

# ARMY HISTORY

Fall 2018

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# ARMY HISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

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**Issue Cover:** Three unidentified soldiers of 89th Division / Library of Congress

**Back Cover:** Composite image, an American soldier in the Ardennes advancing with fixed bayonet, c. December 1944 / National Archives

## EDITOR'S JOURNAL

The Fall 2018 issue of *Army History* offers two excellent articles, a look at an important artifact, a glimpse of a new Center of Military History (CMH) publication, a robust crop of book reviews, and notes from both the Center's director and chief historian.

The first article, by Dr. John "Jay" Boyd, examines an element of the U.S. participation in the First World War that has, unbelievably, been almost completely ignored—the U.S. National Army. This draftee force made up the bulk of U.S. troops in France, yet no major contemporary works on the National Army's creation, training, and time in combat exist. Boyd is striving to correct this omission in the historical record, with this article serving as the first thrust while he completes a book-length study.

The second article, by Douglas E. Nash Sr., who has previously been published in *Army History* (most recently in the Fall 2017 issue), presents an interesting look at a smaller and relatively unknown part of the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Nash argues that the fighting around the German town of Kesternich in mid-December 1944 was the linchpin to the success or failure of the Nazi's counteroffensive. If the Americans were to capture and hold Kesternich, the right flank of the German's wheeling attack would have been exposed. He makes a strong argument that the conflict for Kesternich really was the battle that saved the Bulge.

The National Museum of the United States Army feature examines an important part of Revolutionary War material culture. This issue also offers a look at a new CMH book that highlights the Army's collection of World War I artwork. In addition, as usual, we present eight book reviews that will no doubt be of great interest to our readership.

The director of CMH discusses the importance of history and historians to the Army's institutional memory and readiness for future conflicts. He also describes the Center's efforts in France in support of the World War I Centennial commemorations.

Finally, the chief historian provides updates on a number of important personnel changes at CMH, from a new Career Program 61 director to the arrival of a new batch of graduate research assistants.

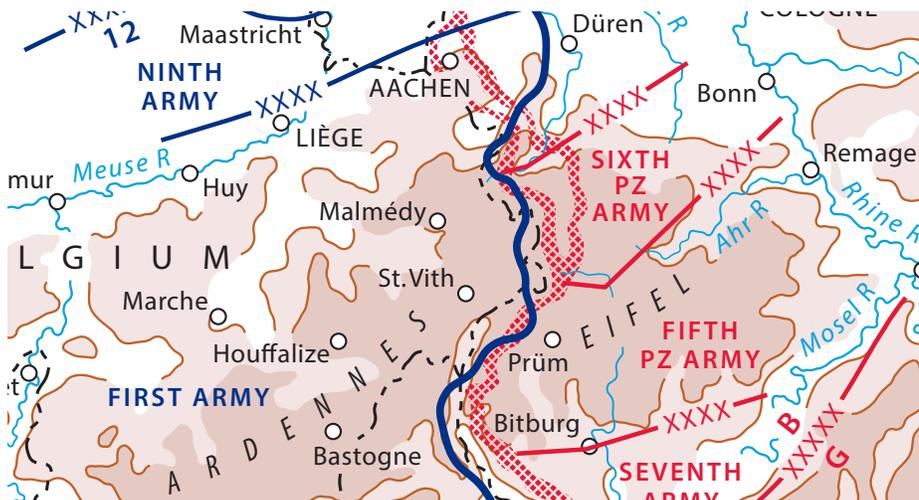
Bryan J. Hockensmith  
Managing Editor



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**KESTERNICH  
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# THE CHIEF'S CORNER

CHARLES R. BOWERY JR.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ARMY HISTORY AND WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS

I recently had the pleasure of attending the Army Birthday Ball here in Washington, D.C. The event is an annual celebration of the establishment of the Continental Army on 14 June 1775, and usually includes a strong historical component. For the past two years, the Center of Military History has been honored to be entrusted with the development of much of the ball's World War I Centennial theme. This year's 243d birthday celebration expanded on last year's "Over There!" theme to highlight Army heroes in various eras. It was a poignant reminder of the centrality of history and historians to the institutional memory of our Army.

During his formal remarks, Secretary of the Army Dr. Mark Esper presented an extended reflection on the value of historical awareness in building future readiness. "As we honor that history—our heritage," he began, "I also want to talk about how the lessons of the past one hundred years can help shape the Army of 2028." He noted the costs, in lives and treasure, of a force being unprepared for war, and that this lack of preparedness can often be traced directly to a failure to remember our past. Secretary Esper challenged us not to "forget what has made us the world's preeminent fighting force" and to "ensure we remember the lessons from the past one hundred years."

No Army historian could fail to note, while listening to our service's senior leader, that the Army's Command and General Staff College is preparing to make deep cuts to military history instruction for midgrade officers. All of us must strive to make Army History relevant and impactful to current operations, in all places all the time. With that imperative in mind, we have two upcoming forums to foster collaboration and an exchange of ideas. From 14 to 17 August, we will hold the Military History Coordinating Committee and Department of the Army Historical Advisory Subcommittee at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, for command and professional military

education historians and subcommittee members. From 10 to 14 December, we will hold the second iteration of our Continuing Museum Training Course at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, for Army Museum Enterprise museum directors and senior staff. If you are invited to one or both of these events, please attend, make your voice heard, and be a part of our ongoing response to a resource-constrained environment.

Finally, I'm proud to report that the passion and skills of Army historians were on full display in late May in France as we conducted the first iteration of our World War I Centennial commemorations. We had a week packed with staff rides, unit heritage events, and commemoration ceremonies at American memorials and cemeteries, all focused on the Regular Army divisions of the American Expeditionary Forces. We hosted more than sixty leaders and soldiers from the 1st, 2d, and 3d Infantry Divisions. Later this year I will write an article and include photos to capture the high points of all the commemorations, but I leave you today with two quotes from participants that speak to how meaningful the events were:

"To come here in person is just an awe-inspiring experience to see what happened and learn the history firsthand . . . it is humbling. I wouldn't trade this experience for the world." (Staff Sergeant, 1st Infantry Division)

"I initially wondered how much value the lessons of World War I would have to my unit today. Once we got out here I saw the immense value and how applicable and valuable the lessons learned are to today's Army." (Commanding General, 3d Infantry Division)

Let's continue to educate, inspire, and preserve!



# NEWSNOTES

## NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM CMH

The Center of Military History is proud to announce the publication of two new additions to its U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I series. The first, *The Marne: 15 July–6 August 1918*, by Stephen C. McGeorge and Mason W. Watson, covers the American Expeditionary Forces' (AEF) participation in the Second Battle of the Marne. Between March and July 1918, a series of four major German offensives had sought to break through the Allied lines. By mid-July, German troops had advanced to the edge of the Marne River, but fierce resistance from the Allies halted their forward momentum. Between 15 and 17 July, American divisions along the Marne and in Champagne played a decisive role in stopping the German advance, most notably alongside the French forces defending the strategically vital city of Reims. From 18 July to 6 August, American units took part in the Allied counteroffensives that pushed the Germans back from the Marne to the Vesle River. The narrative of

this volume focuses on the American efforts on the critical Marne salient, where AEF divisions fought side by side for the first time.

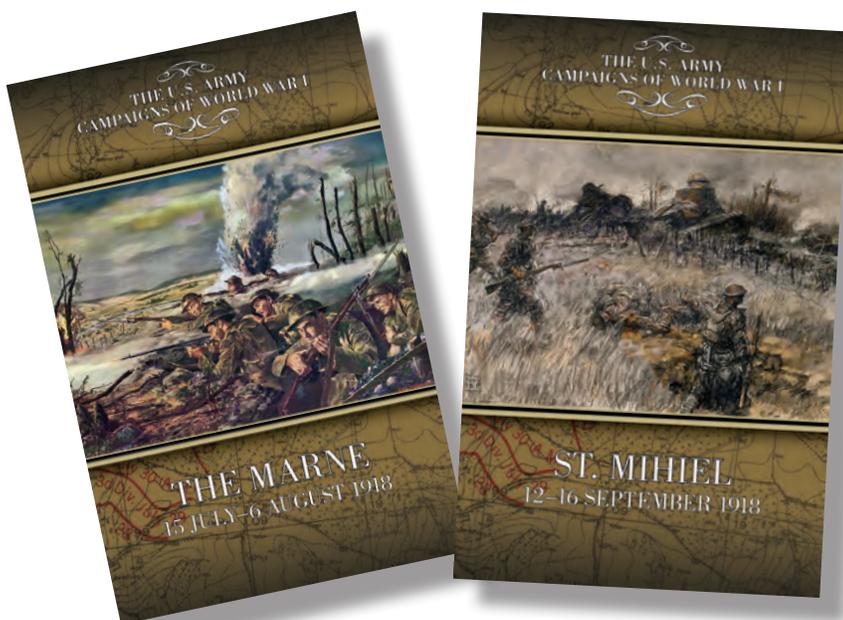
The second pamphlet, *St. Mihiel: 12–16 September 1918*, by Donald A. Carter, explores the AEF's participation in the St. Mihiel Offensive in September 1918. The St. Mihiel salient, created during the initial German invasion in 1914, had withstood multiple French efforts to regain the territory. Yet, even though the Germans had established strong defensive positions around St. Mihiel, the salient was highly vulnerable to attack and was an optimal target for a potential American operation. Until this point in the war, members of the AEF had not fought in a formation larger than a corps, and then only under French or British leadership. Now, as part of the American First Army under General John J. Pershing, they prepared to launch an offensive that would demonstrate to the Allies and the Germans alike that the Americans were capable of operating independently. The AEF's successful efforts in the

St. Mihiel Offensive, and the lessons it learned during the battle, helped set the stage for the grand Allied offensive to come that would seize the initiative on the Western Front.

