel Hamra, with the remnants of the force from the pass stiffened by General Robinette's CCB. British forces backed by American artillery met the brunt of the thrust outside Thala and, despite heavy losses and being pushed back almost to the town itself, held the line there. Rommel was beginning to reach his culminating point and lacked the combat power to continue the offensive. In addition, Montgomery's lead elements were closing up to Rommel's blocking position in southern Tunisia, requiring the return of his mobile elements there. Believing he had achieved his objective of a spoiling attack that bought space and time in his rear area but frustrated that he was unable to inflict a larger defeat on the Allies, Rommel pulled back through the pass. The II Corps had rolled with the punch, suffering heavy casualties in the opening phases due to the piecemeal commitment of its assigned units and the overwhelming enemy force thrown against it. But, the corps had also prevented a larger disaster, protecting the more important airfields and supply base at Tebessa and preventing Rommel from rolling up the Allied lines to the north.



Most of the lost territory had been recovered by the end of the month, and the Allied strategic situation was none the worse for wear.

### **AFTERMATH**

Unfortunately for Fredendall, his corps had lost substantial numbers of men and materiel and temporarily given up important jumping-off positions. Before the battle was over the Allied command began searching for a place to lay the blame and for someone to accept accountability. General Anderson, the overall commander, had left the corps in an exposed position and ignored accurate intelligence that might have allowed it to pull back to more defensible positions with fewer losses. But Eisenhower was straining to establish positive relations between the coalition partners, and an American theater commander sacking a British army commander was unlikely to further those goals. Eisenhower did bring, in a prearranged move, General Sir Harold R. L. G. Alexander from Egypt and put him in command of the 18th Army Group, containing Anderson's First Army and Montgomery's Eighth Army. This removed the campaign from Anderson's direct control and, although he was allowed to finish out the battle in Tunisia, he never again received an important field command.

Within the II Corps, Fredendall's poor working relationships with his subordinates had consequences. General Ward, commanding the 1st Armored Division, had watched the Germans destroy his division piece by piece. Replacement M4 Sherman tanks arrived daily, but the veteran crews were gone. The losses undoubtedly had an effect on Ward, and Fredendall considered relieving him. Cabling Eisenhower on the evening of 19 February, he wrote, "Ward appears tired out and worried and has informed me that to bring new tanks in would be the same as turning them over to the Germans."19 While Ward's assessment may have been accurate, especially if the corps and army continued to commit his division piece-



A column of captured U.S. soldiers in Tunisia in early 1943

meal, his defeatism did not sit well with Fredendall. The message continued, "Under these circumstances do not think he should continue in command although he has done the best he could. Need someone with two fists immediately. Suggest Truscott."20 Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott Jr., who had commanded one of the task forces under Patton in Morocco, was then serving as commander of Eisenhower's forward command post at Constantine, Algeria. He was fully informed of the course of the battle and seemed disposed to commanding the 1st Armored Division.

Eisenhower had other ideas. Maj. Gen. Ernest M. Harmon, who graduated two years behind Eisenhower at West Point and commanded the 2d Armored Division in Morocco, was widely recognized as an expert on armored warfare. Eisenhower summoned him and, according to Harmon, told him to report to the II Corps headquarters where, based on his assessment of the situation, he was to relieve either Ward or

Fredendall. Harmon responded, "Well, make up your mind, Ike. I can't do both!"21 Despite chiding his subordinates for "spending too much time in their headquarters and not having sufficient situational awareness of what was transpiring at the front," Eisenhower, in this case, was apparently guilty of the same offense. Although reluctant to interfere in his British Army commander's force dispositions (he did later tell General Marshall that they "were not completely in accord with my instructions"), he was about to send a replacement officer to relieve either a division or corps commander, only he was unsure which.22 Harmon arrived after Fredendall had already positioned the units that would halt the enemy offensive, but the corps commander did hand him control of one of the two widely dispersed blocking forces the corps controlled, freeing Fredendall to monitor events on the opposite flank. Harmon eventually recommended Fredendall's relief, but when Eisenhower offered



General Patton watches American tanks advancing against Axis forces in Tunisia, 1943.

General Bradley, shown here shortly before arriving in North Africa, c. 1942

Harmon the job he demurred, realizing that it would be unethical to take the job of a man whose firing he had just recommended. On 6 March 1943, newly promoted Lt. Gen. George Patton succeeded Fredendall as the commander of the II Corps. When Patton finally decided to relieve Ward a month later, Harmon received command of the 1st Armored Division, then the only American armored division in action against the Germans.

During the pursuit phase of the battle, Eisenhower also sent General Bradley to visit the II Corps. Bradley had flown directly from northwest Florida—where his 28th Infantry Division had been undergoing amphibious training on the Gulf of Mexico's shores at Camp Gordon Johnston—with only a brief stopover in Washington, D.C., to get Marshall's appraisal of the situation. Bradley's assessment of Fredendall's leadership was disparaging. In A General's Life: An Autobiography (New York, 1983), Bradley relayed General Truscott's description of Fredendall as,

Small in stature, loud and rough in speech, he was outspoken in his opinions and critical of superiors and subordinates alike. He was inclined to jump at conclusions which were not always well founded. He rarely left his command post for personal reconnaissances and visits yet he was impatient with the recommendations of subordinates more familiar with the terrain and other conditions than he was. General Fredendall had no confidence in the French, no liking for the British in general and General Anderson in particular, and little more for some of his own subordinate commanders.23

Bradley added to Truscott's estimate, "His 'command post' was an embarrassment to every American soldier: a deep underground shelter dug or blasted by two hundred engineers in an almost inaccessible canyon far to the rear, near Tebessa. It gave the impression that, for all his bombast and bravado, Fredendall was lacking in personal courage."<sup>24</sup>

Truscott's assessment, due to his success during the war and long influence after, has been repeated almost verbatim by successive historians of Kasserine. Yet each of these charges, when viewed from Fredendall's perspective, has a logical explanation. Commanders frequently have to make decisions based on incomplete information. Given the dispersed nature of his units, he could not always wait for perfect information before acting. In the balance, his management of the battle was sound, as he correctly redeployed units to keep Rommel away from his biggest prize. His front stretched thin, limited personal reconnaissance, abysmal road network and undependable transportation, coupled with a strained communications network over unreliable radios, meant that trips to the extreme ends of his lines could put him out of touch with other parts of the battle for hours. Yet, he did make two personal reconnaissance missions to the front during the most critical phases of the battle, once at the opening to Gafsa and again at the conclusion to Djebel Hamra and Thala. He was correct to place no confidence in the demoralized and underequipped French, and Anderson's mismanagement, both in refusing to permit a tactical withdrawal and in withholding the units Fredendall needed to defend the overstretched front, was a contributing factor in the battle. Fredendall's row with Ward has acquired legendary status, but Patton himself fired Ward a month after taking command, suggesting that the disagreements between the two during the battle were not entirely Fredendall's fault. And, once his lines shifted, Fredendall abandoned his "underground bunker," just a few days into the battle and advanced his command post forward to a more central location.

Why would Bradley feel it necessary to engage in character assassination decades after the battle? Further evidence comes from Bradley's own memoir, where he reports that,

From Constantine, [Maj. Gen. Walter] Bedell Smith, my aides and I jeeped to Fredendall's new



A view of Bizerte Harbor, c. 1942–1943

II Corps headquarters at Djebel Kouif, about fifteen miles north of Tebessa. It was freezing cold in Tunisia, [the original justification for the underground headquarters] but Fredendall's reception was colder than the weather. He lived in a comfortable home and, by military custom, should have invited me to share it. Instead, I was banished to a shabby windowless "hotel" with no amenities, quarters unsuitable even for a second lieutenant."<sup>25</sup>

Bradley would have been wise to consider the "quarters" most second lieutenants then involved in the battle were inhabiting—a shallow, mud-filled hole, if they had time to scrape one out. Fredendall probably would not want a "spy," which Bradley freely admitted he was, snooping around his headquarters and certainly not sharing his quarters, denying him any sort of privacy. Before even leaving for Tunisia, Bradley was aware that "my mission did not endear me to the Commander of [the] II Corps," as Bradley would be

"regarded as an odious spy for Ike, carrying tales outside the chain of command. Any suggested corrections from a rank newcomer from an exalted rear-echelon headquarters would be bitterly resented and probably ignored or laughed at behind my back."<sup>26</sup>

While in Tunisia, Bradley also visited the 1st Armored Division, commanded by "Orlando Ward, my friend from West Point and my former boss on Marshall's secretariat," and shared notes with "my War College classmate" General Harmon, and "an old friend, [Maj. Gen.] Terry de la Mesa Allen [also a West Point graduate]," whom Bradley also found it necessary to relieve months later in Sicily while Allen was still commanding the 1st Infantry Division. On 5 March, when Eisenhower came to visit the II Corps to relieve Fredendall, Bradley was absent, visiting Maj. Gen. Manton S. Eddy's 9th Infantry Division and alleged that Fredendall, "discourteously had not informed me" of Eisenhower's visit. As a result, "after my useless two-hour jeep ride, I arrived back

at II Corps frozen to the marrow."27 Whether Fredendall's slight was real or perceived, it did not further endear him to Bradley. In a private conversation with Eisenhower, during which Bradley recommended Fredendall's relief, Bradley learned that he was to become the II Corps' deputy commander under Patton but would be promoted to corps command after a short time to free Patton up to resume his planning for Sicily. In essence, Bradley had just done what Harmon refused to do—recommend the relief of an officer so that he could move up and assume that position.

### FREDENDALL'S RELIEF

After ultimately deciding not to relieve Ward, Fredendall next found his head on the chopping block. Immediately after the battle, Eisenhower wired Fredendall, "This afternoon I sent you a telegram expressing my complete confidence in your leadership. I meant every word of it but we must not blind ourselves to the serious defects that exist in our training, and perhaps in certain instances, in our organization," though Eisenhower did admit that "I realize that no American division has yet had an opportunity to fight as a complete unit." A week later, Eisenhower reiterated, "There is no question at all in my mind of you having proved your right to command a separate and fairly large American force on the battlefield."28 This could have just been an example of Eisenhower trying to remain positive and offer encouragement to a subordinate, but it masked an underlying movement to engineer Fredendall's relief. Reports began trickling in, primarily from "ministers without portfolios," including Truscott and Harmon, of affairs at the II Corps headquarters. Truscott, for his part, reported discord between Fredendall and Anderson and between Fredendall and Ward, saying, "Between General Fredendall and General Ward there developed an antipathy most unusual in my experience. General Ward came to believe that General Fredendall knew nothing about the employment of armor and was motivated by personal animus in disregarding the division commander and his recommendations. General Fredendall, on the other hand, thought General Ward was incompetent and personally disloyal to him."<sup>29</sup> In the end, the inability to manage this personality conflict would cost both men their jobs.

On 4 March, Truscott spent the day with Eisenhower and his chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, discussing the II Corps and the upcoming campaign. Truscott later recalled that, "Asked for an opinion, I replied that General Fredendall had lost the confidence of his subordinates and that I did not believe the Corps would ever fight well under his command. I also believed that General Fredendall disliked and distrusted the British and would never get on well under British command. I recommended that General Eisenhower assign General Patton to the command."30 That day, Eisenhower wired Marshall, "In the past two days I have developed grave doubts about Fredendall in his future role . . . Fredendall is a good fighter, energetic and self-confident and I have encouraged him to the limit by the fullest expressions of confidence in his work. His difficulty is in handling personnel in which field he is in constant trouble."31 Upon hearing further doubts from both Generals Alexander and Harmon, Eisenhower decided to make the change, not due to Fredendall's performance in the last battle, but more from the way the battle had fractured relationships up and down the chain of command, destroying trust within the corps and threatening its utility in the important battles to come. The next day, 5 March, Patton replaced Fredendall in command of the II Corps and the following month, when Patton took charge of the Seventh Army for the invasion of Sicily, he rewarded Truscott by assigning him command of 3d Infantry Division, scheduled to lead that assault.

Patton marked his assumption of command with a series of orders that the troops described as "chickenshit"—wearing ties with combat uniforms and \$25 fines for not wearing

a helmet—a direct shot at Fredendall, who had been photographed during the battle wearing a knit "jeep cap" at his frosty headquarters. Patton also cleaned house on the II Corps staff. Maj. Gen. Hugh J. Gaffey, who would later command the 4th Armored Division under Patton in the Battle of the Bulge, replaced Colonel Dabney as chief of staff while Col. Kent C. Lambert temporarily took the G-3 job from Colonel Hewitt. Hewitt got his old job back a month later when Lambert took command of CCA in the 2d Armored Division. Colonel Dickson, saved by his astute judgment in forecasting the Axis attack, kept his G-2 post after several weeks of close supervision.

Not all of the changes were positive, though. After a period of good cooperation between the II Corps and the XII Air Support Command, which processed timely aerial reconnaissance requests for Dickson and thus enabling more accurate intelligence assessments, the air-ground relationship soured under Patton's leadership. According to Dickson, under Fredendall, the XII Air Support Command commander "[Brigadier] General Paul L. Williams and his staff lived with us and the most cordial relations had been maintained," but under Patton, the relationship deteriorated to the point that the two headquarters separated, which ran counter to the best practices at the time. Dickson reported, "it was more difficult for me to request our aerial photography and reconnaissance by telephone rather than to run next door with an overlay of the situation map. G-3, too, was getting even less results with his air support requests."32 The relationship declined to the point that Patton and Air Vice Marshal Arthur Coningham, commanding the Northwest African Tactical Air Force, eventually had an ugly exchange in their public situation reports, where Patton claimed he had not received any air support and Coningham replied by suggesting that the II Corps was not "battleworthy," resulting in embarrassment to both commands and frustrating Eisenhower's efforts at seamless Allied cooperation.