These booklets have been issued as CMH Pub 77–5 and CMH Pub 77–7, respectively. Both pamphlets will be available for requisition by Army units through their normal channels and for purchase by the general public from the U.S. Government Publishing Office.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: D-DAY AT SEVENTY-FIVE

As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the D-Day landings during World War II, *Army History* is requesting submissions that focus specifically on aspects of this seminal event. In addition to the standing invitation for articles, the details of which appear in every issue of *Army History* in the Call for Submissions box, we are now looking for contributions that touch on the wide range of topics related to Operation OVERLORD. Our intention is to publish a few quality pieces in the Summer 2019 issue. Articles should be between 4,000 and 8,000 words with endnotes, and the use of primary sources is highly encouraged. It is also suggested that authors adhere to the CMH Style Guide (<https://history.army.mil/howto.html>). Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format, double spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font, and should be sent before February 2019 to the following email address as an attachment, [usarmy.mcnair.cmh.mbx.army-history@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.mcnair.cmh.mbx.army-history@mail.mil)



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Dr. John A. Boyd**, an Army Reserve officer, received his bachelor's degree in history from Vanderbilt University, two master's degrees in history and education at the University of Cincinnati, and a Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky. In 2003 he was appointed the historian for the 81st Regional Support Command and later became the director of Army Reserve History from 2014 to 2016. He is currently the command historian for the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps. He deployed to Iraq with a Military History Detachment in 2005–2006 as a theater historian. In 2010 he was attached as a command historian to Joint Task Force HAITI as part of Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE. He devotes much of his time to performing research with his wife Rachel—also a military historian. He is currently writing a book on the U.S. National Army.



Two unidentified soldiers of the 77th Division

# AMERICA'S ARMY of DEMOCRACY

## THE NATIONAL ARMY, 1917–1919



BY JOHN A. BOYD

 Baccarat Sector, France, 12 July 1918: Unlimbering their gun, Capt. Anderson Dana's Battery A, 305th Field Artillery, 77th Division, National Army, feverishly worked their French 75-mm. artillery piece while Cpl. Andrew Ancelewitz aimed the weapon based on the latest scouting report. Seconds later, Sgt. Fred Wallace relayed Lt. Col. Henry Stimson's order to fire to Pvt. George Elsmek, who "pulled the lanyard sending the first National Army shell whistling across the Boche trenches."<sup>1</sup> For Colonel Stimson, a former and future Secretary of War and Captain Dana's battalion commander, his dream of an army of trained citizen-soldiers had become reality.<sup>2</sup>

From August 1914 to April 1917, Americans watched in horror as hundreds of thousands of British, French, Germans, Austria-Hungarians, Russians, and others slaughtered each other on the battlefields of Europe, and yet, the United States had failed to prepare itself for the possibility that it too might go to war. When the nation finally did declare war on Germany on 6 April 1917, the Regular Army and National Guard combined only numbered 213,557 soldiers—an army the Germans rated as somewhere between those of Portugal and Belgium.<sup>3</sup> To make up for this lack of manpower, the United States built a draftee "Emergency Army" of combat divisions that ultimately became known as the National Army.

This article focuses primarily on the National Army from 1917 to 1919, a unique part of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). To date, no publication or literature has been discovered that discusses the contributions of the National Army as a distinct entity, and this narrative is intended to address that oversight. During its brief but significant existence, the National Army (NA) evolved from an untrained "Emergency Army" of conscripts into a distinct military component comparable to the Regular Army (RA) and National Guard (NG). It became an organization that proved itself worthy of consideration as a reserve force—the strategic reserve America had failed to build before the war. With this in mind, NA divisions became the



Henry L. Stimson, c. 1912

foundation of a new reserve component in 1920: the Organized Reserve.<sup>4</sup>

## BIRTH OF THE NATIONAL ARMY

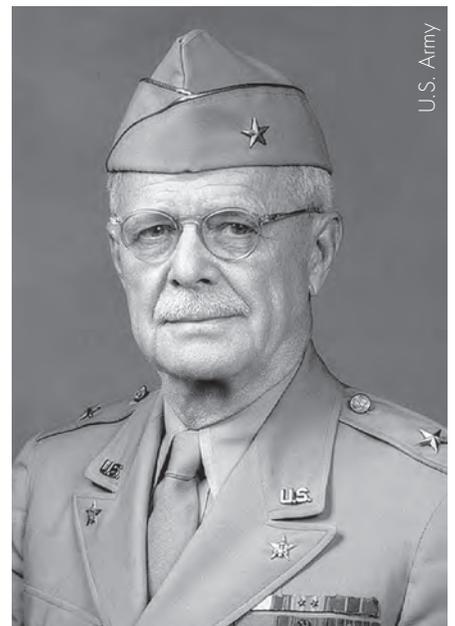
Alarmed at the prospect of war and the failure of earlier defense legislation to pass in Congress, U.S. Army planners Capt. John McAuley Palmer and Capt. George V. H. Moseley developed a manpower measure called the National Army plan in February 1917. Their plan divided the U.S. into sixteen training areas determined by population and advocated compulsory military training for eligible males of military age. Still a prewar peacetime proposal, it stipulated nine years to build a reserve force of two million to three million men; additionally, it was intended for continental defense only, or so the Senate was told.<sup>5</sup>

The declaration of war in April 1917 changed this. A revised Palmer-Moseley plan—ready “just in time”—was approved by Congress and the War Department. What followed was an eleventh-hour attempt to stand up the reserve force the nation had failed to build.<sup>6</sup> “Hereafter we must always have a sufficiently large reserve of trained citizen soldiers to insure our safety,” the *New York Times* scolded. “If we had possessed such an army, the course of this war would have been different.”<sup>7</sup>

Using relevant sections of the National Defense Act of 1916, which

established a Regular Army, Volunteer Army, National Guard, and an Officer Reserve and Enlisted Reserve Corps, Congress and the War Department used the “volunteer army” reference to create the “National Army.”<sup>8</sup> President Woodrow Wilson also authorized the War Department to reorganize the entire U.S. Army.<sup>9</sup> The Army General Staff assigned numbers 1 through 25 to Regular Army divisions, 26 through 50 to the National Guard, and 76 through 100 to the National Army divisions.<sup>10</sup> Based on the Palmer-Moseley plan, sixteen NA divisions would be built, starting with the 76th Division.<sup>11</sup> With Wilson’s signing of a Selective Service Act on 18 May 1917, the first 500,000 conscripts would report to training camps throughout August and September 1917. To house and train the National Army, sixteen Army cantonments—one per division—were selected throughout the United States and hastily built. Camps Upton, Jackson, Dix, Sherman, and Lewis were but a few examples.

As the first draftees reported to the camps, they were met in most cases by U.S. Reserve (USR) officers commissioned through Officer Training Camp programs or Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) schools. At Camp Dix, a soldier recalled he was met “by a young officer who wore ‘U.S.R.’ on his collar and who had a steady, appraising eye.”<sup>12</sup> In fact, the building of NA



John McAuley Palmer, shown here as a brigadier general, c. 1945.



Captain Moseley

divisions was primarily a USR officer concern: “I believe the influence of the Reserve officers has been a most potent factor in the rapid molding of the drafted men,” observed a visitor, the Rev. Joseph H. Odell.<sup>13</sup>

Regular Army officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) were few and far between, averaging less than 1.5 percent of an NA division. They could only be found in upper level



A panoramic view of Camp Lewis, 28 September 1917



A panoramic view of Camp Sherman, c. 1918



A panoramic view of Camp Upton, c. 1919



Governor Manning, c. 1917

division and regimental staff headquarters or, in the case of NCOs, in battalion and company level senior NCO assignments.<sup>14</sup> In his examination of the National Army's 81st Division, historian Allen Skinner determined that 92 percent of all second lieutenants and 63 percent of captains were USR.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, public interest in the war effort intensified with the draft. By design, states and communities had a vested stake in their National Army. In a deliberate effort, the draftees were regionally organized into multi-state divisions. The 81st Division, for example, was made up of men from South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. The governor of South Carolina, Richard I. Manning III, had six sons in the Army, two of whom were with the 81st Field Artillery training at Camp Jackson, South Carolina, and one as an officer in the 79th Division.

The 80th Division consisted of men from Virginia, West Virginia, and parts of Pennsylvania. The 77th Division was primarily from New York, whereas the 313th Infantry of the 79th Division was nicknamed "Baltimore's Own" for obvious reasons.