# THE II CORPS AND THE VICTORY IN TUNISIA

The biggest changes to the II Corps came in the way it was organized and how it fought. Gone were the days of piecemeal deployments along the front. With the threat of Spanish intervention now firmly in the rearview, units in Morocco and Algeria became available. The 9th Infantry Division's three infantry regiments followed its divisional artillery into the line, as did the remainder of 34th Infantry Division. The 34th now had the unenviable task of rebuilding its only combat-experienced infantry regiment, reduced in the battle to a single battalion, while "preparing the other two regiments for battle, a liability that would show in the coming campaign. The corps finally assembled with full divisions—both the 1st Infantry and the 1st Armored Divisions, the units credited with successfully repelling Rommel's final assault—now rebuilt with new equipment and intensive training of raw replacements by the experienced troops. With three full infantry divisions and one armored, the II Corps was now stronger than most U.S. corps would be for the duration of the war. In addition to its full complement, the corps also received a defensive front reduced in size with secure flanks and an offensive mission—driving forward toward the sea to threaten the Germans' vulnerable supply lines in their rear—at the same time Montgomery's Eighth Army opened an attack on the enemy's front. Despite a poor showing by the 34th Infantry Division at El Guettar, the corps performed well in March, rehabilitating itself sufficiently to free Patton to return to the Seventh Army and resume the planning for Operation Husky. This allowed his deputy corps commander, General Bradley, to take his turn at the wheel.

The attack in southern Tunisia saw the II Corps "elbowed out" of the Allied line. In order to be in on the final assault, Bradley successfully lobbied for a change of front, shifting the corps north to the extreme left of the Allied line. This put the corps up against difficult terrain and formidable defenses guarding the port of Bizerte, Tunisia's

German prisoners of war shown after

their surrender to American troops at the close of the Tunisian campaign, May 1943

the close of the Tunisian campaign, May 1943

May 1943

Within two weeks, American for had broken through and captured zerte, surprising the British, who to

German defenders stymied all three infantry divisions, resulting in Bradley calling a conference of his division commanders. Here, according to Colonel Dickson, Bradley's deft touch in managing his subordinates was on full display:

his armor in a breakthrough. Initially,

Bradley opened the conclave with a statement that we were behind schedule, losing our drive and sitting down. He asked what the division commanders proposed to do about it. He called on Generals Harmon (1st AD), Allen (1st ID), Ryder (34th ID) and Eddy (9th ID) in turn to state their plans. The natural rivalry between units took hold and each speaker tried to be bolder and more aggressive than his predecessor. Bradley dismissed them saying, "Gentlemen, I expect each of you to do exactly what you have said here."33

Within two weeks, American forces had broken through and captured Bizerte, surprising the British, who took the main prize of Tunis. Over 200,000 Axis prisoners went into massive Allied prisoner-of-war staging areas, depriving the enemy of much needed manpower and inflicting a serious psychological blow to the Axis cause. Two months later, the II Corps, still under Bradley's command, fought its way across Sicily, eventually jumping to the Italian mainland and closing the war at the foot of the Alps in the Po Valley.

General Marshall recalled Fredendall home to command the Second Army, a stateside training billet that would benefit from the general's reputation as a skilled instructor and the combat experience he had acquired in North Africa; he would never again hold a combat command. In the interest of promoting positive Allied relations and winning the war, Fredendall held his tongue until after his retirement in 1946. But two years later, unhappy with how he had become as-

sociated with the debacle at Kasserine, he wrote an article for the *Chicago Tribune* hoping to clear his name by pinning most of the blame on General Kenneth Anderson. "Gen. Anderson scattered my command from hell to breakfast over my 150-mile front. By direct orders he placed every one of my units, even down to the battalions and companies. He never permitted me to collect my armor into a powerful mobile striking force."<sup>34</sup>

The newspaper wrote Eisenhower asking him for his thoughts but he declined to comment, aware of the futility of refighting old battles. The episode perhaps speaks to Fredendall's character and his noted inability to establish positive working relationships. Despite retiring as a lieutenant general and having contributed to the ultimate Allied victory by training numerous combat divisions rotated through Second Army, he insisted on clearing his name and fighting the "mem-wars." Ward and Allen, his principal subordinates, recovered from their reliefs to command units late in the war—Ward with the 20th Armored Division and Allen with the "Timberwolves" of the 104th Infantry Division. Truscott and Harmon went on to successful corps command, while Patton, Bradley, and Clark all led armies in combat.

### ANALYSIS

Of the four men who commanded the II Corps in the ten months between July 1942, when serious planning for Operation Torch began, and May 1943, when the Axis surrender formally concluded the North African campaign, Fredendall led the corps the longest. He assumed command just over a month before the Torch landings in October 1942 and relinquished command to Patton after the Kasserine battle in March 1943. While Clark, Patton, and Bradley were all forceful personalities who enjoyed significant battlefield success throughout the war, Fredendall, despite effectively directing the landings at Oran, became tied to the failures at Kasserine, and his career along with the II Corps' reputation suffered accordingly.

Could one man alone be responsible for the failures of an organization that performed well in the early stages of, as well as after, his tenure in command? Certainly the U.S. Army, with its institutional focus on leadership as the arbiter of success and failure in battle, was inclined to think so. Certain internal Army biases might have been at play as well. Eisenhower, Bradley, Clark, and Patton all graduated from West Point; Fredendall failed out after his freshman year because of academic issues, yet he was later admitted to Massachusetts Institute of Technology, although he never graduated. Pinning the defeat at Kasserine solely on Fredendall, while highlighting the critical importance of combat leadership, also made it easy to gloss over other service failings, such as inadequate doctrine, inferior equipment, and insufficient training. Organizationally, purging Fredendall and some of his staff also made it easier to rehabilitate the vitally important corps, the only one in action against the European Axis at that time. While Fredendall's shortcomings as a commander—from poor working relationships with superiors and subordinates, to charges of a lack of personal courage—are apparently welldocumented, there were other factors that contributed to the II Corps losses at Kasserine. Certainly Fredendall's punishment, being "kicked upstairs" and given a third star, suggests that Eisenhower and Marshall thought so, especially when compared with their ruthless cashiering of failed division and corps commanders later in the war. It is worth examining exactly how the II Corps functioned in their first test against the Germans, as the conditions they experienced, in a novel theater with limited intelligence and a lack of experienced troops, are certain to be duplicated for future corps commanders and staff officers as they face an uncertain foe in an unknown place.

The II Corps' performance at Kasserine in February 1943 contrasts sharply with the Torch landings the previous November—also under Fredendall's command, albeit against a static and much less-capable French foe—and the final campaigns in

Tunisia. These three periods offer a constructive lens for assessing corps performance in combat: the planning and successful amphibious assault against a defended shore, one of the most difficult exercises in land warfare, the defensive position in what was supposed to be a quiet and certainly the secondary area of the front, and an aggressive drive against a weakened but still dangerous opponent resulting in the enemy's capitulation. Why was the II Corps successful in the bookend operations, but arguably a failure (though, it must be noted, Rommel's effort to seriously disrupt or delay the endgame in Tunisia did not succeed) in the middle one? Four factors stand out.

First, at both Oran and in the latter stages of the Tunisian campaign, the II Corps had an aggressive, offensive mission, attacking enemy positions which afforded it the element of surprise in choosing where and how to fight. At Kasserine, the II Corps ceded the initiative to one of the better tactical commanders of World War II, Rommel, who successfully rolled up the dispersed and isolated positions the II Corps had been charged with defending, but lacked adequate troops to do so successfully.35 According to one historian this proved a serious handicap. "For Americans who had been imbued with an aggressive and offensive notion during training, the defensive Battle of Kasserine Pass imposed a role for which they were psychologically ill equipped."36

Second, the enemy troops facing the Oran landings and the final battles in Tunisia were not the same as those faced at Kasserine in February. Weak Vichy French garrison troops did not conduct a proactive defense and likely saw their opponents as potential liberators. Likewise, the German garrison in April and May had begun to suffer from serious logistic shortages, brought about by a sustained naval and air campaign against vulnerable lines of communications across the Mediterranean. In contrast, the German force that hit the II Corps at Kasserine had been rebuilt behind the Mareth Line after a disastrous retreat across Libya, and

reinforced by additional units and equipment, including the new Tiger tank, rushed across the straits to Tunisia after TORCH. These enemy forces were probably near their peak in terms of strength, morale, and effectiveness.

Third, geography favored the II Corps in its first and third operations. The objectives were proximate and the battlespace easily contained with few opportunities for enemy flanking attacks. At Kasserine, the chessboard sprawled across hundreds of miles isolated by steep mountain ranges and connected by often impassible roads during the worst of the North African rainy season, making it difficult to shift meager forces to the many threatened points.

Finally, the II Corps controlled nearly full divisions with clear unity of command in the Oran and Bizerte operations, fighting with one infantry and most of an armored division (1st Infantry and 1st Armored Divisions) at Oran and with three full infantry and one armored divisions (1st, 9th, and 34th Infantry and 1st Armored Divisions) in March and April. In contrast, in February, Fredendall only commanded portions of the 1st (two regiments) and 34th (barely one regiment) Infantry and 1st Armored (two combat commands) Divisions, as his army commander, British General Anderson, detached significant elements of all three divisions to support French units occupying the seam between the American and British corps on the line in Tunisia. One American officer argued, "the generals of three nations had borrowed, divided, and commanded one another's troops until the troops were never quite certain who was commanding them."37 Historian Orr Kelly agreed, noting that much of the blame lay with "Anderson, who, in the opinion of many American officers, had botched things by micromanaging Fredendall and his American corps."38 Fredendall, not wishing to cede the initiative to the Germans, had squandered some of his strength in aggressive but counterproductive attacks, further weakening and dispersing his force.<sup>39</sup> While in no way excusing the II Corps' many failings in the Kasserine battle, these four factors—mission, enemy, terrain, and troops—as well as the corps commander's and staff's collective inability to effectively address them up the chain, must be considered in any appraisal of American combat effectiveness in the first battles of World War II.

# **CONCLUSION**

Given the weight of evidence marshaled against him by both his peers and posterity, it would seem that Fredendall's leadership deficiencies were a key component of the II Corps' performance at Kasserine Pass. Assigning primary importance to leadership masks other deficiencies, in corps dispositions, equipment, and training that Fredendall could do little to remedy in the short time

before the battle. Ultimately, all he could do was to respond to the situation as best he could. As Blumenson observed, "the underlying cause of the American failure was discrepancy in numbers between the Allies and the Axis."40 Rick Atkinson, author of an award-winning study of the Army in North Africa, wrote, "For years, Fredendall would be castigated for the poor American showing; like several of his subordinate commanders, he was overmatched."41 While the military response, given the resources available to him, was likely more than adequate, the way Fredendall managed the personal relationships, both with subordinates who had been left out to dry and superiors who were largely responsible for it, proved to be his, and the II Corps' undoing. In the end, he was unable to control much of what was happening around

Generals Eisenhower (*right*) and Patton confer at the beginning of the II Corps offensive in Tunisia, 16 March 1943.



him. The only thing he could control was how he reacted to it, and how he let that affect those who worked for him. And in that, history has found him wanting.

At the same time, an examination of the II Corps in the Tunisian battle reveals a larger degree of patronage and nepotism than is generally acknowledged in the senior ranks of the World War II officer corps. In an organization that was supposed to be a pure meritocracy, it is surprising how often connections, mentorsubordinate relationships, and "old school" ties played a role in hiring and firing decisions. While these relationships might be fairly easy to manage at lower levels, at echelons above brigade, officers have acquired both a wide reputation, as well as substantial networks both within and across branches, and hiring and firing decisions are likely to affect those well beyond the individual involved. As a result, well-placed mentors or subordinates can have an undue influence on personnel decisions, and this pernicious influence should be guarded against. While officers always have, and always will favor proven "known quantities" over the unknown in personnel decisions, the appearance of favoritism or fraternization can quickly erode trust within any organization, crippling its ability to accomplish the mission. While Eisenhower never reflected on it publically, personnel management was likely the most valuable lesson he learned in the North African campaign.



# NOTES

1. Indeed, this is the justification given by Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, *America's First Battles: 1776–1965* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986), which includes a chapter on Kasserine by Martin Blumenson, one of the preeminent historians of the Army in World War II.

- 2. U.S. Army II Corps, *II Corps: A Brief History* (Milan, Italy: Editoriale Domus, 1945), p. 7.
- 3. George Catlett Marshall, The Papers of George Catlett Marshall: "The Right Man for the Job," December 7, 1941–May 31, 1943, Vol. 3, (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 264.
  - 4. Ibid., p. 367.
- 5. John H. Thompson, "Kasserine Fiasco Laid to British," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 15 Feb 1948.
- 6. I. S. O. Playfair and C. J. C. Molony, The Mediterranean and Middle East, Vol. IV, The Destruction of the Axis Forces in Africa (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), p. 298.
- 7. Christopher Richard Gabel, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1992), p. 186.
- 8. Benjamin A. Dickson, "G-2 Journal, Algiers to the Elbe." Unpublished manuscript, Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.
- 9. Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), p. 274.
- 10. Thompson, "Kasserine Fiasco Laid to British." The story reports, "Two untried battalions of the 34th Infantry Division (a former National Guard Division of Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin men), and an artillery battalion were on isolated mountain peaks on the plain in front of Faid Pass. This [sic] was Anderson's direct orders."
- 11. Dickson would also correctly predict the German counterattack at El Guettar on 22 March 1943, giving Patton ample time to react. George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*, U.S. Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1991), p. 53.
- 12. Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa*, 1942–1943 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), p. 332.
  - 13. Ibid., p. 336.
- 14. James R. Webb, "Diary Covering the Activities of General Fredendall and Supporting Players, December '42–March '43," p. 6, James R. Webb Papers, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kans. (hereafter cited as Webb Diary).
- 15. Heller and Stofft, America's First Battles, p. 262; Howe, Northwest Africa, p. 627.
  - 16. Webb Diary.

- 17. Howe, Northwest Africa, p. 435.
- 18. Ibid., p. 443.
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  - 20. Ibid.
- 21. E. N. Harmon, *Combat Commander:* Autobiography of a Soldier (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 112; Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, p. 388.
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- 26. Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1941), p. 32; idem, *A General's Life*, p. 133.
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  - 29. Truscott, Command Missions, p. 145.
  - 30. Ibid., p. 173.
- 31. Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, p. 1007.
- 32. Dickson, "G–2 Journal, Algiers to the Elbe." p. 54.
  - 33. Ibid., p. 63.
- 34. Thompson, "Kasserine Fiasco Laid to British."
- 35. Heller and Stofft, America's First Battles, p. 247.
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  - 37. Atkinson, An Army at Dawn, p. 324.
- 38. Orr Kelly, Meeting the Fox: The Allied Invasion of Africa from Operation Torch to Kasserine Pass to Victory in Tunisia (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), p. 254.
- 39. Heller and Stofft, America's First Battles, pp. 244-46.
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  - 41. Atkinson, An Army at Dawn, p. 390.