### CREATING A NATIONAL ARMY IDENTITY: "DRAFTED MAN AS GOOD AS VOLUNTEER"<sup>16</sup>

There were a number of things all Americans needed to know: militarily, they had to understand that a draftee army was as good as a volunteer force—whether true or not—and the draftee needed to believe that he was. Maj. Gen. Charles J. Bailey, commander of the 81st Division training at Camp Jackson, submitted a one-page newspaper commentary to this effect. "So much for the system," began Bailey, complaining how voluntary enlistments had fallen





**General Bailey, c. 1918**

short of manpower needs. To his mind the draftee army was more democratic. In fact, “The most democratic army in the world . . . in a country where democracy rules, is the drafted army.” Men from every class and social distinction—from the mountains to lowlands, rich and poor, college graduate to illiterate—met as equals. Bailey went on to commend the selection of NA officers,



**George Creel, 1917**

saying their “military ability is the only qualification that counts. Wealth, family, social position, or friendship have no weight. There is no man in the National Army who does not have an equal chance with every other man to obtain promotion.”<sup>17</sup>

Yes, the National Army seemed different—more democratic and egalitarian. George Creel of the Committee



**Charles Evans Hughes, c. 1917**

on Public Information told the nation that drafting all ethnicities, religions, social classes, and professions leveled the playing field. Unlike the Civil War draft, no man could buy his way out of the war with a substitute. “The National Army is a real American melting pot,” observed defeated 1916 presidential candidate Charles Evans Hughes while touring NA cantonments; “the

war might rid the United States of racial bigotry and class distinction.”<sup>18</sup>

There was still the color line, however, where “radical Southerners profess[ed] to be afraid of conscription because of the possibility of an encroachment on white supremacy in the South.”<sup>19</sup> Responding to outcries from African-American leaders, political objections were overcome, and two African-American NA divisions were authorized, the 92d and 93d Divisions. One white officer with the 92d commented, “Shoes spick and span, uniforms neat and clean, slick and natty—that’s the Negro soldier. He’s there. He’ll write his reputation big in France. He’s working like a fiend. He has a big pride in his Division—the Ninety-second, composed entirely of Negro soldiers.”<sup>20</sup> This all-black draftee combat division, the “Buffalo” Division, would be the sixth NA division to deploy to France, arriving 19 June 1918.<sup>21</sup>

The ideals of democracy and egalitarianism were well and good; but more important to mothers, fathers, spouses, and others was the reassurance that their loved ones were safe and doing well—that they were with the right sort of men, moral men, who wanted to “make good.” For that matter, the unity of the war effort demanded that the draftee NA divisions be nothing but patriotic Americans dedicated to the war effort, or so it was written. Dozens of articles and stories were published informing the public that their draftee soldiers were well taken care of, healthy, training enthusiastically, living in a morally uplifting environment, and accommodating to Army life well with other “Great Americans.” These were not “conscripts” but men who had been honorably inducted, men who had patiently waited for their number to be called so they could answer the colors. Books like *Blown in by the Draft* and *The New Spirit of the New Army* addressed the perceived concerns of the nation. “If you feel after reading the book [*The New Spirit of the New Army*] that your son has joined the Y.M.C.A. rather than the army . . . you are not so far wrong after all,” mentioned a *New York Times* book review. Another

declared, “Strange and wonderful is the great Army of Freedom!”<sup>22</sup> Within these books and articles, such as *Our New National Army*, *The National Army*, or *The Man in the National Army*, were fairy-tale stories about the occasional German immigrant who chose to serve his new country and fight “Kaiser Bill,” the pacifist leaning man with doubts, or the antiwar Socialist who suddenly realized the error of his ways and became a first class fighting man.

Of these “patriot reassurance” books, *Our First Half Million*, by Edward Lyell Fox is a shining example of National Army patriotism. Fox joined the National Army in 1917, was commissioned a captain of field artillery after attending Officer Training School in Madison, New York, and was assigned to the 349th Field Artillery of the African American 92d Division. Few writers were as enthusiastic about the NA or the future of the “Buffalo” Division as Fox. A self-made adventurer and author of two books about his 1915 experiences in wartime Germany, he was reassigned to the Army Military Intelligence Division in Washington, D.C., just in time to discover that his books were banned for being pro-German. Undaunted, Fox would publish *Our First Half Million* under the pseudonym “Captain X” and the book would be his last.<sup>23</sup>

For Fox, the National Army was serious business, and its soldiers were a world away from being naïve flag wavers singing “Over There.” National Army draftees understood what was at stake:

They entered this war after reading of it for three years. They know its horrors. In this they are unlike the men of any nation whom circumstances rushed into war, as into an Unknown Adventure. Our men know this war; they followed it in the press since its outbreak. They are going in, dogged and grim; theirs is a cold courage.<sup>24</sup>

For today’s reader, an examination of such wartime literature seems entirely over the top—propaganda or patriotic gore—easily dismissed, but

the fact is there was simply too much of it. The average NA soldier-in-training was being told through multiple sources—his officers, trainers, books, journals, manuals, newspapers, politicians, ministers, and visiting camp dignitaries—that he was a unique and exceptional soldier serving in an egalitarian army fighting a war for democracy. His indoctrination started at home with *The Home-Reading Course for Citizen-Soldiers*, designed and issued by the War Department for general use. This series of thirty daily lessons, intended for “the men selected for service in the National Army,” appeared as a pamphlet or in hometown newspapers. It offered “practical help in getting started in the right way,” and featured such lessons as “Making Good as a Soldier,” team building, camp life, guard duty, foot care, and “Playing the Game.” Lesson No. 27, “The Spirit of the Service,” reminded draftees that “the National Army has been picked to represent all parts of the country and all groups of the people. Never has America sent forth an army so truly representative of the nation.”<sup>25</sup>

“The very air,” declared Capt. X [Fox], “breathes with the deep purpose of the new army and its deep conviction in the justice of our cause. *We will not lose.*”<sup>26</sup> When so indoctrinated, it was inevitable that over time a majority of NA soldiers came to believe they were “Soldiers of Democracy.” This was fine with the Regular Army, for initially an NA identity was encouraged.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the NG, this was a force the RA could directly control. The moment had arrived, and they intended to build a model army in their own image using Regular and Reserve officers.

As mentioned, NA divisions contained more USR officers commissioned through ROTC or Officer Training Camp programs than any of the three components; RA and NG officers tended to stay with their divisions.<sup>28</sup> Also different, due to their draftee origins, National Army units contained a higher percentage of foreign-born soldiers. As noted earlier, the 77th “Metropolitan” Division, also known as the “Statue of Liberty” Division or “Melting Pot” Division, was built with large numbers of New

York draftees of all ethnicities and faiths. The 77th bragged that forty-six different languages were spoken, but similar situations existed in the 78th, 79th, and 82d Divisions, among others. This, too, made NA divisions decidedly different from the rest of the Army at the start of the war.<sup>29</sup>

Leaders of the new National Army purposely inculcated their soldiers with an esprit de corps. The officers of the RA well understood that men performed better in battle as a team fighting for the ideals embodied in their units. All NA soldiers wore a unique identifying collar disk with the letters N and A superimposed over the “U.S.” or some variation thereof. Like the RA and NG divisions, men of the NA chose colorful and descriptive nicknames for their divisions. Men fought in the 78th “Lightning,” 82d

“All-American,” 86th “Black Hawk,” or 91st “Wild West” Divisions. In fact, by March 1918, all divisions were instructed to select a symbol with which to mark their equipment for easier identification while overseas. The 81st “Wild Cat” Division went a step further, creating a distinctive unit shoulder patch—a three-legged wildcat on an olive drab circle. At the time, shoulder patches were non-regulation, but General John J. Pershing, the commander of the AEF, could not help but acquiesce and permit an NA division to tout its identity; after all, a unit shoulder patch was yet another way of telling the Allies that the United States intended to fight as an independent army with its own units, not as individual soldier replacements for the French and British. Once Pershing approved the “Wild Cat” patch, all divisions were authorized to wear a shoulder sleeve insignia.

enough to do,” declared Col. John Howard of the Camp Upton Military Police.<sup>30</sup>

For the many foreigners in the ranks—18 percent of all U.S. soldiers were born outside of the country—the Army created the Foreign-speaking Soldier Subsection (FSS), which sponsored English classes and civic lessons to make the troops “better Americans.” But surprisingly, there were few efforts to forcefully Americanize foreign-born soldiers. Instead, they were often organized into small units based on their language or ethnicity using native speaking officers. To instill patriotism, well-known ethnic or religious leaders toured the training camps inspiring them to do their part and “make good.”<sup>31</sup>

The largest ethnic groups to immigrate to the United States between

General Pershing, c. 1917



Library of Congress

### THE NATIONAL ARMY AS A PROGRESSIVE ERA SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

Truly the National Army was a new model army, a great experiment born during the Progressive era. Liberal reformers of all types flocked to help mold and shape the soldiers of the new divisions. Convinced that engaging men in positive activities built moral men, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker selected Progressive reformer Raymond Fosdick to head the new Commission of Training Camp Activities (CTCA). Soon all NA cantonments offered soldiers sports activities, libraries, movies, musical shows, and YMCA huts (for a feel of family and home). Fosdick appointed Joseph Lee to run the new War Camp Community Service (WCCS), which mimicked the Playground and Recreation Association of America, of which Lee was a founder. The subtitle of one *New York Times* article informed readers, that these efforts were designed to keep the “Good Behavior of the National Army’s Young Soldiers . . . Under the Influence of Rational Safeguards and Systematized Recreation.” In other words, “the army is neither a reformatory nor a Sunday school. It has quite

Secretary Baker, 1916



Library of Congress



Raymond Fosdick, c. 1917



General Wood, c. 1919

the possible shell shock that goes with time in hell.<sup>33</sup>

## THE NATIONAL ARMY AS AN EMERGING COMPONENT

Gradually, if not fitfully, the NA acquired the characteristics of a military subculture similar to, but also different from, the RA and NG. Military correspondence of the day seldom used the term “component” when referring to the NA, but often used “branch,” just as the RA and NG were branches of the Army. In any organization, a critical ingredient when creating a subculture is time, and here NA soldiers inadvertently stayed in cantonments longer than RA or NG troops—long enough to undergo an ideological incubation period. The deployment of NA divisions was often delayed, in some cases for as long as nine months. It was during their extended stay in the camps that draftees were inculcated with a loyalty to their comrades, regiment, division, and the National Army. These delays were not intentional, but rather, a byproduct of American unpreparedness. Pershing explained,

[T]here was little equipment left even for the additional men required to fill up the National Guard. Unfortunately, this made it necessary to delay calling out more drafts for units of the National Army. However, considerable numbers were called into service and proceeded with preliminary instruction, but the lack of equipment seriously delayed their progress.<sup>34</sup>



A War Camp Community Service poster, 1918

1885 and 1914 had been Italians and Russians. These numbers were reflected in the national draft; for example, the 77th Division was also known as the “Yiddish Division” due to the large number of Russian Jews in the ranks. In 1917, while the 77th trained at Camp Upton, the commanding general requisitioned a train to transport 3,000 Jewish soldiers to Passover services in New York.

While Progressives conducted their social experiments, the Regular Army was, again, not displeased with the direction and goals of its new model army. Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood, an advocate of compulsory military training before the war, believed “a man’s economic efficiency and citizenship value [was] enhanced by military training.” In fact, a soldier “has learned the habits of promptness, personal neatness, respect for authority, respect for law, respect for the rights of other people, . . . to value men at their true worth, one in whom the narrow prejudices of locality, religion, environment have been largely ironed out.”<sup>32</sup>

The intended end state was an army of physically fit, well-disciplined, highly trained soldiers with superior habits of health and morality. Yes, give the draftee to the National Army, and, according to Wood, “You have made him a better American”—provided the soldier could survive the trauma of artillery and machine gun barrages, rifle and hand-to-hand combat, the death and maiming of comrades, and

The Army General Staff’s overall scheme was to deploy the RA divisions first, then the NG divisions followed by NA divisions once they were validated for combat and deployment. This is more or less what happened: “Our little Regular Army, our National Guard, is speeding overseas,” Fox told his readers. “In that vast battle line of Europe, they will be swallowed up. But they will hold the line until the National Army comes, until we come.”<sup>35</sup> By the end of May 1918, nine NG divisions were in France, compared to three NA divisions.<sup>36</sup>



Joseph Lee, c. 1918

Undoubtedly, the NA divisions were in the camps longer, some too long, and as is true for most military organizations, unit pride and self-identity often expressed itself competitively—with the nearest rival being the National Guard. “The Reserve officers . . . want their units to overtake the National Guard and stand abreast of the Regular Army as quickly as possible,” observed Reverend Odell.<sup>37</sup> Often, RA and NA leaders targeted the NG as undemocratic and elitist. In General Bailey’s view, the social underpinnings of the NG “handicaps [them] at the start, and . . . valuable time is needed to eliminate it.” An additional problem, as Bailey saw it, was volunteers had “much to unlearn.”

In any volunteer organization I have ever known both rank and file had much to unlearn before they could start on the rough and thorny path to efficiency, and this severance of old time relations and the adoptions of new ones is an unfortunate necessity among volunteers as we have always organized them.<sup>38</sup>

This “time to unlearn” theme applied to officers and enlisted men: the “National Guard officer undergoes no test of ability in many States,” declared Bailey, in words worthy of a hardheaded Regular Army officer.<sup>39</sup> Others simply implied the NG was “handicapped by the fact that a large percentage of its men had only a smattering of military knowledge . . . which had to be unlearned before the training in the newer ideas of warfare could begin.”<sup>40</sup>

In an article titled “Claim Drafted Men Outdistanced Guards,” it was revealed that the War Department’s initial plan had been to deploy the bulk of NG troops to France prior to moving the NA divisions, but due to an inspection of the NA, authorities seemed convinced “that many of the national army divisions are in better shape than the national guard.” Adding insult to injury, NG officers blamed their delay on their allotment of draftees, calling them men of “the poorest sort of soldier material.”<sup>41</sup>

Such thinking was not confined to the officer class. A few enlisted soldiers

of both components developed mutual dislikes for each other while training in the camps. This low-level noise morphed into an irritating intraservice rivalry in which each gave as good as they got.

When a secondary headline in *The State* (Columbia, S.C.) proclaimed, “National Guard Sings Better Than National Army,” the average reader might have expected an amusing anecdote. If so they were quickly disappointed. Singing in this era was serious business, and cantonment song leaders concluded that “a difference is readily noticed in the National Guard and National Army camps.” National Guard singers were regarded as “further advanced” because they had sung together for years when compared to the NA draftees.<sup>42</sup> This musical assessment may well have been the equivalent of lyrical “fighting words.”

Pfc. Kendrick Parks, Medical Detachment, 116th Field Artillery NG, Camp Jackson, had heard enough. National Army officers evidently ridiculed several of his comrades, telling them they were substandard, and used the derogatory comment “National Guard, eh?” when making corrections. Sergeants of the NA were doing the same things, sizing up NG troops, deriding their habits, discipline, appearance, and criticizing their work.

In a fiery letter, Parks defended the NG saying, “whatever be said antagonistic to the National Guard, there is vastly more to be said in their favor.”

Parks acknowledged that the Guard had initially made mistakes, exposing itself to “unjust slander from some of those who came into service after them,” but the Guard’s hard learned lessons helped the entire Army. Senior leaders had shaped “their plans and moulded [sic] them through experiments with the National Guard.” Of the NA he remarked, “some of that little cheap element should be instructed in common sense, policy and courtesy . . . lately old National Guard men have suffered abuse and humiliation.” Ending his letter in a flurry of NG indignation, Parks concluded saying, “All this antagonism will perish with the other little things of the war . . . when records are reviewed in the light of peace.”<sup>43</sup> History would prove Parks right, but meanwhile for good, bad, or ugly, NA officers and enlisted men had developed a self-identity, sometimes at NG expense. The National Army had come of age.

Did component differences influence deployment and organization? When examined, the Army General Staff and AEF appeared sensitive to the types of combat divisions it put onto the line. At one point they evidently organized corps based on RA, NG, and NA components. In late March 1918, the *New York Tribune* reported, “Draft Troops not to be last at Front,” commenting on the Army’s 2–2–2 Corps organizational plan. The intent was for each AEF Corps to consist of two RA, two NG, and two NA divisions.

### Secretary Baker drawing a lottery number for the draft



Not surprisingly, this plan eventually crashed and burned as corps were adjusted and reorganized in France. By May, a new corps organization plan called for one RA, one NG, and one NA division each.<sup>44</sup> This was tacit recognition of the NA as a unique component. Senior leaders likely believed that NA divisions needed to be mixed evenly with their RA and NG counterparts.<sup>45</sup> For those keeping score, NA divisions outnumbered RA and NG divisions in France for the first time on 25 August 1918.<sup>46</sup>

### 7 AUGUST 1918, GENERAL ORDER NO. 73: "THIS COUNTRY HAS BUT ONE ARMY—THE UNITED STATES ARMY."<sup>47</sup>

At the highest levels, Secretary Baker, Army Chief of Staff General Peyton March, General Pershing, and others had endured enough "component" quibbling. "[T]here had grown a feeling of irritation and friction . . . between the different elements comprising the army," complained March, and he intended to stop it.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, it was irritating low-level noise—there was a war to be won. When such bickering filtered down from officers to privates, it was time to call a halt. For pragmatic reasons as well as economies of scale, the time had come to roll all components into one unified "United States

Army." In truth, the RA, NA, and NG designations had provided a wartime expedient for building and fielding divisions. However, over time, as RA and NG divisions received their share of draftees and replacements, the initial differences between the components had started to blur. This was a reasonable yet questionable claim.

Frankly, the elimination of "branches" (components) seemed pragmatic, part of a larger plan to uncomplicate staff work. It was also timely, for the RA was creating component neutral divisions. In the belief that more divisions were needed to end the war in 1919, the Army was building divisions 9 through 14, and on 1 August 1918, six additional RA divisions, 15 through 20, were announced. These twelve RA divisions were built on a new organizational and training model; each would consist of two RA and two draftee regiments.<sup>49</sup> With the end of component differences, regiments, officers, and men could be efficiently moved throughout the total army structure. The NG, and for that matter the NA, had bought the RA much needed time, but there would be no new NG divisions fielded, and once the 100th or 101st NA Divisions were manned and deployed, the likelihood of new NA divisions was questionable.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, it was with much self-satisfaction that March discussed at length the creation of a unified United States Army with the *New York Times* on 11 August 1918:

Unification will undoubtedly remove the cause of, or rather the opportunity for, much dissatisfaction among the three different branches [components]. Each has been likely to think that it was discriminated against with reference to the other two, whether the question concerned an officer's promotion or retirement, or sending regiments belonging to one of the other branches to France.<sup>51</sup>

With the issuance of General Order (GO) No. 73, all three components were officially made one army on 7 August 1918.<sup>52</sup> The National Army was no more, and any "reference," warned

March, "to the United States Army as divided into separate and component forces of distinct origin, or assuming or contemplating such a division," was at an end. The identification collar disks of soldiers were to be changed from NA or NG to the RA "U.S." March was especially proud of this achievement, for he believed the bickering would stop, but in reality, component self-identity would not change overnight.<sup>53</sup>

Protesting that "the morale of our men will be hurt by this," New York Governor Charles S. Whitman circulated a petition among governors advocating new insignias for National Guardsmen to preserve their identity. Among his suggestions were red stars on uniform sleeves, state coat-of-arms on campaign hats, piping, or different colored collars. Whitman asked March to delay implementing GO No. 73, but not all governors agreed with him. South Carolina Governor Richard I. Manning III pushed back saying, "my conviction is strong that during the war there should be no distinction . . . that there should be one unified United States Army."<sup>54</sup> A son of the post-Civil War South had opted for the "Union" of one Federal Army.

In Europe, there were few stockpiles of new collar disks—an expensive proposition at best—and the divisional numbering system remained well-known. Soldiers knew who was who. Furthermore, newspapers and military reporting systems still used NA, RA, and NG distinctions, and the differences between officer commissions would never truly die. Then again, allegiance to the National Army was perhaps strongest in the training camps and with those stationed stateside. Only the heat of battle would determine the true nature of the three components.