# U.S. ARMY ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT

# A FORLORN HOPE

THE SWORD COMMEMORATING THE ARMY FLAG RAISING AT THE HALLS OF MONTEZUMA

### BY DIETER STENGER

The U.S. Army Center of Military History is the proud steward of the State of Iowa's presentation sword to Capt. Benjamin Stone Roberts for his gallantry as the commander of a "forlorn hope"—a sacrificial raiding party or a group of combatants taking part in an assault where casualties are expected to be high—during the Mexican War in 1847. The presentation of the sword commemorated merely one of seven acts of bravery in battle, as well as the service of a soldier who, by 1865, would ascend to the rank of brevet major general, U.S. Volunteers.

Benjamin Roberts, born on 18 November 1810, in Manchester, Vermont, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1835 and was commissioned a second lieutenant. After serving four years and resigning his commission in 1839 to become a civil engineer, he returned to the Army at the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846. Appointed by President James K. Polk as the ranking first lieutenant of the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen, Roberts commanded the advance guard of the Marines under Marine Corps Maj. Levi Twiggs and captured the city of Vera Cruz in March 1847. He later led the company that stormed the works at the Battle of Punte del Medio. Promoted to the rank of captain in February 1847, he then commanded a squadron of his regiment and stormed the main heights of Cerro Gordo in April. Roberts led the charge against San Juan de los Llanos and commanded the advanced guard in the Battle of Contreras, both in August. He led his company at the Battle of Churubusco, and then commanded a hand picked forlorn hope of marines from the brigade of Bvt. Maj. Gen. Persifor F. Smith, and the men succeeded in capturing Chapultepec on 13 September 1847. With 100 men from his regiment and 400 volunteers, Roberts routed the forces of Mexican Army General Antonio López de Santa Anna. During the capture of the Gareta of Belin, one of two gates to Mexico City, he led the advance of Brig. Gen. John A. Quitman's 4th Division that broke into the city on the morning of 14 September 1847. As the first officer to enter the city, General Quitman gave Roberts the honor of raising the American flag over the ancient Mexican palace of Montezuma, while Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott led the U.S. forces into the city. In November 1847, Roberts surprised and then defeated Generals Anastasio Torrejón and Joaquín Rea and 700 guerrillas at Tlascala, capturing their main supplies and weapons. In consideration of his services in General Scott's campaign, President Polk brevetted Roberts a major and a lieutenant colonel in the Regular Army. In 1849, the legislature of Iowa presented to Roberts the "thanks of the State, expressive of its appreciation of his services in the capture of the City of Mexico, and afterwards, by another resolution, bestowed upon him a sword of honor, presented by its Representatives in Congress at the Capitol in Washington."2

The Ames Manufacturing Company of Chicopee, Massachusetts, fabricated the sword, including the sterling silver grip of the hilt that is completely engraved. The cross-guard and knuckle bow of heavily gilt brass and gold plating is composed of three branches, completely covered on the outside surfaces in a wreath with an eagle above and curtains to either side. In the center of the escutcheon is the inscription, "PRESENTED BY the State of Iowa TO CAPT. B. S. ROBERTS for meritorious GALLANT service in Mexico." The scabbard is adorned with a large solid gold presentation plaque engraved with the special orders giving Roberts the honor of raising the American flag over the U.S. Capitol dome.

The presentation sword to Captain Roberts is stored in the climate-controlled Museum Support Center, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Dieter Stenger is the chief curator of arms and ordnance at the Museum Support Center, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

### NOTES

- 1. "Documents Regarding Cpt. Benjamin S. Roberts," Army Historical Collection Accountability System, Central Control No. 905844, CMH 2017.004.014 A, U.S. Army Center of Military History.
- 2. S. S. Howe, ed., "Biographical Sketch of Brigadier General Benjamin Stone Roberts," *The Annals of Iowa 1864*, Vol. 1, no. 5 (Iowa City: Iowa State Historical Society, 1864), pp. 200–206





# NMUSA FEATURE

# WITHIN THE WALLS

# The "Army Theater" Construction

# BY PATRICK R. JENNINGS

In 1888, long after the fighting of the American Civil War came to an end, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, the hero of Gettysburg and former governor of Maine, spoke to members of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS) as he nominated former U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes to be the group's commander in chief. Chamberlain, an educated man and a proponent of history, noted to his audience that, "Noble records that have been made are to be nobly kept," but more importantly, he added, "The power of noble deeds is to be preserved and passed on to the future." Chamberlain urged the MOLLUS members, most of them Civil War veterans, that their duty was not simply to record and collect their past, but to remember it and to teach it to future generations.

As work on the National Museum of the United States Army progresses, Army History will continue to provide status updates in future issues. Periodically during construction, the journal will focus on a special section or exhibit in the facility or part of the collection that will be on display.

One of the more remarkable features of the museum will be the state-of-the-art "Army Theater." It will offer an immersive cinematic experience that unfolds across a 300-degree screen, supplemented by rumbling seats, helicopter rotor wash, and full surround sound.<sup>2</sup> The theater, extending almost three stories high, seats 122 people and also is capable of showing first-run movies and the latest documentaries. It is equipped for public presentations that display a single largescreen or multiple smaller screens that can surround the audience.

The Army Theater will present museum visitors with an orientation film, Of Noble Deeds. The title is taken from Chamberlain's words and reflects his desire to preserve the Army's history and teach it to future generations. The movie highlights the meaning of service to one's country and sets the stage for the "Fighting for the Nation" galleries, six subgalleries that make up the museum's primary exhibit space. As the film navigates the Army's history using quotes, video clips, and historical photographs, it syncs historic and contemporary events with the core values of the American soldier: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. From the Battle of Bunker Hill to the war in Afghanistan, the movie will remind audiences that soldiers are the heart of the Army and will connect these soldiers' stories with the artifacts and art on display in the museum.

**Dr. Patrick R. Jennings** is the chief of Programs and Education at the National Museum of the United States Army.

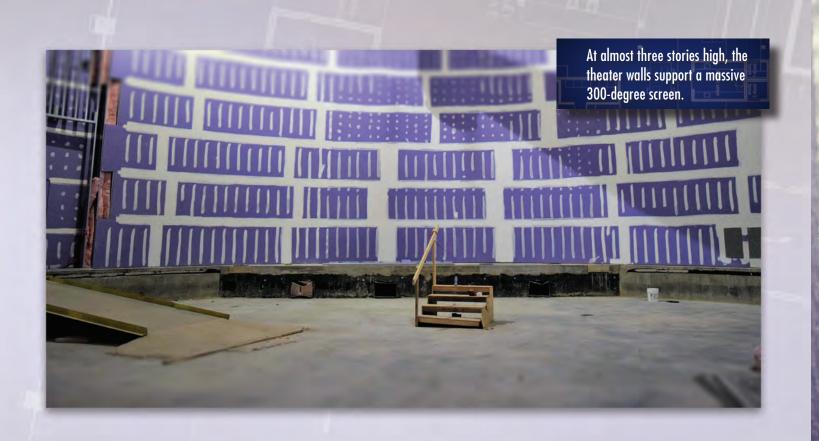
### NOTES

- 1. Joshua Chamberlain, Enclosure to a Letter to Rutherford B. Hayes, 2 Nov. 1888.
- 2. The film will be screened throughout the day during the museum's regular hours and selected showings that are less intense with far fewer immersive special effects—for viewers who are sensitive to loud noises, flashing lights, and sudden movements—will be offered each hour.















THE MARNE
15 JULY-6 AUGUST 1918

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capt. Jonathan D. Bratten is the command historian of the Maine Army National Guard. He enlisted in 2008, received his commission in 2011, and holds bachelor's and master's degrees in history. He has held leadership and staff positions from platoon through battalion level and served one deployment to Afghanistan, In 2016 Bratten served as a historical adviser for the Smithsonian Channel documentary Americans **Underground:** Secret Cities of World War One and also appeared in the piece. He has written for the Army Press, the Army Historical Foundation, the Washington Post, the Bangor Daily News, and the Association of the United States Army. Bratten also contributed a chapter to the anthology Strategy Strikes **Back: How Star Wars** Explains Modern Military Conflict (Lincoln, Neb., 2018). He lives in Portland, Maine.



# KNOW HOW OF FIGURE

The American Expeditionary Forces Incorporating Lessons Learned

# By Jonathan D. Bratten

n the early morning hours of 20 April 1918, select troops from German Army Group Gallwitz, under the overall command of General Max von Gallwitz, conducted final inspections of their equipment before setting off in dense fog for their jumping-off points. They picked up pre-staged explosives, grenades, and rolls of white tape to mark the spots where they planned to blow holes in the barbed wire barricades. At precisely 0300, German batteries of all calibers unleashed a punishing barrage on the American lines in the Toul sector in northeastern France. Their objective: isolate the village of Seicheprey, pummel its occupants into a stupor, and allow for the infantry to scoop

up the remaining Allied troops. The defenders, American soldiers with the 102d Infantry Regiment of the 26th Division, were indeed stunned but only momentarily. Seicheprey erupted into a hellish nightmare, with hand-to-hand fighting all around. It took two days for the 26th to retake Seicheprey, at the cost of hundreds of casualties—including about one hundred men who were taken prisoner and paraded by the Germans as part of a propaganda campaign. For the Americans, it was a rude awakening to a brutal new type of warfare, and it would be their baptism by fire.

The spring of 1918 was a heady time for the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in France. Four U.S. combat divisions were completing various stages of their training: the 1st and 2d Divisions, both Regular Army units, and the National Guard's 26th and 42d Divisions. There were milestones aplenty in the early days: first shots, first raids, and first casualties. April saw the 26th Division tangle with the best of the German Army's assault forces at Seicheprey. The 1st Division was fully engaged on the first American offensive, taking and holding Cantigny in May. In June the 2d Division halted the Germans at Belleau Wood, and in July all divisions were on the offensive until the end of the war.

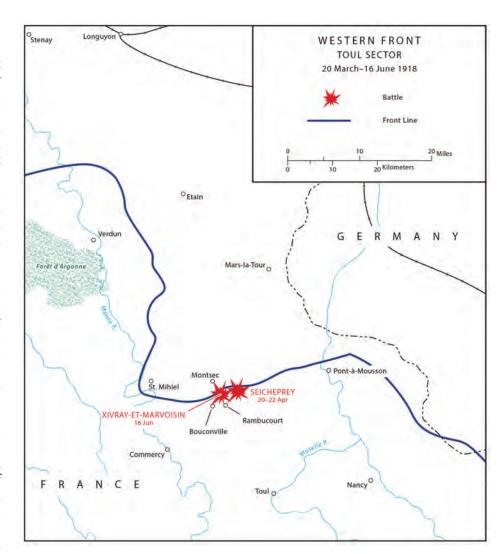
But absent from those "firsts" is one engagement that demonstrated not only how well the Americans could fight, but how quickly they learned—both from their French allies and from

their German adversaries. On 16 June, the Germans attempted another assault like the one at Seicheprey—but this time against the 103d U.S. Infantry in the town of Xivray. However, in this instance they met with absolute disaster because the U.S. troops had learned how to fight in a modern war. A close study of the engagement demonstrates that many of the principles the Army uses today—mission command, defense in depth, standard operating procedures—all contributed to defeating a superior force of veteran German troops.

Xivray is a small town in the Lorraine region of France, just down the road from Seicheprey, and both villages were pounded into rubble during the war. In 1914, the German advance in this sector had driven French forces so far west that the German lines protruded like a spearhead into France. The front later stabilized, and this area became known as the St. Mihiel salient. The Toul sector was on the southeastern edge of the salient, where the Germans maintained a strong presence along the heights of the Meuse, threatening Verdun and Soissons. On 3 April 1918 the 26th Division moved into the sector, relieving the 1st Division and one French division. Under the overall command of Maj. Gen. Fénelon F. G. Passaga's 32d French Army Corps, the 26th Division would take over the defense of the entire sector.3

The 26th, nicknamed the "Yankee Division," was composed of National Guard units from the New England states. Of the division's four infantry regiments, two—the 101st and 104th—were from Massachusetts, the 102d came from Connecticut, and the 103d hailed from Maine and New Hampshire. The division had spent February and March on the front at Chemin des Dames. The Toul sector was their next test before they were ready for offensive combat.

The 103d Infantry, commanded by Col. Frank M. Hume, a postmaster before the war, took up its first position with the wood of Bois Brule—literally, "the burnt woods"—on its left and the village of Seicheprey on the right.<sup>4</sup> The American front lines ran along a





French residents fleeing German troops during the Axis advance, May 1918

ridge that dipped down into swampy areas near Xivray and its twin town of Marvoisin, where small ponds had developed. The main front was entered through numerous shallow ravines, which offered cover and concealment to potential attacking enemy forces. The trenches had degraded into muddy quagmires because of the low ground and the incessant rain, and the sides had collapsed from continuous artillery bombardment. Dugouts were in poor shape as well, meaning that the men stationed in forward positions could get little in the way of rest.5 Xivray was connected to Marvoisin, far forward of the main lines, by one trench, with a communication trench running toward the rear. From Xivray, the trench line ran parallel to the small stream Rupt de Mad, angling back toward the town of Bouconville. Halfway from Xivray to Bouconville were two small rises, both filled with dugouts to make them strong points.<sup>6</sup> Commanding the 1st Battalion, 103d Infantry, Capt. James Hanson noted in a letter to his wife, "Somehow this sector worries me."7

Opposite the 103d's new position lay the German main line of trenches some only one hundred meters away. Above these lines rose the dominating height of Montsec. The Germans had turned this hill into a fortress and from its top, they had a clear line of sight all the way across the 26th Division's lines. Soldiers felt as if Montsec was always there looking down on them no matter where they were.8 Behind Montsec were wooded areas where the Germans could move their troops and hide artillery batteries from the French and Americans.9 German observation balloons and aircraft routinely went up around Montsec, so Allied movements in the daytime quickly drew a deadly barrage from German batteries. 10 The 26th's intelligence estimated that the unit received an average of 1,300 German artillery rounds every day they occupied the Toul sector.11 Consequently, the Americans conducted resupply operations, defensive position construction, and patrolling missions during the hours of darkness.