### "THE EYES OF THE WORLD WERE UPON THEM:" THE NATIONAL ARMY IN BATTLE<sup>55</sup>

After training with the British, the first NA division to arrive in France, the 77th "Statue of Liberty Division," was posted in the Bacarat sector in Lorraine, south of Strasburg on 26 June 1918. The first draftee division was in combat:



Library of Congress

General March, c. 1918



Library of Congress

Charles Whitman being sworn in as governor of New York, 1 January 1915

The 77th was to be the first National Army Division to take over a part of the front line. It was the first real test of a great experiment. It was to determine whether an army recruited from the motley ranks of civilian life could, within a few brief months, be trained into an effective fighting force. It was to forecast whether the natural assets of initiative, alertness, courage and determination could be matched against the iron discipline of a great war machine.<sup>56</sup>

Cpl. Isaac N. Freedman of the 307th Infantry provided firsthand combat news of the “great experiment.” The Germans “used everything on us that they ever had attempted, including gas shells and liquid fire,” he wrote after an attack, “but they were sent back with losses—and they outnumbered us two to one.” Proudly mentioning a handshake from his company commander that “was worth all kinds of money to me,” Freedman concluded his letter saying, “You can tell your friends . . . that the National Army is a success.”<sup>57</sup>

How was the National Army used and how did it fight? Whether by accident or design, NA divisions appear to have fulfilled the role of a strategic reserve. With the creation of the American First Army and the transition to large-scale military offensive operations similar to the Allies, NA divisions became an indispensable part of AEF operations. Put another way, the St. Mihiel attack and the larger Meuse-Argonne Offensive could not have been accomplished without NA divisions.

This begs the question raised by Gen. March as to whether the NA divisions could have been used in combat earlier. After the war, March claimed that both he and the War Department believed,

that these men from the United States obtained by the draft and trained in our camps, who were eager to get on the firing line, could have been utilized in the fighting very much sooner than they were with marked advantage both to the United States and our Allies.<sup>58</sup>

March blamed Pershing’s training plan saying, “I believed that entirely too much time was spent on the training considered necessary by General Pershing before he permitted a man to be sent to the firing line in France.”<sup>59</sup>

“The practical effect of the Pershing policy,” opined March,

was that large bodies of American troops, divisions whose morale was at the highest point, who had had from four to six months in camps in America, and who expected on arrival in France to be thrown into battle immediately, found the keen edge of their enthusiasm dulled by having to go over again and again drills and training they had already undergone in America.<sup>60</sup>

It was more complicated than that. The performance of each American combat division hinged upon how they were trained, led, and how much they learned in combat. The American army used questionable doctrine and training in 1917 and 1918. While

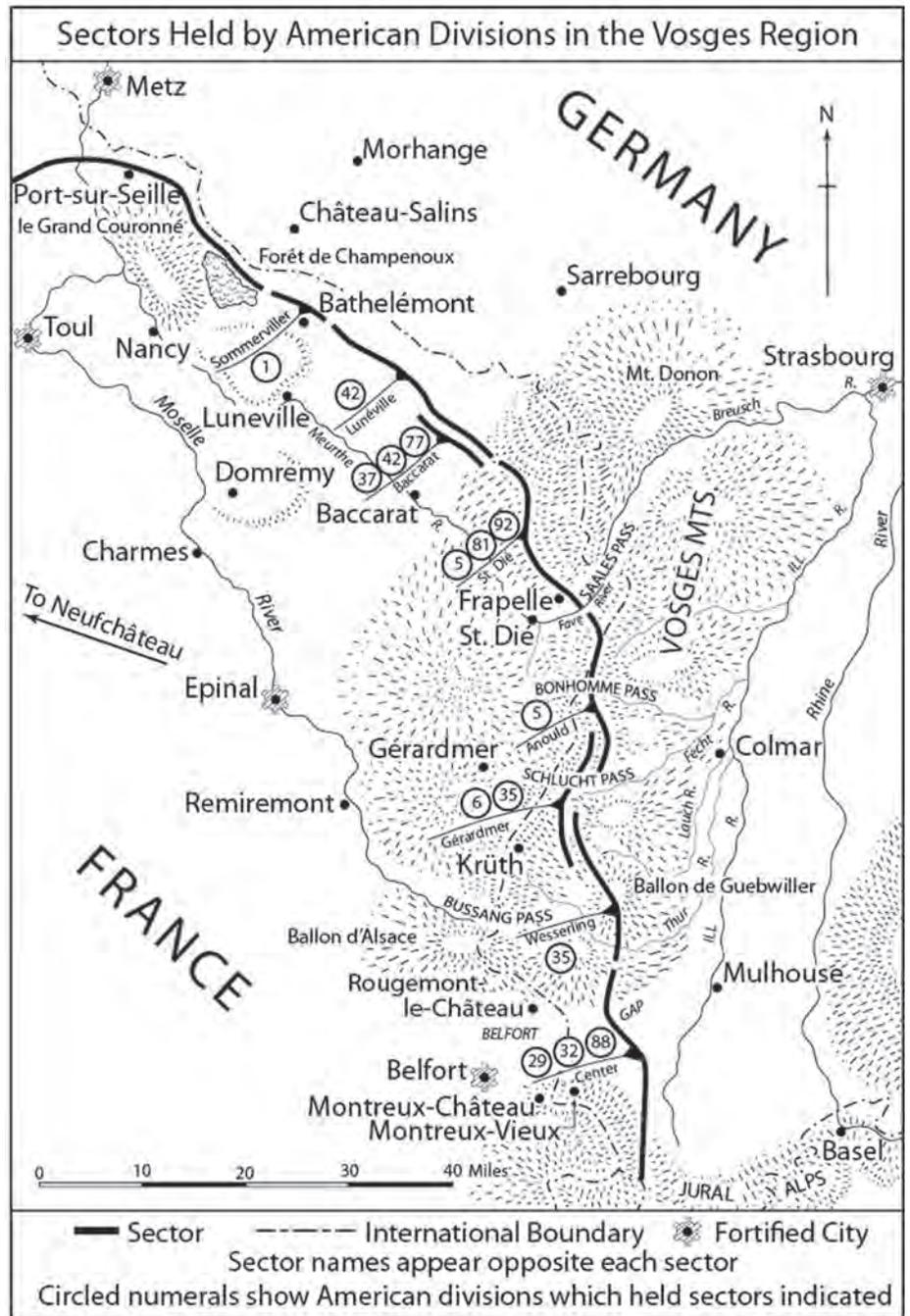


General Pershing insisted on a doctrine of “Open Warfare”—breaking the German trench lines through fire and maneuver and then advancing campaign-style to victory—most NA soldiers had been trained in trench warfare, yet there was precious little of that. Prior to deployment, most NA divisions were repeatedly stripped of troops for use as replacements before finally deploying themselves, meaning that a good number of their soldiers lacked training. This error was compounded when green NA divisions were committed to combat in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne campaigns that ended the war.<sup>61</sup>

Still, National Army divisions began making a name for themselves during the St. Mihiel Offensive of 12 September 1918. It was here that the 89th, 90th, and 82d Divisions, deployed with four veteran divisions, experienced their first combat, while the 78th, 80th, and 91st Divisions were initially placed in reserve to help.<sup>62</sup> The unexpected American attack was a stunning victory and secured the 200-square mile St. Mihiel salient: “It may have represented the high point of the AEF.”<sup>63</sup>

However victorious, many believed that Pershing had overcommitted himself. Concluding the St. Mihiel campaign on 16 September, he had promised the Allies he would then conduct the large-scale Meuse-Argonne Offensive, some fifty miles away, on 26 September. This left his most experienced combat divisions—the 1st, 2d, 26th, and 42d—unable to disengage and out of sector for the impending attack.

According to General March, this compelled Pershing to discard his training program and “shove men into the fighting just as fast as he could get them.”<sup>64</sup> Instead of veteran divisions, the Meuse-Argonne campaign used new divisions. In fact, seven of nine attacking divisions had barely completed their training in France, and of these, five lacked combat experience.<sup>65</sup> Of the nine attacking divisions, four were National Army. Among them was the hapless 79th Division, which was ordered to attack the most difficult and defended position on the entire



42d Division soldiers man their trenches near Baccarat, c. 1918





American troops pass through Montfaucon, c. 1918

front—Montfaucon, nicknamed “Little Gibraltar.” General Pershing believed that “green troops were bursting with enthusiasm and bored by their long stay in the training camps,” and the 79th was therefore assigned to “fix” the enemy to the front of Montfaucon, while the veteran 4th Division on the 79th’s right flank would advance beyond the objective and execute a left turn, capturing Montfaucon from behind.<sup>66</sup> It never happened. The III Corps commander, Maj. Gen. Robert Bullard, creatively reinterpreted the 4th Division’s orders, commanding it to ignore its flanks and move forward. This failure, interpreted by some as betrayal, eventually resulted in over 3,500 casualties during two days of combat for the 79th. Stalled in front of Montfaucon, the concept of “One Army” was torpedoed by Pershing and his staff, who believed a National Army division was holding up the entire First Army, and with it the entire Meuse-Argonne Offensive. However, this was far from the truth. The misuse of the 79th in the attack and General Bullard’s disregard of the battle plan remained contentious throughout the interwar period.

Eventually, the 79th did capture Montfaucon, and the 80th Division of Bullard’s III Corps made respect-

able gains. The 80th participated in all three phases of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the only NA division to do so, earning the sobriquet “Only Moves Forward.” The 77th, 91st, and 89th Divisions would also fight well. Unfortunately, Pershing, who had achieved a strategic surprise on 26 September, now had to contend with German reinforcements who shattered his dream of a breakthrough and open warfare.

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive would be a grinding battle of attrition for forty-seven straight days. It would be the NA’s trial by fire as well as its major contribution to American victory. The NA would incur 37 percent of the battle’s casualties, more than any other component.<sup>67</sup> Its use as a strategic reserve made victory possible.

In a war of attrition, battle metrics meant little. Nevertheless, the Army of 1918 attempted to measure success based on numbers: the number of miles advanced, the number prisoners and equipment captured, and tragically, the number of casualties a division endured—which for some signified fighting prowess. By any measure, National Army divisions fared about as well as most divisions in the AEF. Historian Mark Groteleschen as-

essed the combat ability of all AEF divisions, saying:

Often they did so sloppily, recklessly, occasionally even ineptly; but nevertheless, when American units fought on the defensive, they were rarely thrown back; and when they attacked, they usually moved forward. Though they often suffered more casualties than they should have, ultimately they pushed the Germans back and meted out much punishment along the way.<sup>68</sup>

The first NA division to arrive in France, the 77th, endured 25 percent more casualties than any National Army division, likely because it was on the ground longer. It advanced a total of forty-four miles during the war, followed by the 89th Division with thirty miles. In fact, the NA divisions won the component race, advancing 178 miles compared to the NG’s 175 and the RA’s 128. Days on the front line, however, tell a different story. National Guard divisions totaled 1,095 days, the Regular Army 678 days and the National Army 675—but these statistics are next to meaningless. Time, leaders, terrain, training, and most certainly



Library of Congress

Robert Bullard, shown here as a lieutenant general, c. 1919

the Germans and their fortifications determined the outcome for AEF divisions. When all was said and done, the National Army suffered 13,484 dead—26 percent of the AEF.<sup>69</sup> For the soldiers who died, including Pvt. Henry Gunther of the 79th Division—the last official casualty of the war—component mattered not: they were all one United States Army, buried together in cemeteries throughout France.

### NATIONAL ARMY DIVISIONS AS TRAINERS, DEPOTS, REPLACEMENTS, AND EXPEDITIONARY

The National Army was a success in countless ways not reflected in the combat record. First, its units were utilized as training divisions while stateside to make up for RA and NG division manpower shortages: “Of the forty-one divisions that were sent to France (not including the 93d Division), seventeen lost at least 10,000 men each to transfers between the time they were raised and the time that they sailed for France.” Most of these divisions were National Army. The 79th Division is a notable example: it re-



Courtesy of the Baltimore Sun

Private Gunther (arrow) with other soldiers of the 79th Division



General LeJeune, c. 1920

ceived over 80,000 men during its time in cantonment. Men reported, were trained, and suddenly were reassigned elsewhere, much to the frustration of cadre who then had to start training new troops all over again.<sup>70</sup>

Once in Europe, five NA divisions were skeletonized or converted into depot divisions. The 83d Division was the first to experience this practice when it functioned as the 2d Depot Division on 27 June 1918. At the time, it was one of only two depot divisions intended to manage replacements for nine divisions on the line, seven in training, and six arriving in France.<sup>71</sup> In August, the 76th Division arrived and served as the 3d Depot Division, followed by the 85th Division, which performed as the 4th Depot Division. The 84th and 86th Divisions fared differently: the 84th was broken up, sending its men to the 1st and 2d Depot Divisions, while the 86th was skeletonized, transferring men to the 2d Depot Division and some units to the Service of Supply.<sup>72</sup>

The 83d and 85th Divisions each detached an infantry regiment to entirely different theaters of war. The

332d Infantry of the 83d Division was detached and deployed to Italy to boost Italian morale. It kept the Germans and Austro-Hungarians guessing about where the AEF would strike next. In October 1918, it participated in the Battle of Vittorio Veneto.<sup>73</sup> The 85th Division provided the 339th Infantry and support units for the Northern Russian Expedition. Calling themselves the “Polar Bears,” the regiment’s troops supported a complex mission that resulted from confusion caused by Russia’s exit from the war in 1917 and the ensuing Russian Civil War.<sup>74</sup>

For reasons not fully explained, the 91st Division received orders on 15 October 1918 to move to Belgium under the command of the French VII Corps. Most American officers, especially Maj. Gen. John LeJeune of the 2d Division, were not impressed with French *élan* or leadership in late 1918. LeJeune’s beloved 2d had paid a stiff price in a joint attack on Blanc Mont when slow-moving French divisions exposed the 2d’s left and right flanks to German counterattack. Incensed, LeJeune threatened to resign if his division had to fight alongside the French in any future offensives.<sup>75</sup> This may explain why the 91st found itself the lone NA division under French command so late in the war. Arriving at the end of October, the 91st took part in the Ypres-Lys Offensive until the armistice. No other NA division would again serve under foreign command.

### THE STRATEGIC CONTRIBUTION OF 1919

Significantly, the NA played a strategic role in the outcome of the war. While the RA built additional divisions (9 through 20) for deployment, eight NA divisions, numbers 94 through 101 were equally in some state of organization and/or training when the war ended.<sup>76</sup> These twenty additional combat divisions, of which eight NA were a part, were intended for the Summer-Fall offensives of 1919 that would end the war. The Germans most certainly knew about them. A casual reading of the military’s *Army Navy Register* reveals assignment orders for key officers



General Cochran, 1918

and staff to the divisions. For example, Brig. Gen. William B. Cochran was no doubt eager to leave Camp Gordon to assume command of a brigade of Nebraska and Missouri infantry—soon to become part of the 100th Division organizing at Camp Bowie, Texas.<sup>77</sup> Pershing and the Allies had begun 1918 with the expectation that the war could not be won until 1919; had this been the case, the fielding of these divisions signaled the end of the war for Germany. The existence of this strategic force-in-embryo was yet another reason for German capitulation.

### THE CREATION OF THE ORGANIZED RESERVE, 1920: FROM INDIVIDUAL TO UNIT

On 11 November 1918 the Great War ended. The soldiers of the National Army were transported home, most discharged without parades, and left to resume their lives. While in France, the men created division-level associations to host reunions and assist soldiers making the transition back to civilian life. Unfortunately, this is as far as they went; with the exception of the American Legion—a mix of RA, NG, and NA members—no NA lobbying organization was

formed.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, Congressional committees gathered in 1919 to revise and update the 1916 National Defense Act, at first considering a plan known as the “Baker-March Bill.”<sup>79</sup> Military leaders and others testified before Congress, among them Maj. Gen. John O’Ryan of the National Guard Association. O’Ryan and the National Security League proposed a new component—“a great citizen army, to be known as the national guard corps.” They suggested thirty divisions, functioning as a separate component of the United States Army under the direction of the Secretary of War.<sup>80</sup> Such an entity eliminated any requirement for a federally controlled Reserve Corps or National Army as had occurred in 1917.

Into the fray stepped Col. John McAuley Palmer. Testifying before Congress, Palmer sought to “perpetuate the citizen army of the World War.”<sup>81</sup> He considered the National Guard an “organized citizen army” which, if placed under federal control, could simultaneously serve both state and

nation. He well understood the Regular Army’s desire to have a federal component it could directly control. He also sympathized with veterans who admitted that “if we go back to a vague reserve status like our present reserve corps . . . we are through.” Palmer also believed that “the designation of previously existing local units having records in former wars . . . [like the one just concluded],” could be used as a basis of organization.<sup>82</sup> General Pershing sided with Palmer:

We have a very great asset in our trained units that have had experience in the war. I am referring to the units of the National Guard and so-called National Army. They have returned with traditions, with a history, with pride of service, all of which makes a very valuable asset in any organization that is to be used as a basis for training. I think those divisions should be continued in existence with the officers that

served with them, retaining them in the rank they had as far as their efficiency proved that they were capable of performing the duties of their respective ranks; and **I would hold those divisions and designate them as reserve divisions** [author’s emphasis] into which could be put the young men as they left the training camps. I would try to get together the officers and men who formerly composed these divisions; by so doing the traditions and the esprit of those organizations would be kept alive for the rest of time.<sup>83</sup>

While the proposal was pragmatic in thought, the devil was in the details. The plan Palmer championed advocated a system of Universal Military Training (UMT) that would assign newly trained soldiers directly into the World War I-era divisions—National Guard and National Army—on an equal basis. Upon completion of training, the recruit “would be enrolled for four years in one of the local units of the National Guard or the Organized Reserve [NA divisions] formed in the vicinity of his home.”<sup>84</sup> Palmer, and likely Pershing, well understood that the “whole of the new citizen army would have been strictly a Federal force entirely free from the complicated dual system status of the militia clause of the Constitution.”<sup>85</sup>

Palmer’s concept did not survive scrutiny; Congress would torpedo the plan as too expensive, and the National Guard would rally to defend their prewar status. The newly elected president of the National Guard Association of the United States, Lt. Col. Bennett C. Clark, son of the Democratic Speaker of the House, Champ Clark, was especially vocal, telling adherents in St. Louis, “It is the aim of all of us to build up the national guard and smash the regular army.”<sup>86</sup> Other allies boldly asserted that the Guard did most of the fighting during the war and that the conscription requirement in the proposed “National Defense Act” would force many four-month recruits into the Regular Army for a year to make up for a lack of volunteers. The National Guard “is alive to the efforts of the regular army to foist legislation thru congress which

General O’Ryan, 1918



Bennett Clark during training at Fort Myer in 1917





Courtesy of the College Archives and Special Collections, Williams College

Colonel Whittlesey, c. 1918

will place all control of military affairs with the regular army and eventually kill off the guard,” warned the *Evening Times-Republican* (Marshalltown, Iowa) deep from within the American heartland.<sup>87</sup>

The Guard would gradually tone down its rhetoric, but in the face of Guard distrust and fiscal constraint, Palmer reluctantly threw out UMT and replaced it with a volunteer system. Congress, he parsed, “therefore decided that the new citizen army should be formed in two separate lines, a first line to include the wartime divisions of the National Guard; and a second line, the Organized Reserves, to include the wartime divisions of the National Army.”<sup>88</sup>

On 4 June 1920, the 1916 National Defense Act was amended. It created an Organized Reserve (OR), which incorporated the divisions of the National Army and the prewar Officer Reserve and Enlisted Reserve Corps.<sup>89</sup> *The Army Navy Register* was quick to explain the 1920 Act, saying “each component will have a fixed mission and an equally important role. . . . The Organized Reserve is distinctly a war force. In time of peace it will be maintained [as a] skeletonized

organization or cadre, capable in an emergency of broad expansion.”<sup>90</sup>

To man the former NA divisions, General Pershing issued a call to his 203,786 officers of the Great War to rejoin their old divisions as reserve officers. Over 87,000 officers enthusiastically responded with an additional 12,000 applications kept on file—an extraordinary response. Men like Lt. Col. Charles W. Whittlesey, commander of the famous “Lost Battalion,” wasted no time soliciting his wartime comrades to rejoin the 77th Division.