Across the murky expanse of noman's-land, the Germans of the 5th

Landwehr Division were intensely interested in these newcomers to the war. The *5th Landwehr*, used primarily as a defensive unit, had occupied this position since the initial invasion in 1914–1915. By the time the Americans arrived in the sector, the 5th Landwehr had taken only light casualties and was well accustomed to defensive warfare. Rated by AEF intelligence as a fourthclass division with "no initiative or capacity for offensive operation," the 5th Landwehr would nevertheless show that they were skilled adversaries in positional warfare.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it was not just the 5th Landwehr with which the Americans had to contend. but select German assault battalions that specialized in raids as well.

At the time, the best way to gain intelligence on opposing units was to

conduct raids and capture prisoners. In April, the Germans probed the 104th Infantry at Apremont and the 102d Infantry at Seicheprey, gaining prisoners from both units.<sup>13</sup> On 27 May they raided the 101st Infantry's position at Flirey. They were forced back, but still took a few captives.<sup>14</sup> All that remained was to test the 103d Infantry around Xivray, and the *5th Landwehr* would have gained valuable intelligence on all the infantry regiments in the 26th Division.

The 103d Infantry was not idle. They participated—albeit in a minor way—in the action at Apremont and Bois Brule in April and had been active in patrolling their front lines. Enemy artillery fire, sniping, and the weather proved to be the most trying for the men. Pvt. Charles Dubuque of

Pvt. Samuel J. Dana, assigned to Company I, 103d Infantry, shown here after being wounded in action at Xivray, France, on 16 June 1918. Dana was one of nine Passamaquoddy Indians who served with the 103d in World War I.

Irvin E. Doane, shown here as a captain, c. 1919







Col. Frank M. Hume, commander of the 103d Infantry

Company I wrote home to his family in April describing life in the trenches: "It rained for five days and five nights steady, and of all the water in France, we had the majority in our trenches. We were covered with mud from the top of our helmet to the bottom of our shoes, and it would run off our overcoats or slickers just like water." <sup>15</sup>

On 13 June the 103d changed its troop disposition around Xivrayet-Marvoisin. They evacuated their frontline trenches in position 1, about 100 yards to the front of the town in an exposed position. The platoons pulled back to the 1 Bis position, halfway between the Rupt de Mad and Xivray, where they would be less vulnerable to being cut off and captured.16 Only Companies E, I, and L were represented on the front lines around Xivray-et-Marvoisin, with the balance of these units kept in support in the towns of Bouconville and Rambucourt—both a few kilometers behind Xivray. As was the regiment's standard operating procedure, each company held two platoons forward and two platoons in support. This permitted an elastic defense in depth with squads arrayed similarly.

The 103d Infantry maintained small outposts in Marvoisin because



Wartime view from the top of Montsec with arrows pointing to barbed-wire barriers, 1918

the town was too far forward to risk exposing a larger force, but it could not be left completely undefended.17 Hotchkiss machine guns from Company D, 103d Machine Gun Battalion, bolstered the infantry positions along the line, built into strong points.18 All told, approximately 225 U.S. soldiers occupied the 1 Bis positions and outposts around the two towns.<sup>19</sup> Field guns of the 51st Field Artillery Brigade, which could deliver 75-mm. and 155-mm. shells on enemy targets with one call from a forward observer, supported the infantry. The men in the trenches badly needed this firepower; it took a minimum of thirty minutes for reinforcements to arrive if they were attacked.

From Montsec, the Germans had ample opportunity to observe the movement of American troops around Xivray. German patrols checking the American trenches in front of Xivray found them vacant. It was here that they would strike the 103d. The main body of the strike force was com-

A U.S. Army major rides in the basket of an observation balloon near the front lines in northeastern France, June 1918.



posed of 300 shock troops from the 36th Landwehr Regiment of the 5th Landwehr Division. The assault force was composed of eighty storm troopers from Sturmbataillon 14 who were moved into the area prior to the attack. These select veteran troops traveled around the Western Front conducting raids. They were noted for their excellent infiltration tactics and the ferocity of their attacks. Most preferred to carry light machine guns rather than rifles, and also carried bags of hand grenades. Rounding out the strike force were thirty to forty troops from *Pionier Kompany 16*, approximately 100 from the 22d Bavarian Reserve Regiment, and twenty flammenwerfer (flame throwers).<sup>20</sup> The operation, with a total strength of 500–600 men, was named Brotausgabe (Bread Ration).<sup>21</sup> The troops rehearsed for the assault for three days, utilizing flammenwerfer, MP18 light machine guns, and MG08 heavy machine guns. Rehearsals were conducted at full scale, out of sight of U.S. lines. On the final day they held one last full dress rehearsal, complete with smoke to provide a realistic depiction of the imminent battle.<sup>22</sup>

For artillery support, the Germans counted on the fire of approximately fifteen batteries in the vicinity, as well as two long-range railroad guns firing massive 210-mm. shells.<sup>23</sup> Observation of artillery fire was obtained through positions on Montsec and aerial flyovers. Lt. Frank Burbank, commander of Company C, 103d Infantry, wrote in frustration, "Enemy planes do about as they wish over this sector."<sup>24</sup>

On the night of 15 June, the German assault force, augmented by stretcher bearers and other support personnel, moved into the area opposite Xivray on trucks and then advanced on foot to their various points of departure, picking up explosive charges, wire cutters, and marking tape along the way. The assault force split into three elements at the jumping-off point. The first, containing the storm battalion, most of the pioneers, and two groups of infantry, was to attack Xivray from the west; the second, consisting mostly of 36th Landwehr soldiers, was to bypass the village from the west, circle around, and attack from the south; the third, also primarily *36th Landwehr* troops, would assault from the east, catching the 103d Infantry in a pincer movement.<sup>25</sup>

At 0315 on 16 June, U.S. field artillery observers on night watch with the 101st Field Artillery reported what appeared to be a working party northwest of Xivray-et-Marvoisin. The battery called down to the 103d Infantry's headquarters, which reported that there were no working parties out. The commander of the 101st Field Artillery, Col. John H. Sherburne, had made it clear to his commanders that they were to exercise disciplined initiative in the absence of direct orders. With German movement visible, the battery opened up with preregistered fire from their 75-mm. guns.<sup>26</sup> They caught the first concentrations of German troops assembling for the assault.

At 0320, the German batteries opened up—early, because of the American shelling—focusing on the forward U.S. positions, striking lines of communications, and hitting both Bouconville and Rambucourt. From the placement of German fire, it was evident that they knew where all the U.S. troops were positioned. High explosives, shrapnel, and gas targeted the American front lines, as well as battery positions, which noted that their positions were "shelled very heavily." But this did little to cause the U.S. artillery fire to slacken.<sup>27</sup>

For the infantry, however, the barrage was another story. The outposts in Marvoisin and the communications trench near Xivray fared poorly. In fact, of the twenty-eight fatalities that the 103d Infantry's regimental history lists from 16 June, all but seven were from shell fire. Several sources from both within the division and without attest that this was the most severe bombardment received by U.S. troops to that date.<sup>28</sup> Whether true or not, this assertion lends credence to the ferocity of the attack. "It can be stated with authority that it was the heaviest barrage the Germans put over while the Americans occupied the Toul sector," wrote a soldier from the 29th Engineers after the war. The German 210mm. howitzers targeted Rambucourt, the massive shells caving in dugouts

and destroying buildings.<sup>29</sup> Enemy fire was most destructive around Marvoisin, causing the outposts and machine gun positions which had no dugouts to shelter in to suffer greatly.<sup>30</sup>

Almost immediately the barrage cut the communication lines from the 2d and 3d Battalions' headquarters to their forward companies, necessitating all communication to be carried by runners.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the artillery fire, at 0330 German planes bombed Boucq, where the 26th Division headquarters was located, as well as Roy-au-Meix and Jouysous-les-Côtes, where both infantry brigades had their headquarters.<sup>32</sup> The fire raged along the whole front line; several artillery rounds struck the field kitchen of Company E, destroying it completely.<sup>33</sup>At the beginning of the bombardment, Cpl. Clarence Dunlap of Company E sent one man from his squad out to an advanced listening post to keep an eye on routes the Germans might use to infiltrate. As the barrage increased in intensity, Dunlap left cover and crawled out to join his man in the listening post so that he would not be alone and fearful. Both men were wounded, and Dunlap died of his wounds the following day.34 In the same company, Cpl. Ralph Merrow was struck by shrapnel and lost consciousness as he was tending to the wounds of a comrade. Sgt. Harold McElhiney's ammunition belt was struck by a fragment of hot shrapnel, causing his hand grenades and ammunition clips to explode—killing him instantly. Shell splinters also struck Sgt. Elwood Allen in the head, killing him as well.<sup>35</sup>

The preliminary enemy barrage lasted from twenty to thirty minutes, which was longer than the ten minutes initially allotted by German planners, undoubtedly because of the swift response of American gunners. At 0355, gas rockets were spotted coming from the German lines, sent up by the German infantry. This was supposed to be the signal for the German artillery to open fire, prisoners later stated, but the alertness of U.S. observers had caused the Germans to open fire early. At 0430, U.S. infantry in Xivray called for an artillery barrage to their



Soldiers with the 101st Field Artillery fire an antiaircraft machine gun at a German observation plane in Plateau Chemin des Dames, France, 5 March 1918.

front, an order possibly called in by Lt. William B. George, a forward observer with the 102d Field Artillery. His Distinguished Service Cross citation states that, "During a violent bombardment, when the roads were being swept by heavy shell fire, Lieutenant George exposed himself to enemy fire for the purpose of obtaining the desired information."37 Regardless of who called it in, the American barrage caught the attacking German infantry in the open, disrupting and checking their advance at the outset. At the same time, the twelve Hotchkiss machine guns from Company D of the 103d Machine Gun Battalion began laying down suppressive fire on their fronts.<sup>38</sup>

The three German columns pressed forward to their attacks. Coming out of the early morning mist, the Germans struck American outposts in Xivray and Marvoisin and the communication trench between the towns. They were surprised by the American machine gunners who had stuck to their positions through the barrage and now cut into the attacking columns.<sup>39</sup>

In the northwest corner of Marvoisin, a machine gun emplacement from Company D, 103d Machine Gun Battalion, was manned by Cpl. Donald F. Peck and Pvts. John Flynn, Ben Parker, Alex Robertson, and Newport Wycoff. The attacking Germans from the 36th Landwehr Regiment placed a machine gun on a nearby knoll and fired on this position. Eventually only Flynn and Wycoff remained unhurt.40 Wycoff suddenly dropped, shot through the thighs, and Flynn was left working the gun until it jammed. Wycoff urged Flynn to leave and get help. Flynn ran back through Marvoisin and found Lt. Roger Williams, the commander of Company I, 103d Infantry, in the communications trench. Flynn informed Williams that the Germans were on the edge of the town.41

Lieutenant Williams assessed the situation with the commander of Company L, Lt. Irvin E. Doane. The two had no time to wait for orders from their battalion commanders and agreed to carry out an automatic counterattack, a tactic that had been devised by the

French and implemented by American forces. This maneuver required that the reserve be brought forward from Bouconville. However, shells were still falling all around their position and all the communication lines had been cut during the German barrage. With no other options, Doane ran back through the curtain of German shells to get the reserve platoon.<sup>42</sup>

At 0555, runners from Company I reported to the regimental command post that Germans were spotted entering Xivray. This was the first enemy column, made up of the deadly Sturmtruppen. Opposite them were two platoons of infantry from Company I that had hunkered down in the communications trench between Xivray and Marvoison during the bombardment, but remained in place to stop any attackers. As the barrage shifted to the right, the infantrymen spotted the Germans coming through a break in the wire and moving to the left. The infantrymen opened fire with their rifles at any targets they could see. 43 A German machine gun placed nearby

began spraying the trench and pinning down the men. 44 Pvt. Charles Lola defended his advance post with tenacity before being killed by machine gun fire, the first Passamaquoddy Indian to be killed in World War I. He would be posthumously awarded the French Croix de Guerre. Pvt. Samuel J. Dana, also a Passamaquoddy, was seriously wounded. 45

Also in Company I was Pvt. Amedee Deschaines, who carried the muchmaligned Chauchat automatic rifle. From his position within the trench he could not see the enemy, nor could he support his weapon on the slippery mud of the trench lip. Frustrated, Deschaines climbed up on top of the edge of the trench, fully exposing himself to the enemy. Manhandling the Chauchat to his shoulder, he proceeded to engage the column of Sturmtruppen with accurate and deadly fire while his comrades tossed him fresh magazines of ammunition every time he ran out. In total he fired forty-two magazines, each one holding twenty rounds.46 Emboldened by his bravery, his fellow soldiers crawled out of the trench and began engaging the Germans with rifles and grenades. This sustained volume of fire broke the German assault and they retreated back into Xivray. Deschaines received the Croix de Guerre on 9 November 1918, a month after he had been killed in a gas attack.47

The third enemy column, composed of men from the 36th Landwehr Regiment, moved around Xivray to the left attempting to get to Bouconville to cut off the U.S. troops in Xivray. They were confronted by Pvt. George F. Foster of Company D, 103d Machine Gun Battalion, the only unwounded man of his machine gun team after the German bombardment. He opened on the enemy when they were within range, cutting down dozens of German soldiers and blunting their attack. Additional soldiers rallied around his position and formed a new machine gun crew. His actions single-handedly stopped the envelopment of U.S. lines around Bouconville.48

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Williams detached a squad of men to return with Private Flynn to retake his gun on the right flank. The squad followed the trench back to the town to try to flank the Germans, only to discover that the Germans had moved to a position directly adjacent to the trench. The surprised doughboys emerged to find themselves right on top of the unsuspecting Germans, who took to their heels. The Americans shot several, retook Flynn's gun, and captured the German gun that had originally targeted him.<sup>49</sup>

By this time Lieutenant Doane was returning from Bouconville with the reserves accompanied by Lt. Clinton V. Pickering from Company E. As they were staging the reserve for the counterattack, Doane spotted a small party of Germans in the open, approximately 250–300 meters away. The lieutenants, with six volunteers, charged the enemy party and scattered it, shooting several of them. The Germans had been carrying a litter with a wounded German officer on it and they abandoned him to the Americans. They also left Pvt. Hamlin from Company L, who was wounded, and would have been the only prisoner taken from the 103d in this action. The German prisoner, a lieutenant, was irate, "Your men don't know how to fight," he protested to Doane. "They had no business to be where I was; they had come through a German barrage to get there and they might have been wiped out."50

Having checked the advance of the three German assault columns. the Americans counterattacked and pushed into Xivray. The fighting in some cases was hand-to-hand. Sgt. Vern C. Boutilier of Company L caught a team of enemy soldiers in the intersection of the communication trench and the 1 Bis position and attempted to engage them with his Chauchat, which jammed. Undeterred, he dropped his weapon, drew his bayonet, and charged the enemy, scattering the group and capturing their machine gun. With this he held his position until the rest of his platoon caught up to him. Lieutenant Williams spotted three German soldiers in the ruined streets, one of whom was carrying a *flammenwerfer*. Firing on them with his pistol, his rounds ignited the flamethrower's propellant,

which exploded, killing the trio.<sup>51</sup> The Americans cleared each building with grenades, bayonets, and pistols until they had regained the forward edge of Xivray.