While far from perfect, the Army’s intent was to man OR divisions with their full complement of officers, plus one-third of their senior enlisted soldiers, all in a nonpay status except when doing two weeks of annual training. In the event of a war, each division would fill the lower ranks with trained draftees and deploy. Meanwhile, OR divisions were established in nine Army Corps areas throughout the country, close to where the original NA divisions had received draftees in 1917.<sup>91</sup> “As the Organized Reserves [*sic*] are distinctly a war force and will attract a class of citizens who do not feel inclined or are unable to undertake the obligations assumed by members of the National Guard,” explained the *Army Navy Register*, “it will be maintained as a cadre of a skeletonized force.” And, perhaps recalling the NA and NG differences of 1918, the *Register* optimistically predicted, “there will be no competition between it and the National Guard.”<sup>92</sup>

Standing up the new OR took time, but eventually the old NA divisions were manned and quasi-functional. For example, the 81st “Wild Cats” headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee, quickly filled 100 percent of their officer slots by 1922, while other divisions did the same or came close.

The National Army had become the new Organized Reserve. A memorandum for the adjutant general of the Army, dated 8 July 1922, stated:

National Army regimental colors which are available will be re-issued to the proper regiments of the Organized Reserves. Pending the adoption of regimental arms and mottos

regimental colors will be issued from the stock now on hand with the old crest by the Minute Man crest.<sup>93</sup>

## THE LEGACY OF THE NATIONAL ARMY

Without the National Army of 1917–1919, today’s Army Reserve might not exist. Prior to the First World War, a small Officer and Enlisted Reserve Corps provided technical specialists to RA and NG units as individual soldier augmentees. Some sources incorrectly reported “The Army Reserve Corps numbered 4,000 enlisted men and no officers” at the start of the war.<sup>94</sup> Right or wrong, the Reserve Corps remained insignificant to many prior to 1917.

In fact, depending upon which prewar plans are examined, congressional leadership usually leaned toward expanding the National Guard while adding more federal control. It took a war emergency demanding millions of men in 1917 to change this, and even here, there were some who promoted the idea of simply expanding NG divisions and putting draftees directly into them. Only a series of mishaps, poor interactions, and misunderstandings between the NG and RA dating back to 1898 prevented this—the RA convinced itself it had to have a federal component it could directly control. For the Organized Reserve, this was a window of opportunity.

Equally fortunate for the Army Reserve was the fact that NA divisions assumed the characteristics of a component during the Great War. The divisions developed unit esprit de corps and a special pride in being NA officers and soldiers. They had been trained and led by a small cadre of RA officers and large numbers of USR officers who had made them in their own image. They knew little about the training camp experiences of the RA and NG components and were repeatedly told they were a uniquely democratic and egalitarian force—exceptional in all respects. Considering the fact that the National Army was the reserve the United States failed to build before the war, moving the NA divisions and their structure to the Organized Reserve seemed logical and pragmatic. In 1920, it could have ended differently; Maj. Gen. O’Ryan’s proposal to create a NG corps of thirty divisions

was only one of several plans that might have relegated the Army Reserve to a minor or nonexistent role.

With the movement of NA divisions to the OR, the Army Reserve had officially moved from individual reserve soldiers to reserve soldiers in units. This institutional change moved the Army Reserve in a direction from which there was no going back. One hundred years later, the lineage of the National Army continues to permeate today's Army Reserve. Many of today's USAR units use the same regimental numbering system and wear the same unit patches that were designed in 1917 and 1918. Every OR division, plus additional divisions, were reactivated in World War II, and like those of 1917–1919, were filled with draftees who went on to win a war. It is their lineage and heritage we celebrate today, and the National Army lineage undoubtedly gave us heroes: Lt. Col. Charles Whittlesey of the 77th's "Lost Battalion," Sgt. Alvin York of the 82d "All American" Division, and Medal of Honor recipients such as Cpl. Freddie Stowers of the 371st Infantry, National Army.<sup>95</sup> It is indeed a heritage worth commemorating.



Courtesy of the American Battle Monuments Commission

The gravestone of Medal of Honor recipient Freddie Stowers at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery



Library of Congress

*In the Wire*, by Eyre Powell. Powell, chief of Union Pacific Press Bureau, was attached to the 89th Division in France in 1918.

## NOTES

1. Julius Ochs Adler, *History of the Seventy-Seventh Division, August 25th, 1917–November 11th, 1918* (New York: W. H. Crawford Company, 1919), p. 209.

2. Stimson served as Secretary of War from 1911 to 1913 and again from 1940 to 1945.

3. The U.S. Army consisted of 9,693 officers and 203,864 enlisted men. “The U.S. Army in World War I Fact Sheet,” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History [hereafter cited as CMH], accessed 6 June 2017, [http://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/wwi/\\_documents/WWI\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/wwi/_documents/WWI_Fact_Sheet.pdf)); A. Scott Berg, *Wilson* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2013), p. 440.

4. This author discovered no publication which specifically discusses the National Army as a distinct entity within the United States Army of 1917–1919, nor are there any articles that examine the NA as a functional component similar or equal to the RA and NG.

5. *Harrisburg Telegraph* (Harrisburg, Pa.), 10 Feb 1917. Two significant plans were the Stimson plan and Continental Army plan.

6. John McAuley Palmer, *America in Arms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 161.

7. “The National Army,” *New York Times*, 4 Aug 1917.

8. John J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War, Vol. I* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1931), p. 130.

9. The 1916 Act authorized the president to draft NG soldiers as individuals. No units of the prewar NG were mobilized. Instead, NG soldiers were put into newly organized divisions numbering 26 through 42.

10. The Regular Army initially stood up eight divisions numbered 1 through 8. The National Army fielded sixteen divisions plus two African-American divisions, the 92d and 93d. Organization, planning, and limited numbers of troops filled National Army divisions 94–101, but none deployed due to the war’s end.

11. *The State* (Columbia, S.C.), 1 Feb 1918. National Army brigade numbering began at 151, infantry regimental numbers began at 301 and up. Each 27,000-man division consisted of two brigades and four regiments (two per brigade), making it what they called a square division. The Army also launched a short-lived scheme to field fifteen NA cavalry regiments, publishing the names of the first seven commanders. These regiments—the 301st–315th CAV. NA—were eventually converted to artillery units.

12. Captain X [Edward Lyle Fox], *Our First Half Million: The Story of Our National Army* (New York: The H. K. Fly Company Publishers, 1918), p. 25.

13. Joseph H. Odell, “The New Spirit of the New Army,” *The Outlook*, 23 Jan 1918.

14. The Army originally planned for 961 RA NCOs to serve with each NA division, but the number kept being reduced.

15. Skinner used 81st Division personnel lists from May and June 1918. Other commissions in the 81st were labeled National Army commissions, a mix of internal promotion, NG, and RA soldier promotions.

16. *The State* (Columbia, S.C.), 29 Apr 1918.

17. *Ibid.*

18. “War May Rid U.S. of Race Hatred,” *Washington Times*, 12 Jan 1918.

19. *New York Times*, 7 Apr 1917. For more on George Creel see Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Mobilization* (Washington, D.C., Department of the Army, 1955), Chapter X, “Influence of Propaganda and Censorship on Mobilization in World War I.”

20. Captain X [Fox], *Our First Half Million*, pp. 75–76.

21. The 93d Division consisted of drafted African-American National Guardsman organized into three regiments. The 93d is officially listed as a National Army division. Its division headquarters was never organized and all its regiments were assigned to the French Army during the war.

22. *New York Sun*, 31 Mar 1918, (Section 6, Book Reviews), pp. 10, 12.

23. Fox was discovered to be the author by cross-referencing other books and articles. He always dedicated his work to his wife, Eleanor Ward Fox or “EWF.” Fox was later dismissed from the Army and became the subject of Senate testimony during December 1918 investigations of pro-German activity in America. Although Capt. George Lester of the Military Intelligence Division testified that Fox was a loyal soldier, Fox’s life as a writer was over. He died 20 January 1920, and his obituary requested that no flowers be sent.

24. Captain X [Fox], *Our First Half Million*, p. 84.

25. “Home-Reading Course for Citizen-Soldiers,” *Public Ledger* (Maysville, Ky.), 12 Sep 1917.