At 0723, artillery observers reported to Headquarters, 103d Infantry, that "the Boche [German troops] were leaving Xivray, carrying stretchers." The artillery immediately laid down a barrage to catch them encumbered and in the open.<sup>52</sup> It was this barrage that an American soldier commented to a reporter after the fight, "We would have driven them clear to the Rhine if it hadn't been for our own barrage. But," he added retrospectively, "it got them."53 Thirty minutes later, the observers reported the last of the Germans withdrawing from Xivray. At the same time, the regimental headquarters began receiving reports from the line battalions and companies. Because the first German barrage had knocked out telephone communications, updates to regimental headquarters had been slow.<sup>54</sup>

Headquarters listed their first direct report from Xivray at 0830, "Trenches and posts knocked in—several dugouts stoven in—will put men in good ones—have breakfasted them—will maintain daytime observation posts—Boche Red Cross men are carrying back the wounded now—they are pretty busy." It took until 1230 to receive a message from the company commander in Xivray, Lieutenant Williams.

Have not at any time been out of Xivray except in front—we had not information of box barrage in time to use it [i.e., to use it to pursue the enemy with more than a few soldiers] —we got many Boche as they tried to come in but none entered our line—a big group came up Bouconville road and set up their machine gun, but we handled them and have captured two of their guns—my men are now searching for wounded . . . Boche Red Cross have carried back many wounded to Maison Blanche. 55

Two hours after the attack ended, the Germans unleashed a furious bom-

bardment on the frontline positions, Boucq, and the surrounding towns. Apparently frustrated at having come away empty-handed, the Germans were intent on punishing the Americans. Xivray was hit with more high explosive and gas. While Pvt. Howard Crosby and a lieutenant from the 103d's Machine Gun Company were "making a reconnoiter of our new positions . . . a high explosive landed near us, knocking me out and covering us both with dirt. While unconscious, several gas shells exploded nearby and I inhaled considerable gas. The next thing that I remember was coming to in the 101st Field Hospital in Toul, on the morning of the 17th."56 Boucq was shelled so hard that the 26th Division headquarters was forced to displace to Trondes some four kilometers away.<sup>57</sup> As the artillery rounds were dropping in Boucq, a doughboy was standing near a mule that took a direct hit from a shell, blowing it to bits. A YMCA man rushed to help the soldier up, asking if he was hurt. "Hell no," replied the shaken soldier, "but you ought to see that mule."58

As was customary at the time, Allied newspapers exaggerated German losses. The supplemental regimental

report filed on 23 June stated that the 103d had buried forty-seven dead German soldiers to that point, and could see six bodies in their immediate front, with many more in the tall grass in no-man's-land, but added, "We have made no effort to bury these as it would unduly expose our men."59 Estimates of German losses run from the fifty-three killed reported above to a possible seventy. Hundreds were wounded by American artillery and machine gun fire. The 103d also reported taking eleven prisoners some reports state ten, and others thirteen—including one officer, some of whom were wounded. The regiment captured five MG08 machine guns, recaptured one Hotchkiss machine gun (Private Flynn's), three flamethrowers, one smoke producer, one pair of wire cutters, and "a quantity of small arms, small arm [sic] ammunition and pioneer equipment."60

Losses within the 103d Infantry from this action were twenty-eight killed, thirty-six seriously wounded, sixty slightly wounded, and forty-seven gassed. The 103d Machine Gun Battalion suffered two killed and eleven seriously wounded. The majority of the wounds and deaths were from the

artillery fire. 61 Casualties continued for three days after the engagement due to the sustained artillery fire.

The Allied press took hold of the engagement at Xivray and soon headlines proclaiming a new U.S. victory raced around the world. Publicly, the Germans did not have much to say about the affair. The Army Group Gallwitz report of 16 June 1918 noted that, "Between the Meuse and the Moselle we inflicted losses on the American by an attack on both sides of Xivray and destroyed parts of their positions."62 However, their internal after action review was vastly different. Filed on 22 June, the report openly stated, "It was again proven that the American Infantry employed on the Western Theater is an adversary that battles well in close fighting and must not be undervalued. The Americans are masters in employing machine guns." The report went on to say that two full Sturmabteilung (assault detachments) were annihilated from the American machine guns. In a worried tone, the report lays out that American defensive tactics have come to resemble those of the Germans themselves. 63 It was a sign that the AEF was learning. Yet there was no mention of prisoners;

U.S. soldiers don their masks during a gas alarm in the St. Mihiel Salient, 30 April 1918.





Soldiers with the 2d Division drive to a rest camp during a relief from the front line in northeastern France, 17 June 1918.

taking prisoners was something that the German shock troops expected. But at Xivray, the 103d Infantry denied them their prize, and is known for "never having had a man captured while holding a defensive sector."

Commendations were quick to come down for the 103d Infantry and its supporting units at Xivray. Letters from the French Corps and Army commanders arrived, followed by a short missive from General John J. Pershing, "I am directed by the commander-in-chief to inform you that he has noted with sincere appreciation the excellent work of the 103d Regiment of your division, which inflicted severe losses in killed, wounded and prisoners in repelling the strong raid attempted by the enemy on the morning of 16 June 1918, on the Xivray sector."65 Probably the best summary of the action, though, came from Sgt. Samuel E. Avery of Headquarters Company, 103d Infantry, who wrote home, "You have probably read (by this time) of the little affair we got into, and let me tell you Em they sure did get the worst of the argument, and then some [sic]."66

While Xivray does not rank with the better known battles of World War I, it highlights several important developments in how the AEF learned to fight the Germans. First, positional warfare had to be fought at the lowest level. Company grade officers were empowered to make tactical decisions without waiting for orders, using disciplined initiative and prudent judgment. Second, U.S. troops learned the importance of having standard operating procedures in place so that units could simply act without having to wait for orders. In essence, Xivray was the example of mission command in action. A third point was the crucial importance of liaison between infantry and artillery. Communication between combined arms prevented Xivray from

being another Seicheprey. Defense in depth was another lesson learned from the battle. Rather than forming a static line, U.S. troops were deployed in echelons stretching more than a mile back from the front. Had the German attack been the prelude to a full offensive rather than a raid, they would have met successive lines of defense meant to wear them down until they became overextended. Lastly, the AEF showed it could rapidly incorporate lessons learned. It had been two months since Seicheprey, but already the units of the division had implemented controls to ensure that they were not caught off guard again. A unit of National Guard soldiers, outnumbered by the enemy, demonstrated that they could go toe-to-toe with the Kaiser's best and secure a victory.



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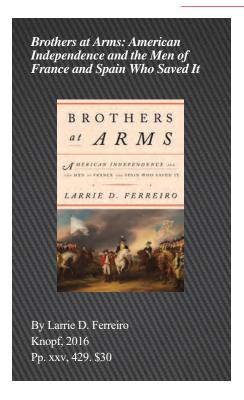
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### **BOOKREVIEWS**



#### Review by John R. Maass

A plethora of history books over the last several years have fallen prey-most likely at the insistence of publishers' marketing departments to making outlandish claims in their subtitles. "The Month that Saved America," or a general who "Saved the Revolution," and the politician who "Saved the American Dream" are just a few of these hyperbolic phrases on book covers that exaggerate for effect. Larrie Ferreiro's new book, a 2017 Pulitzer Prize finalist in history, carries a subtitle as well, a claim that France and Spain saved America's bid for independence in the Revolutionary War. In this tightly written, wellargued book, the author thoroughly proves his case.

As Ferreiro outlines in detail, the newly united American colonies desperately needed supplies, powder, and weapons at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1775. Patriot leaders quickly realized that in order to procure "warlike stores" and shore

up their finances, they would need to secure European loans and alliances in their fight against Great Britain. In the effort to obtain this materiel, the author argues that an official political stance by the Continental Congress had to be announced by 1776—hence the Declaration of Independence. France and Spain "would openly take sides" only if America "demonstrate[d] that it was an independent nation fighting against a common British enemy," Ferreiro writes, and concludes that "the Declaration was not meant for King George III . . . [n]or was it primarily intended to rally the American colonies to the cause of independence . . . [i]nstead, the Declaration was written as a call for help from France and Spain" (p. xvii). Thomas Paine's widely read pamphlet, Common Sense (Philadelphia, Pa., 1776), was also a call for alliances, in that it made clear the direct link between a declaration of independence and the securing of aid from France and Spain (p. xix). While Ferreiro's argument about America's founding document being primarily a call for military aid and diplomatic ties may be somewhat overstated, he certainly has made an intriguing case for this purpose of the Declaration.

One of the many myths told in books and stories about the Revolutionary War is that only after the 1777 American victory over the British at Saratoga, New York, did France enter the war on the side of the rebellious colonies. In fact, as Ferreiro shows in detail, the French began conspiring with the Americans from the conflict's early stages, and had laid the groundwork for intervention long before the Battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775. French agents toured North America in the prewar years to gauge the colonists' disaffection from Great Britain, while in France military and political leaders longed for opportunities to get back at the British after the humiliating French defeat in the Seven

Years' War. A strategy of revenge (*revanche*) became the new focus in Paris and Versailles, Ferreiro writes, which informed the support in France (and to a lesser extent, Spain) for the American insurgents.

Much of Ferreiro's well-written narrative includes fascinating details about the efforts of France and Spain to crush their enemy across the channel. French plans to invade the British Isles began as far back as the late 1750s, and continued into the Revolutionary War years, particularly in 1774 when newly crowned King Louis XVI made the Comte de Vergennes his foreign minister. By 1775, French and Dutch merchants were used as cover to ship muskets, powder, and ammunition to America, spurred on by French playwright and merchant Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. The Spanish, who were "joined at the hip with France" (p. 319), were always reluctant partners of the French, feared the British Navy, and never officially recognized the United States diplomatically during the war. Nevertheless, they too made extraordinary contributions of money, troops, and supplies.

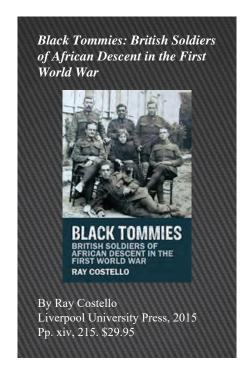
The French also provided invaluable service to the American cause of independence in the form of officers that General George Washington's Continental Army had few of: engineers and artillerists, the best of which "had been trained in France" (p. 121). Washington needed them for construction of defenses, positioning his guns, and to conduct or defend sieges. While it is true that Washington and Congress grew frustrated with the number of French volunteer officers who sailed to America to offer their services in the war in return for commissions and the chance for glory, many of these officers rendered valuable service to the rebels, including the Marquis de Lafayette, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the Comte de Rochambeau, and Louis Lebègue Duportail. The latter may have been the most useful to Washington, as he rose to become chief engineer to the Continental Army, a brevet major general, and one of the American commander's trusted aides.

Perhaps the Spanish and French provided their most beneficial service to the new United States with their navies, for as Ferreiro concludes, the combined fleets could not be ignored by Britain's Royal Navy after 1778. This was especially true in the Caribbean Sea and around the Florida coast, where prized sugar islands remained a British concern, as did invasion threats to the home islands. "For the first time in the war," the author writes, the British navy "would be on the defensive" (p. 171).

French and Spanish armies also fought on the American side, notably at Pensacola, Florida, and at the siege of Yorktown, Virginia, where most of the combined Franco-American force consisted of French soldiers, sailors, and vessels.

Larrie Ferreiro has provided readers of American and military history with a flowing narrative of dramatic events, one that shines a much-needed spotlight onto the indispensable role that foreign assistance played in supplying American forces, reinforcing them with troops and ships, and ultimately enabling them to win their independence.

Dr. John R. Maass is a historian at the National Museum of the United States Army. He received a bachelor's degree in history from Washington and Lee University and a Ph.D. in early U.S. history from Ohio State University. He is the author of the first pamphlet in the Center of Military History's Campaigns of the War of 1812 series, titled Defending a New Nation, 1783-1811 (Washington, D.C., 2013), The Road to Yorktown: Jefferson, Lafayette and the British Invasion of Virginia (Charleston, S.C., 2015), and George Washington's Virginia (Charleston, S.C., 2017).



#### Review by Roger D. Cunningham

During World War I, British soldiers were popularly known as "Tommies," a nickname with origins in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When images of those soldiers and their service are recalled today, they tend to be thought of primarily as white men. But in Black Tommies: British Soldiers of African Descent in the First World War, author Ray Costello, an independent British historian, documents the fact that more than a few were of African descent.

Costello faced a significant problem in conducting his research for this book. In the U.S. Army, African American soldiers (except those whose skin color was light enough to enable them to "pass" as white men) were confined to segregated units until 1948, when President Harry S. Truman desegregated the U.S. armed forces. Additionally, enlistment papers indicated the race of the enlistee. In the British Army, however, the search for black Tommies was greatly complicated by the facts that race was not noted in enlistment documents and that small numbers of black soldiers were allowed to serve in otherwise white regiments. There were large black communities in several British port cities, such as Liverpool and Cardiff,

and their men "presented themselves to the recruiting authorities with varying results in terms of acceptance, depending to [sic] the inclinations of the officer in charge" (p. 50). As but one example, Norman Manley, a Jamaican studying in England and destined to become independent Jamaica's first prime minister, served in the Royal Field Artillery from 1915 until 1919.

Black units raised outside the United Kingdom helped fight in the campaigns that were conducted against German colonial and Turkish forces in Africa and the Middle East. One of these units was the West India Regiment, which had, since the last decade of the eighteenth century, largely been recruited in Jamaica. During the war, all of its troops were West Indian volunteers with white officers and some black noncommissioned officers.

Most black units, however, did not serve in combat roles. In 1915, the British Army began raising the British West Indies Regiment (BWIR). When the regiment was later transported to the Western Front, its soldiers were not used to fight Germans but were restricted to performing labor and guard duties. This was because of British concerns about showing black troops that they could successfully fight a white European foe, a lesson that might spell problems throughout the British Empire after the war was over. The Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps served in France, primarily loading ammunition. The South African Native Labour Contingent (SANLC) also served in France, mostly in ports, unloading supply ships and loading trains with war materiel for the front. In 1917, the SANLC suffered a great tragedy when its last contingent heading from South Africa to France on the troopship SS *Mendi* was accidentally rammed by the SS Darro in thick fog in the English Channel, killing roughly 650 personnel.

Meanwhile, a black unit, the Royal Engineers Coloured Section, had been raised in the United Kingdom. The men in that outfit worked as crane operators, clerks, motorboat drivers, and crewman aboard ships, and were stationed in Mesopotamia during 1917 and the first few months of 1918.

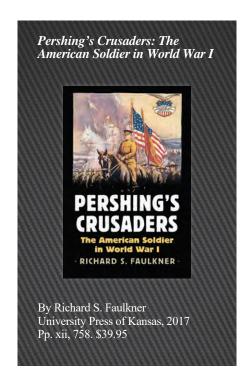
Although the Manual of Military Law (1914) clearly forbade black or mixed-race officers from leading white men in the British Army, Costello documents the service of a handful of black British officers. These men included 2d Lt. Walter Tull, who, for many years, was incorrectly credited as being the only black British officer to serve during the war. Tull was killed in France in 1917 while serving with the Middlesex Regiment. Second Lt. George Edward Kingsley Bemand served in the Royal Field Artillery and was killed in France in 1916. Several black physicians also saw service in the Royal Army Medical Corps, including Dr. Risien Russell, who was commissioned as a captain and served from 1908 until 1918.

Many black British troops were greatly dissatisfied with the manner in which they were treated during their time in uniform, and sometimes this provoked a violent response. In December 1918, a BWIR battalion stationed in Taranto, Italy, mutinied after being assigned to duties they thought should be performed by a labor unit. This resulted in the battalion being disbanded and its members distributed among other units. All the other BWIR battalions in Taranto were disarmed.

The author has made a good start in researching a topic that has been largely ignored over the past century. He admits, "There is tremendous scope for further research into the world of the Black Tommy which will add significantly to the military history of the Great War" (p. 166). Readers interested in black military history, specifically in World War I, will find much to appreciate in this book.

Roger D. Cunningham graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1972 and retired from the 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.





#### Review by Mark Klobas

Pity the poor doughboys, for theirs is a tale of historical neglect. Sandwiched as they are between the Billy Yanks of the American Civil War and the G.I.s of World War II, the troops of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) have not enjoyed the benefits of the attention given to those other soldiers by many esteemed historians, whose books sought to encapsulate the experience of service in their respective wars. Even their contemporary counterparts in Europe have received scholarly attention from Denis Winter and others, who explained what life was like for the British Tommy and the French poilu as they trained and served on the Western Front in World War I.

In that respect Richard S. Faulkner's book is sized to fill the gap in the literature on the subject. It is a comprehensive work in the best sense of the term, a weighty tome in which there is hardly a superfluous page. The author provides an extensive examination of what the war was like for the millions of men who enlisted or were drafted to serve in the AEF, covering everything from their induction to their training, from their uniforms to their weapons, from their voyage overseas to their housing in France, and from their

relationships with civilians to their response to trench warfare. Nothing is neglected, with chapters on the soldiers' discipline and morale, the differences created by race and ethnicity, and even their sex lives and alcohol consumption. Doing so required Faulkner to undertake a wide-ranging survey of all of the available material, and the one hundred-plus pages of endnotes and bibliographic listings at the end of the book serve as a testament to the labors it required.

As daunting as the vast number of sources must have been, synthesizing it so as to draw conclusions from such a wide range of material poses an even greater challenge. To his credit, Faulkner acknowledges this by providing no single overarching explanation for why men joined up in 1917 or how they responded to their training or life in the trenches. Instead he conveys their diversity by describing the span of motivations and experiences, showing how very different service could be for the men. The war for a soldier who went over in the summer of 1917 proved to be very different from the one who followed a year later, and even two men on the same ship destined for France could face disparate circumstances based on their race, their rank, or their role.

Yet, for all of the variety of experience, certain commonalities emerge over the course of Faulkner's book. Foremost among them is the lack of preparedness for what the troops faced. Though the U.S. Army had made plans prior to the war for the rapid training of a large number of inductees, many of these arrangements quickly proved inadequate to cope with the hundreds of thousands of men who stuffed the new camps established to train them. Without a sufficient quantity of seasoned personnel, junior officers often found themselves doing the work that was normally the responsibility of their noncommissioned officers, while they all rushed to train for a war unlike any other in American history. In this they received assistance from their new allies, as the British and French both provided veterans well versed in the ways of trench warfare. However, the benefits of their

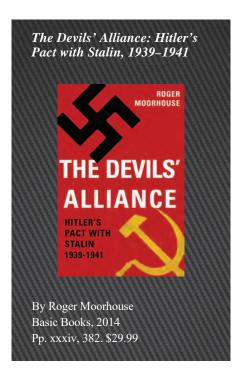
advice were often blunted by the views of American officers, whose unjustified beliefs in the superior doctrine and abilities of Americans as soldiers led them to disdain the hard-won lessons learned by the Allied armies on the Western Front.

Many of these prejudices were perpetuated once the doughboys reached France. For most of the Americans traveling "over there," their ideas of France as an enlightened nation filled with friendly people soon confronted the reality of a nation weary from three years of debilitating warfare. Though numerous soldiers took affectionately to the French people they encountered, their interactions with French and British soldiers reinforced the perception that their comrades had lost their fighting spirit, and that the reintroduction of this element by the American forces would win the war. Moreover, the advanced training which was planned for American units arriving in France was increasingly rushed in order to get the desperately needed troops to the front as quickly as possible. The result, as Faulkner sadly notes, was a casualty rate far higher than necessary, as underprepared American soldiers with an exaggerated sense of their capabilities experienced an unnecessarily bloody education at the hands of the Germans. Despite their losses, though, the doughboys persevered through these miserable conditions right up to the Armistice, with the survivors expressing a lasting pride in their life-changing ordeals.

Faulkner details the experiences of these soldiers with a degree of assuredness borne of his command of the information. Yet, what distinguishes his writing is the sympathy with which he recounts the lives of the young men who served in the AEF. While he renders criticism where it is due, his admiration for their service provides a respectful and dignified account of their time while in uniform. When coupled with the thoroughness of his work, it makes for a book that serves both as an indispensable starting point for anyone who wants to learn about the American soldier in World War I and a valuable, well-organized reference work to which readers can return to learn more about any aspect of the doughboys' service. In this respect the book can take its place next to other classic works about the conflict. It is a volume that no student of the Great War can afford not to have on their shelves.

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#### Review by Matthew E. S. Butler

Roger Moorhouse laments the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 as "simply not part of our collective narrative of World War II. It is my conviction that it should be" (p. xxiii). In The Devils' Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin, 1939–1941, Moorhouse builds a strong case on behalf of its salience. The plural possessive punctuation in the title is intentional: the pact was the creation of the twentieth century's most despicable villains. Both sought to take advantage of the

crumbling international situation and, in time, each other. Moorhouse explores all the important implications—diplomatic, ideological, economic, military, and humanitarian—of the alliance on Germany, the Soviet Union, and the various peoples unfortunate enough to live between them.

Given the mutual and vocal antipathy between the Nazi Party and Soviet regime for decades, the agreement was an unexpected thunderclap heard around the world. Nonetheless, the leadership of both Germany and the Soviet Union shared a desire to upend the global status quo. Toward that end, both the German and Soviet foreign ministers, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov, thought they had achieved a masterstroke on 23 August 1939. The nonaggression pact's Secret Protocols hid the most important and sinister aspects: the wholesale division of Eastern Europe. Those details were finalized shortly after both powers invaded Poland in staggered succession, Germany on 1 September 1939 and the Soviets sixteen days later.

Poland was divided along the River Bug. The Soviets were also promised Bessarabia (Moldova), Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. At first, the Baltic States were subjected to unequal treaties, but by early August 1940 all three were annexed by the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, with a secure Eastern Front, Germany could turn its might toward the successful springtime invasion of Western Europe. Totaling the extent of their 1940 conquests, Hitler's empire had grown by 500,000 square miles while Stalin's was 260,000 square miles larger. Ultimately, they came to share a 620-mile common border.

Between August 1939 and June 1941 the two countries concluded at least six formal treaties and trade agreements. These triggered a cascade of smaller negotiations haggling over the details such as commodity prices and delivery schedules, and Moorhouse provides vivid vignettes of these tense parleys. Until 1941, the Soviets drove "a very hard bargain" (p. 172) and the Germans grew

increasingly dissatisfied. Contrary to any popular notions, Soviet fuels and minerals were not crucial to Germany's victories over France and the Low Countries.

In return for their foodstuffs and raw materials, the Soviets had a shopping list of German technologies and industrial machinery. The author provides us only a glimpse of what they wanted and ultimately received. There are big-ticket items intended for reverse engineering, like the incomplete heavy cruiser Lützow and fighter aircraft, such as five Bf-109Es. As Moorhouse explains, "the Soviets were demanding from Germany nothing less than the shortcut to an advanced military-industrial economy" (p. 174). Regarding tanks, many brand new Soviet models, like the T-34 and KV, were assembled in factories recently kitted out with German machinery, while for the Germans, "one out of every eight" of their tanks that would eventually invade Russia "was indeed running on Soviet fuel" (p. 263). However, economic and military historians will be disappointed by the absence of any tables. A chronology of deliveries arriving in each respective country, if available, could have provided a balance sheet of sorts. Did one materially get the better of the other before all-out war?

The Devils' Alliance is provocative regarding Hitler's decision to betray Stalin. Reminiscent of A. J. P. Taylor's arguments, Hitler is depicted as "the supreme opportunist" following a reactive "multitrack policy" (pp. 210-11). In the autumn of 1940, the Nazi-Soviet Pact was "strained but not yet moribund," Moorhouse explains, but in mid-December "Hitler's decision would be made for him by events at an obscure regional conference in Galati, Romania" (pp. 213-14). A discussion of riverine navigation became a platform for yet more Soviet hard bargaining; the conference ended with literal fist fights between the Italians and Russians. "This nexus is made abundantly clear by the timing of events," Moorhouse concludes. "The very next morning Hitler issues his Directive No. 21 . . . the death knell of the Nazi-Soviet Pact was sounded, and Operation Barbarossa was born" (pp. 215–16). The book offers little documentation to rule out this exact sequence as simply coincidence.

Sir Ian Kershaw, the 2001 Wolfson History Prize recipient, has argued that Hitler's motivations in attacking the Soviet Union were many, ranging from deep-rooted anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism to a decades-long desire for material self-sufficiency and Lebensraum. The most important reason, however, was geopolitical: to eliminate, in Hitler's own words, "Britain's last hope." With the Soviet Union quickly removed, he was certain the stubborn British would sue for peace. By mid-1940, it was thought in Berlin that "conquering London via Moscow" was less risky and more certain; Hitler never veered away from this conclusion.<sup>2</sup>

Moorhouse's description of a play-it-by-ear approach until mid-December 1940 is less convincing. In November, Hitler tasked his generals to find an ideal location for a field headquarters close to the future front—the eventual "Wolf's Lair" near Rastenburg, East Prussia—and on 5 December he told his top generals to prepare an invasion for May 1941.3 The formalized War Directive No. 21, which came thirteen days later, specified the same timeframe. The Danubian Conference was probably not the watershed that finally swayed Hitler to issue his most important decision of the war; the eventual invasion was delayed multiple times due to unforeseen difficulties, the demands of practical preparations, and the desire to avoid a winter campaign.

Events in the Balkans shifted Stalin's thinking too. By late March 1941, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia were all within Hitler's Axis. "[T]he fall of Belgrade marked the moment at which the active appeasement of Hitler began in earnest," (p. 230) argues Moorhouse. Whereas Stalin had used the pact for over a year to leverage territory and technology, by the spring of 1941 he was on borrowed time, hurriedly

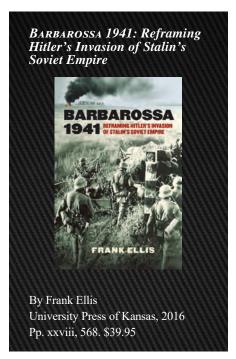
reorganizing and arming a military sapped by his own purges and the disastrous Winter War with Finland. On 22 June 1941, time ran out.

The grisly human cost of this "peacetime" diplomacy rarely slips out of view in The Devils' Alliance. The mass deportations, executions, and other atrocities up and down the newly shared borderlands of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union are described in agonizing detail. The barbarity of both regimes in Eastern Europe is laid bare. In this regard, the author has an obvious axe to grind with decades of postwar Soviet handwringing that asserted the 1939 pact was simply defensive. Nonetheless, Nazi Germany proved itself more murderous; Soviet victory in the east and Allied victory in the west was the best conceivable outcome, even for the Eastern Europeans who would not realize independence until the 1990s. In this regard, Moorhouse situates the Nazi-Soviet pact front and center in explicating the European origins of both the Second World War and its long overhang, the Cold War.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London: Hamish, 1961).
- 2. Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World*, 1940–1941 (London: Penguin, 2008), pp. 54, 70, 75, 86–87.
  - 3. Ibid., p. 84.

Dr. Matthew E. S. Butler resides in Indianapolis where he serves on the staff of the Indiana House of Representatives. He has a bachelor's degree in history from Purdue University and received a master's degree in British history from the College of William & Mary in Virginia. He holds a doctorate degree in modern history from the University of Cambridge. Both his thesis and dissertation examined economic ties between the British Empire and South America.



#### Review by Reagan Fancher

In recent decades, a multitude of titles have analyzed Operation Barbarossa, Adolf Hitler's 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union. This massive attack surprised foreign observers and began the bloodiest chapter of the most destructive war in history. In his meticulously researched book, Barbarossa 1941: Reframing Hitler's Invasion of Stalin's Soviet Empire, Frank Ellis offers a refreshing look at the campaign from the perspectives of the two major belligerents.

The author could not have selected a more suitable subtitle for his work. The book goes to great lengths to provide a crucial reassessment of BARBAROSSA, drawing from a wealth of sources that included the diary of a German Panzer Division soldier and Soviet secret police (NKVD) operations in the wake of Hitler's invasion. Critically, the volume will be appreciated most by those with background knowledge of the vast offensive and the Eastern Front of World War II in general. It is not intended as a book for beginners, as those who have not studied this theater of the war may feel lost among Ellis's in-depth details and dissection of other works on the topic.

The writer begins with an informative view of Hitler and the Nazi Party's racial ideology and their motives for planning and carrying out horrendous atrocities during the campaign. Rather

than focusing on the military episodes of Barbarossa's initial phases, however, Ellis homes in on the rear actions of the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen*. These mobile killing squads followed the German Army into Soviet territory and massacred over a million Jews.

The author also explores the development of armored warfare doctrine during the interwar period by such theorists as Heinz Guderian and Vladimir Triandafillov. The incorporation of political ideology into German and Soviet military training is described at great length. Another strength of the book is the focus on the indoctrination of Soviet military commissars, referred to by Ellis as "a new type of combatant" (p. 98).

The author meticulously describes the introduction of political commissars into the Red Army and their ruthless efficiency in enforcing the ideological norms dictated by Stalin. Commissars were known as tenacious combatants and had the unquestioned authority to contradict the orders of Soviet military commanders. Ellis argues that these ruthless men, whom he compares to the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen*, could arguably pose a threat from a military perspective, and that the view of them as innocent targets of the Nazi's own murder machine is thus not entirely justified.

Ellis also compares and contrasts Hitler's "Commissar Order" with Stalin's own "Katyn Memorandum," a document issued by NKVD Chief Lavrenti Beria recommending the mass execution of thousands of Polish prisoners of war. While in no way attempting to excuse the horrendous crimes carried out by Nazi forces on the Eastern Front, the writer persists in trying to set the record straight regarding what he feels to be a self-righteous, undeserved victim status afforded to Soviet military commissars.

Another key point explored in the book is the controversial theory put forward by Soviet defector and author Viktor Suvorov, to which the author refers as the "Stalin Attack Thesis," or SAT (p. 401). In his book, *Icebreaker: Who Started the Second World War?* (London, 1990), Suvorov argued that Stalin was actually planning to attack Hitler prior to the start of Operation Barbarossa. Ellis delves into Suvorov's

various claims regarding Soviet military planning and statements by Stalin and other Soviet leaders. He then counters them with his own findings, ultimately rejecting Suvorov's overall argument regarding Stalin's intentions.

Ellis argues, in direct contradiction of Suvorov, that Stalin's mass purges of the Red Army leadership weakened the Soviet military to the point of ineptitude in defending against attack, not only in terms of experienced military leadership but in creating a system of terror in which Red Army commanders were fearful of showing initiative in warfare. Citing other problems with the SAT, the author ultimately rejects the notion that Stalin was in any way preparing to attack Hitler in 1941. In this reviewer's opinion, Ellis makes a good case for his position but does not fully succeed in rebutting Suvorov's thesis. He does not take into consideration the findings of Suvorov's book, *The Chief Culprit*: Stalin's Grand Design to Start World War II (Annapolis, Md., 2008), in which Suvorov expands his earlier argument and addresses many of the key issues that Ellis alleges he neglects. Nevertheless, Ellis' book contains another major revelation largely overlooked by many scholars of the Eastern Front. He points out that one of the most decisive reasons for the failure of Hitler's forces in the Soviet Union was due to the Nazi refusal to abolish the hated collective farm system. This is a pivotal issue, because as German forces advanced in the wake of Barbarossa, they were initially welcomed as liberators by much of the Soviet civilian population, especially in Ukraine.

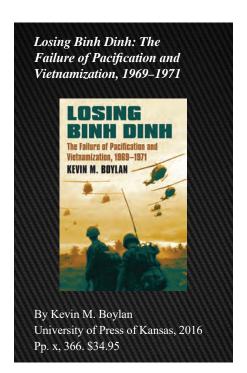
As Ellis points out, Ukraine was among the regions hardest hit by Stalin's ruthless collectivization policies of the 1930s. The so called "kulaks," or skilled peasants, had been forced onto collective farms, and had to turn over all their property to the regime in Moscow. When the Ukrainian and Russian civilian populations realized that not only did Hitler have no intention of abolishing this policy, but planned to adopt it himself, they fought the invaders with the same fervor with which they continued to resist Stalin's troops.

Overall, Ellis' use of primary sources
—including NKVD documents, Red

Army propaganda literature, and a German soldier's war diary—makes for an impressive and highly informative read. His emphasis on several key areas of importance regarding the Eastern Front provides a fresh, realistic, and objective new look at the war and adds significantly to the topic's growing historiography. In the years to come, BARBAROSSA 1941 will no doubt further the ongoing research into this crucial period in world history.

Reagan Fancher received his bachelor's and master's degrees in history from the University of Louisiana at Monroe. His current research focuses on the Islamist mujahideen insurgency during the Soviet-Afghan War and the Soviet Red Army during World War II.





#### Review by Andrew J. Birtle

For the past fifteen years, historians have been debunking the myth that the Allies had essentially won the Vietnam

War, only to lose it at the Paris peace talks in 1973 and by bad decisions that came afterward. In Losing Binh Dinh: The Failure of Pacification and Vietnamization, 1969–1971, Kevin M. Boylan joins the attack on this notion and its chief propagator, Lewis Sorley, by taking an in-depth look at a single South Vietnamese province, Binh Dinh. The book is a valuable contribution, for to date historians have focused primarily on the big picture from the vantage points of Washington and Saigon. Few have descended into the weeds to test how President Richard M. Nixon's policy triad of Vietnamization, pacification, and American troop withdrawals unfolded in the field. Through extensive research and lucid prose, Boylan demonstrates that, in Binh Dinh at least, the Allies never won the war.

Binh Dinh was a key province during the Vietnam War. Situated in northern Military Region II, it was South Vietnam's second largest province in terms of acreage and contained 5 percent of the country's population. It was also mired in poverty because of overpopulation and a shortage of arable land—intractable problems that no government could easily resolve. Complete control of Binh Dinh would allow the Communists to cut South Vietnam in two. For this reason both sides had targeted the province since the beginning of the insurgency in 1959. Unfortunately for the Allies, Binh Dinh had been an enemy stronghold since the Indochina War of the 1940s and early 1950s. The renowned scholar Douglas Pike dubbed it the heart of the insurgency, first against the French, and later against the South Vietnamese government.

Binh Dinh had revolutionary fervor, but that alone does not explain why it was such a trouble spot. In a country where family ties often trumped other considerations, the enemy's deep roots in the community posed a significant obstacle to the Saigon regime. Families were loath to renounce their sons, brothers, and husbands who had first fought against the French before later taking up arms against the Allies. Moreover, after the Indochina

War many Communist soldiers had married Binh Dinh girls before relocating to North Vietnam as part of the Geneva Accords. These marriages further cemented Communist ties to the population in preparation for the day when the guerrillas would return. Thus, from the start the challenge for the Allies was less to protect the province than to wrest control of it from the enemy, an unenviable task.

As daunting as the challenges were in Binh Dinh, the Allies felt they had no choice but to tackle them. After briefly reviewing the history of the province during the early and middle years of the Vietnam War, Boylan focuses on the period after U.S. Army General Creighton W. Abrams Jr. took command of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), from General William C. Westmoreland in mid-1968. These were the years in which Sorley says the Allies defeated the insurgency. They were also the years when MACV experimented with inserting U.S. soldiers at the local level in Binh Dinh. In Operation Washington Green, the 173d Airborne Brigade dispersed squads across northern Binh Dinh to live and work with paramilitary soldiers (Regional and Popular Forces). For two years the brigade assisted pacification by attacking the enemy's clandestine government, by protecting hamlets from Viet Cong intimidation and violence, and by conducting civic actions as part of the Allies' larger nation building program. Brigade training and mentoring activities likewise furthered Vietnamization, preparing the South Vietnamese armed forces for the day when they would stand alone, a day that was fast approaching due to President Nixon's progressive withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. In short, the campaign in Binh Dinh was a microcosm of the Nixon-Abrams era in Vietnam, and U.S. officials at the time touted Washington Green as the very model of a successful, modern counterinsurgency campaign. A careful study of this province thus seems worthwhile, not only for understanding the war in one locale, but as a test for just how successful Nixon and Abrams were in defeating the insurgency in the final years of American participation in the war.

What Boylan found was that "population centric" counterinsurgency did not succeed in Binh Dinh. Mistaken policies and undesirable behavior by U.S. troops contributed to the negative outcome, but fundamentally the author believes that Washington Green "foundered on the twin shoals of the enemy's great strength and effectiveness and the government of [South] Vietnam's all-encompassing weakness and ineffectiveness" (p. 269). Not only did the enemy enjoy sociopolitical advantages, but he posed a military challenge the Allies were never able to overcome. Although the Americans were relatively successful in protecting the population from guerrillas, they were ineffective at the two extremes of the violence spectrum: terrorism, which had a devastating impact on Allied attempts to govern, and the enemy's conventional military capabilities. The Phoenix Program's attempt to root out the Communist politico-terror apparatus paled in effectiveness compared to Viet Cong assassinations, while the Allies failed to bring the enemy's large, conventional forces to heel. Instead, security waxed and waned with the presence of North Vietnam's 3d Division. When the division removed itself from the area, pacification moved forward. When it returned, pacification regressed. And nothing the Americans tried—from small patrols made by troops living close to the population to large-scale search and destroy operations—succeeded in providing permanent protection from this conventional military threat.

Alongside the enemy's strength and endurance were systemic weaknesses in South Vietnamese society. These included widespread apathy and war weariness, socioeconomic maladjustment, corruption, and perhaps most importantly, inept leadership at virtually every level. Boylan credits nearly all progress that did occur in Binh Dinh to the Americans, not the South Vietnamese. But there were limits to what the United States could do or was willing to do. Moreover, the policies of Vietnamization, pacification, and withdrawal,

while theoretically in harmony, often worked against one another. When the 173d Airborne Brigade withdrew from South Vietnam in 1971, the situation in Binh Dinh rapidly deteriorated.

Critics may argue that failure in one province does not mean the program failed overall. Boylan concedes this point, noting that every province in Vietnam was different, but he is equally correct in noting that all counterinsurgency, like politics, is local. Moreover, Binh Dinh was not just any province, it was the Nixon administration's poster child for the alleged success of General Abrams' "one war" strategy. Boylan also uses data to show that his findings in Binh Dinh mirrored nationwide trends. He calls on historians to do more province-based studies to test hypotheses about the war, a worthy aspiration indeed. For now, however, he and others have shot enough holes in the Sorleyan victory thesis to bring it crashing to the ground.

The book contains some factual errors. The author misstates the weight of a Rome Plow and misattributes authorship of the strategic hamlet program to the United States. He also asserts that the Viet Cong first started burning hamlets in Binh Dinh in 1969, when in fact they had been burning hamlets in the province for years.

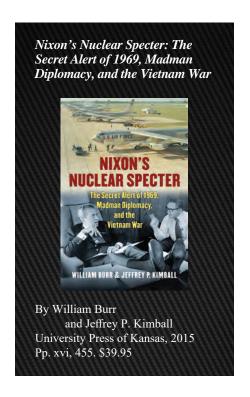
Errors such as these are minor and do not undermine the integrity of Boylan's work. More questionable are the author's acceptance of some commonly held, but debatable, beliefs. For example, the book accepts the notion that Abrams adopted a significantly different strategy than Westmoreland, one that eschewed "body counts," when the evidence clearly indicates that Abrams emphasized attritional warfare. The book portrays Operation Washington Green as being unprecedented, yet many operations shared its practices to one degree or another, starting with Operation FAIRFAX, initiated by Westmoreland in 1966. The author speculates that the enemy's program of land redistribution made it popular in Binh Dinh, yet the problem in the province was not the ownership of land but the lack of arable land to begin with. For this the Communists

had no solution. Finally, the author relates without comment a regimental adviser's statement in 1969 that "we have never put pressure on higher ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] echelons to commit their maneuver units to pacification" (p. 115). In fact, by 1969, U.S. military and civilian officials had been harping on this subject for many years, using virtually all the tools at their disposal. Mediocre results do not equate either to a lack of understanding or to a lack of effort at every link of the civilmilitary advisory chain.

One of the more unfortunate misperceptions concerns the extent of South Vietnamese participation in the fighting. Boylan paints the South Vietnamese military as an organization that sat back and let the Americans carry the burden. He is correct that South Vietnamese performance left much to be desired, but the idea that the Vietnamese left the fighting to the United States is a gross mischaracterization. During the three years that are the focus of this book, the United States lost 14,853 combat dead while the South Vietnamese suffered 67,917 combat deaths. So who was carrying whom? Perhaps the high rate of Vietnamese casualties, a number the U.S. public would never have tolerated had they been Americans, played a role in influencing South Vietnamese behavior. That so many died indicates both the incredible impact the war had on a country that was much smaller than the United States, and the depth of support for a regime that would not fall until North Vietnamese tanks rolled over it in 1975. It is long past time to recognize the sacrifices of the South Vietnamese people in their struggle against communism.

Dr. Andrew J. Birtle is a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He has written two books about the evolution of U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine. He is currently working on a book about U.S. Army activities in Vietnam between 1961 and 1965.





#### Review by Shannon Granville

In the second half of October 1969, the United States launched a series of military exercises that effectively constituted a worldwide test of the U.S. military's readiness and capability to engage in nuclear warfare. These exercises, officially called the Joint Chiefs of Staff Readiness Test, used strategic air and naval forces to present an aggressive posture of the U.S. nuclear arsenal as it might have appeared in active combat. The real purpose of these exercises was known to only a handful of people in the U.S. government, including President Richard Nixon, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, and their respective chief aides. To an outside observer, such a coordinated readiness test might seem an understandable if excessive show of force, considering the U.S. government's desire to maintain a strong front in its ongoing involvement in the war in Vietnam. Yet in their book Nixon's *Nuclear Specter: The Secret Alert of* 1969, Madman Diplomacy, and the *Vietnam War*, William Burr and Jeffrey A. Kimball present a more disconcerting line of reasoning behind the overarching military strategy: an approach that Nixon and Kissinger thought of as

"Madman Diplomacy." Their goal was to emphasize not only that Nixon was willing to consider the use of nuclear weapons in order to force a settlement to the Vietnam War, but also that he was an irrational, unpredictable actor—and, unlike his predecessors, might be reckless enough to give the order to strike with disproportionate nuclear force and risk a larger conflict that would jeopardize his own security. Through this case study, Burr and Kimball provide a history of America's nuclear threat diplomacy and an analysis of the inherent tensions between nuclear deterrence and compellence to achieve diplomatic ends.

The authors are well placed to analyze the potential role of nuclear weapons in the Nixon-Kissinger playbook for Vietnam. Burr is a senior analyst with the National Security Archive at George Washington University, and has written extensively on U.S. diplomatic history with a focus on nuclear history and nonproliferation. Kimball, professor emeritus of history at Miami University in Ohio, is the author of Nixon's Vietnam War (Lawrence, Kans., 1998), which examines the administration's strategic approach to the stalemate it had inherited. The authors' interest in the 1969 nuclear readiness alert originated in the 1990s, and stemmed from their disagreement with a then-prevalent thesis about the reasoning behind it—namely, that it had been intended to deter a threatened Soviet attack on China in late 1969, in the wake of the Sino-Soviet border conflict that had been simmering since March of that year. In the mid-2000s, they published initial findings from their research through the National Security Archive and the journals Cold War History and the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, and sought to resolve their questions on the meaning and repercussions of the readiness test through additional Freedom of Information Act requests; extensive research in U.S. diplomatic, intelligence, and military records; and interviews with many of the participants involved.

Burr and Kimball's account begins with a political, military, and cultural survey of nuclear diplomacy and brinksmanship from 1945 to 1968, evaluating how different presidential administrations in the first two

decades of the Cold War viewed the potential role of nuclear weapons in crisis decision making. It examines how the "nuclear taboo" surrounding the use of such weapons informed many choices made during different moments of Cold War tension, such as the 1954-1955 and 1958 Taiwan Strait crises and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The second chapter focuses on how Nixon's and Kissinger's own strategic views on nuclear weapons developed, particularly with relation to the influence that President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had on Nixon's early conception of his Madman Theory. The next six chapters cover the more practical applications of Nixon's and Kissinger's strategic diplomacy and military escalation against the Soviet Union and North Vietnam throughout 1969, including the bombing of Cambodia; efforts to link planned harbor mining operations against Haiphong with diplomatic overtures to Moscow; and the development of DUCK HOOK (also known as PRUN-ING KNIFE), a collection of military operations that contemplated the use of tactical nuclear weapons against targets in North Vietnam but was abandoned when first Kissinger and then Nixon reevaluated its potential effectiveness. The Joint Chiefs of Staff Readiness Test itself forms the center of the penultimate chapter, and an epilogue evaluates why the test failed to compel concessions out of the Soviets or the North Vietnamese at the negotiating table and how Nixon and Kissinger consequently shifted their approach to seeking a long-term exit strategy for U.S. forces in Indochina.

Nixon's Nuclear Specter is a solid, well-researched book, with clear prose that helps propel the narrative through the murkier aspects of the motives and reasonings of Cold War strategic decision making. Most of the sources are from U.S. archival materials and English-language publications, but the authors have provided some counterpart perspectives through translated primary source documents from North Vietnam and the Soviet Union and interviews with individuals such as Luu Van Loi, a member of

the North Vietnamese delegation who has published translations of materials from the Paris peace negotiations. The only notable omission in the book is one over which the authors themselves had no control: the Henry Kissinger papers, which are held at the Library of Congress, and are currently sealed from the public and will remain so until five years after his death. Burr and Kimball refer to this unusual arrangement as "possibly the last standing abuse of power of the Nixon era... [and] most likely in violation of federal records laws" (p. x), which speaks volumes for the frustration of researchers everywhere in dealing with materials from the Nixon administration.

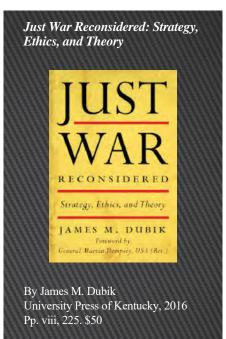
One of the strongest messages of *Nixon's Nuclear Specter* is a warning about the dangerous game that politicians and military leaders play when relying on nuclear weapons in coercive diplomacy. The mixed messages surrounding the October 1969 nuclear feint helped undermine its credibility with its intended Soviet and North Vietnamese audiences. Combined with the toxic internal obsession with secrecy that was a hallmark of the Nixon administration, the historical perspective is sobering:

Even though policymakers before Nixon and since have believed that military force is a necessary adjunct of diplomacy, he and Kissinger may have been unique in their conviction that secret threats and stealthy military operations could actually produce desired diplomatic results. Moreover, their desire for strictly compartmentalized security was so absolute and their distrust of the State Department and the military leadership so great that they put themselves into what amounted to an echo chamber that was nearly impervious to advice from experts in the national security bureaucracy. Their furtive mind-set and methods would create dysfunction in government as civilian officials and top commanders puzzled over the meaning of the policies and actions that they had taken before and during October 1969 (p. 8).

The threatened use of nuclear weapons for diplomatic signaling, as Nixon and Kissinger found, raised unnecessary risks of accidental consequences and simultaneously undermined their own credibility as political and military decision makers. Nearly three decades after the end of the Cold War, this assessment remains as topical as ever.

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#### Review by Alan M. Anderson

Just war theory has been studied and discussed by philosophers, military strategists, and policymakers for

centuries. It is intended to ensure that from a moral standpoint, war is ethical—both the decision to commence war (jus ad bellum) and the way in which war is conducted (jus in bello). Retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, now a professor at Georgetown University's Security Studies Program, focuses his recent monograph, Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics, and Theory, on the jus in bello branch of just war theory. In a thought-provoking and well-reasoned analysis, Dubik argues that the traditional, exclusive focus of jus in bello on the tactical level of warfare—the actions on the battlefield—is inadequate and wrongly ignores the equally significant strategic level of warfare: "the level at which senior political and military leaders set war aims, identify strategies and policies, approve the military and nonmilitary campaigns necessary to achieve those war aims, and establish the coordinative bodies necessary to translate plans into actions and adapt as the vagaries of war unfold"

Dubik argues that Michael Walzer's preeminent work, Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations (New York: Basic Books, 1977), presents too much of a bright-line rule between jus ad bellum and jus in bello. Dubik contends that Walzer's approach leaves a gap in just war theory: the strategic or war-waging dimension. He illustrates his point using the decisions senior political and military leaders made regarding the North Africa campaign in World War II as examples of correctly setting, adapting, and revising strategic aims as the conflict unfolded. Having established the strategic-level gap in just war theory, Dubik identifies the tripartite "central tension inherent in the strategic, war-waging dimension of war's conduct" as:

(1) achieving coherence by setting war aims and making strategy, policy, and campaign decisions that increase the probability of achieving those aims; (2) generating organizational capacity by translating those aims and decisions into action that achieves those aims at the least cost, in lives and resources, and the least risk to the innocent and to one's political community, then adapting decisions and actions as the vagaries of war unfold; and (3) maintaining legitimacy by doing all the foregoing while observing that war convention, sustaining public support of the war effort, and ensuring proper subordination of the military to civilian leadership (p. 27).

Dubik uses the American Civil War and U.S. actions in Iraq and Afghanistan to further establish that the conduct of war includes both tactical and strategic dimensions that have a moral aspect. Waging war, Dubik maintains, includes the responsibility of senior military and political leaders not to "squander the lives of the citizens-who-become soldiers without accruing moral blame" (p. 56).

Dubik next analyzes alternative approaches to how senior political and military leaders should interact at the strategic level. He first considers the objective control theory of Samuel P. Huntington and the principal-agent theory of Peter Feaver, followed by the unequal dialogue approach described by Eliot A. Cohen in *Supreme* Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime (New York: Anchor Books, 2003). Using examples from the Vietnam War and of the conduct during the Iraq War in the Rumsfeld era, Dubik concludes that all of these theories are inadequate in some way. The principal-agent theory fails to adequately value soldiers' lives—a necessary element for the war-waging dimension of *jus in* bello. The unequal dialogue approach "leaves unattended the important role that senior political leaders play in setting the right climate for a proper dialogue" (p. 112).

Considering the various deficiencies in these theories, Dubik describes what he believes is the proper framework for the warwaging dimension: a near continuous, performance-oriented, dialogue

implementation regime. To work, such a regime must promote candor, open minds, and include repetitive dialogues among senior leaders. In addition, the results of such dialogues must be translated into action, not just initially, but also adapted as political and military events unfold—adjusting to the dynamic nature of war. Dubik in effect argues for a type of observe, orient, decide, and act loop at the strategic level. Such a regime is not infallible, but increases "the probability of prudent action and of using well the lives of citizens-who-become soldiers, protecting the political community, and limiting risk to the innocent" (p. 130).

Dubik identifies five principles that should guide senior political and military leaders who are engaging in the regime he describes. These five principles—continuous dialogue, final decision authority with civilian leaders, managerial competence, war legitimacy, and the right of resignation under certain circumstances provide a structure that, if followed, should result in war-waging decisions and actions that will use the lives of citizen soldiers appropriately. This plan would also reduce the chances that innocent lives or the existence of the political community are needlessly risked. "Senior political and military leaders who follow the principles . . . are acting justly with respect to the exercise of their jus in bello strategic, war-waging responsibilities" (p. 138). Dubik concludes, "The five war-waging principles—plus the tripartite tension inherent in waging war—more completely circumscribe the moral dimensions of war's conduct at the strategic level" (p. 172).

There is much to be said for Dubik's identification of the "gap" in traditional just war theory to address the strategic, war-waging level of the conduct of war. His recognition and description of the benefits and framework for operation of a continuous, performance-oriented, dialogue-effecting regime at the strategic level merits strong consideration among senior political

and military leaders. As might be expected, Dubik's book also raises a number of thought-provoking questions. Has he truly identified a gap in the jus in bello theory? Or has he more simply described a method and policy for conducting warfare at the strategic level that senior political and military leaders should follow in order to more successfully prosecute war? Just war theory is intended to apply to, and guide the conduct of, all parties to a conflict. Does one side really want its enemy to follow Dubik's approach to ensure that they better execute their war-waging responsibilities and therefore, presumably, conduct the war more effectively? And how does Dubik's theory apply in the context of modern warfare, which often involves failed-state or nonstate actors who have no citizenry to which they are politically responsible or who could not care less about taking innocent citizens' lives or wasting the lives of their "soldiers" on the battlefield?

Regardless of the responses to such questions, *Just War Reconsidered* is a timely study that should be required reading for all military and political leaders who are responsible for the conduct of warfare at the strategic level

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### CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

Jon T. Hoffman

## EVALUATING COMMERCIAL PUBLISHING PRACTICES FOR CMH



In previous Footnotes, I have reviewed initiatives the Center of Military History (CMH) has undertaken to improve support to the Army. But sometimes events, rather than plans, dictate what happens. One of those circumstances arose in 2017, when the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army began a review of the Army Publishing Directorate (APD), which handles the printing, distribution, and warehousing of nearly all the Army's publications, including CMH's official histories. Mr. Mark F. Averill, the deputy administrative assistant, was focused on APD's warehouse in St. Louis, ensuring that its operations were as efficient and cost effective as possible.

As it turned out, one of the largest "customers" of the warehouse was CMH, which had nearly 1,400 pallets of books in stock, comprising some 626 distinct items from our catalog. That led Mr. Averill to pull CMH into the review, with the goal of determining if we were printing, distributing, and storing the appropriate quantities of our publications. As part of that analysis, he tasked us with investigating the wisdom of shifting to e-publication (digital-only books optimized for electronic reading devices), as well as the possibility of a commercial print-on-demand option to meet any remaining need for actual paper copies.

CMH began with a look at the current state of e-books in commercial publishing. Contrary to the perception that digital is the wave of the future, it turned out that the Association of American Publishers had documented that e-books as a percentage of sales had begun a steady decline. Actual sales data over the past decade for one particular commercial military history publication (authored by a CMH historian) vividly demonstrated that decrease in the military history field (most germane to CMH). A Pew study also showed—somewhat surprisingly—that the shift away from digital was greatest among the younger generation. Although CMH will continue to experiment with e-books—we have recently re-issued American Armies and Battlefields in Europe (Washington, D.C., 1938) as a digital publication—for the time being we will still focus primarily on paper copies, because that is what most of our readers want.

The examination of print-on-demand started with considering who would pay to acquire the books and how they would do so. It turned out that regulations prohibit the use

of a government purchase card for printed material, thus cutting off that potential simple avenue for official requestors to directly order books. One alternative would be individual offices or units going through the APD printing process, which would have put an intolerable burden on that organization. Instead of ordering a large quantity on behalf of CMH (as currently happens), APD would have been doing largely the same amount of work repeatedly to fill each customer's print order, even for a single book. A slightly more efficient method would have been CMH/APD periodically ordering small quantities of a title to keep a few in stock to meet requests. To evaluate this option, CMH and APD ordered five copies each of a campaign pamphlet, a paperback book, and a hardcover book. The pamphlets cost \$33.50 apiece, compared to the more typical cost of just under a dollar when printed in large quantities. The paperback books came in at \$169 each. We canceled the order for hardcovers when the winning bid was over \$1,400 per copy! In addition, the response time to publish was about three weeks—much longer than simply fulfilling an order from warehouse stock. Equally important, the pamphlets and paperbacks we received were of a much lower quality than usual. That was partly due to the type of press used for a shorter turnaround, but also due to the lack of a press inspection, which is only available (and practical) when printing much larger quantities. With that actual data in hand. Mr. Averill canceled further consideration of printon-demand as a solution.

The main change to come out of this review was the development of business rules to govern future publications. CMH will base its print orders on initial distribution, plus the likely quantity needed to meet demand for about five years. The actual number acquired will be based on expected usage data, the cost of warehousing a pallet, and the cost of printing per book, with a balance between the three to achieve the most efficient use of Army dollars.

This long overdue review provided a good opportunity for CMH to evaluate its practices and optimize, so that we operate more like a commercial publisher and keep one eye constantly focused on the cost of doing business.