26. Captain X [Fox], *Our First Half Million*, p. ix.

27. As with most organizations, not every soldier would enthusiastically embrace

the cause, the draft, or the National Army. See Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005), which discusses anti-conscription, opposition to the war, and more.

28. Captain X [Fox], *Our First Half Million*, p. 124.

29. Les’ Andrii Melnyk, “A True National Guard: The Development of The National Guard and its Influence on Defense Legislation, 1915–1933” (Ph.D. diss., The City University of New York, 2004). Melnyk states that on average, draftees composed 25 percent each NG division.

30. “Making Vice Unpopular in Camp,” *New York Times*, 16 Dec 1917.

31. For an excellent overview of Progressive efforts in the cantonments see, Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2009), pp. 88–111.

32. John Dickinson, *The Building of an Army: A Detailed Account of Legislation, Administration, and Opinion in the United States, 1915–1920* (New York: The Century Company, 1922), p. 337.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War*, pp.130–31.

35. Captain X [Fox], *Our First Half Million*, p. 17.

36. The African-American 93d Division is not included in this count. While officially designated an NA division, three-quarters of the division were black National Guardsmen.

37. Odell, “The New Spirit of the New Army.”

38. Maj. Gen. Charles J. Bailey, “Democratic Fighting Force is National Army,” *The State* (Columbia, S.C.), 29 Apr 1918.

39. *Ibid.* A great number of RA officers did not respect the NG, before, during, or after the war. After the war, Pershing would apologize on behalf of the RA saying, “The National Guard never received the whole-hearted support of the Regular Army during the World War. There was always more or less a prejudice against them.” Quoted in Michael D. Doubler, *I Am the Guard: A History of the Army National Guard, 1636–2000*, (Department of the Army Pamphlet 130–1, November 2001), p. 187.

40. *Topeka State Journal*, 12 Mar 1918.

41. “Claim Drafted Men Outdistanced Guards,” *The Topeka State Journal*, 12 Mar 1918.

42. “The Importance of Music in Military Training,” *The State*, 8 Jan 1918.

43. "Asks for Just Judgement of the National Guard," *The State*, 25 Aug 1918.

44. *New York Tribune*, 23 Mar 1918; "Original Plan Abandoned," *New York Tribune*, 22 May 1918.

45. There are several reasons for this; the most likely is the uncertainty as to how NA and NG divisions would perform in combat.

46. *New York Times*, 25 Aug 1918.

47. War Department, GO 73, 7 Aug 1918, RG 165 (War Department and Special Staff), Chief of Staff General Correspondence 1918–1921, Box No. 10, National Archives Record Administration, Washington, D.C.

48. Peyton C. March, *The Nation at War* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1932), p. 3.

49. *New York Times*, 1 Aug 1918.

50. The AEF was working the thirty-division plan to bring one million men to France by 31 December 1918. An eighty-division plan was in the planning stages when the war ended. See Kreidberg and Henry, *History of Mobilization*, pp. 298–306.

51. "Only One U.S. Army," *New York Times*, 11 Aug 1918. Boldface inserted by author.

52. The Army would implement a total draftee army, prohibiting voluntary enlistments the next day, 8 August 1918.

53. Melnyk, *A True National Guard*, p. 99. Melnyk comments that March and Baker considered General Order No. 73 "among the greatest achievements of their wartime tenure." See also March, *The Nation at War*, p. 5. March mentions that Army unification had come up before; Secretary Baker had discussed it with then-Army Chief of Staff General Hugh L. Scott, who had opposed it. March reports that Baker commented of GO No. 73, "there is no order . . . [that] gives me more pleasure to sign than this."

54. "Whitman's Request Denied by Governor," *The State*, 20 Oct 1918.

55. Edwin L. James, "Upton Division Gallant in Action," *New York Times*, 24 Aug 1918.

56. Adler, *History of the Seventy-Seventh Division*, p. 32.

57. "Upton Men Like Veterans," *New York Times*, 8 Aug 1918.

58. March, *The Nation At War*, pp. 260–61.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

61. In many instances NA divisions did not receive the "mandatory" three months training in France that had been ordered by Pershing.

62. The three divisions account for more time in a sector defense than any other NA

divisions except the 92d, which was poorly utilized in battle. The veteran divisions were the 1st, 2d, 5th, and 42d.

63. Mark E. Groteleuschen, "The Doughboys Make Good: American Victories at St. Mihiel and Blanc Mont Ridge," *Army History* 87 (Spring 2013): 13.

64. *Ibid.*

65. William T. Walker Jr., *Betrayal at Little Gibraltar* (New York: Scribner, 2016), pp. 62, 99. Four divisions would get newly assigned artillery regiments with which they had never trained.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 63. The 79th was assessed as having less training time than any division in the AEF. General March's belief that "a short polishing in training" was all that a NA division required was disproved.

67. Meuse-Argonne casualties by component: NA 37 percent, NG 34 percent, RA 29 percent.

68. Groteleuschen, "The Doughboys Make Good," p. 8.

69. *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book* (American Battle Monuments Commission, U.S. Government Printing Office [hereafter cited as GPO], 1938), p. 515

70. Richard S. Faulkner, "'There is a limit to human endurance': The Challenges to Morale in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign," Edward G. Lengel, ed., *A Companion to the Meuse Argonne Campaign* (West Sussex, U.K.: John Wiley & Sons Inc. 2014), p. 291.

71. Leonard L. Lerwill, *The Personnel Replacement System in the United States Army*, (U.S. Army CMH Pub. 104–9, U.S. GPO, Facsimile Edition, 1982, 1988), pp. 212–13.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 221–24.

73. *Final Report of Gen. John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief American Expeditionary Forces* (Washington D.C., U.S. GPO, 1920), pp. 54–55.

74. *Ibid.*

75. Maj. Bryan L. Woodcock, "The 91st Infantry in World War I—Analysis of an AEF Division's Efforts to Achieve Battlefield Success" (Student thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2013).

76. The 94th Division, aka the "Neuf-Cats" or "Neuf-Quarte" (French for "Nine-Four"), was to be a segregated Puerto Rican division modeled after the 93d Division in which only the regiments were organized. The organization of the 373d through 375th regiments was underway, but was slowed due to a lack of Spanish-speaking officers.

77. "Fort Gordon Notes," *Army Navy Register*, 2 Nov 1918, p. 498.

78. The Reserve Officer Association would be formed in 1923, too late to influence National Defense Act amendments of 1920.

79. The bill proposed by Secretary of War Baker and Chief of Staff March advocated a 500,000-man Regular Army as well as universal military training. The bill was ill-conceived and poorly presented, likely to fail on its own merit with the opposition of the National Guard.

80. "Bases New Army on Militia." *Washington Post*, 31 Aug 1919.

81. Palmer, *America In Arms*, p. 168.

82. Dickinson, *The Building of an Army*, pp. 353, 345.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 354. Bold emphasis added by author.

84. Palmer, *America in Arms*, p. 174.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

86. *The Logan Republican* (Logan, Utah), 8 May 1919. For a detailed discussion of the 1920 National Defense Act and how the RA and NG ultimately compromised, consult Melnyk, *A True National Guard*.

87. *Evening Times-Republican* (Marshalltown, Iowa), 1 Sep 1919.

88. Palmer, *America in Arms*, p. 171.

89. OR strength would hover around 100,000 (mostly officers) during the interwar period. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Steven E. Clay would remark in *U.S. Army Order of Battle 1919–1941, Vol. 1; The Arms: Major Commands and Infantry Organizations* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Combat Studies Institute Press, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2010), p. 4, "Due to political maneuvers by N.G. lobbyists, the authorized strength of O.R. units was set at 100 percent wartime strength for officers, but only 33 percent wartime strength for enlisted personnel."

90. *Army Navy Register*, 11 Sep 1920, p. 564.

91. One useful feature of the OR was that every college ROTC program assigned its newly commissioned officers directly into a nearby OR division.

92. *Army Navy Register*, 11 Sep 1920, p. 564.

93. Memo in possession of the U.S. Army Reserve Command History Office.

94. *The Sun* (New York), 2 Jun 1918. This report was not correct; the Medical Reserve Corps alone boasted several hundred doctors beginning with its establishment in 1908.

95. Nine Medal of Honor recipients can be found in the ranks of the 89th Division—a two-way tie for the second-highest number.

# U.S. ARMY ART SPOTLIGHT

## NEW IN PRINT

### THE GREAT WAR: U.S. ARMY ART

BY DEBORAH A. STULTZ

The U.S. Army Center of Military History is marking the World War I Centennial in many ways, and the publication of *The Great War: U.S. Army Art* is one of them. The book showcases pieces from the Army Art Program, which is also observing its own one hundredth anniversary.

World War I was the first time the Army recruited artists and sent them into combat. Commissioned in the Corps of Engineers as captains, the Army instructed eight artists to record the American Expeditionary Forces' activities during the Great War. Eyewitness artists outside the program soon followed them to Europe. Their works give us a sense of poignancy and emotion that cannot be captured by photography.

Through the book's pages, we can step into the atmosphere of the war: from the embarkation of troops, to the factories producing armaments, to the frontline trenches, to evacuation hospitals, to the home front. The reader feels the despondency of war refugees, and aches alongside a suffering soldier.

The book also presents propaganda posters that the Division of Pictorial Publicity commissioned to support the war effort. The division recruited the top artists and illustrators of the time to quickly and effectively convey the government's message: enlist, buy bonds, and conserve food.

General editor Sarah G. Forgey, Chief of Art, Army Museum Enterprise, guides us through the artwork. She shares insights into the artists and their artworks as only a curator can. Photographer Pablo Jimenez-Reyes took great care to accurately record the artworks for the book. Former Army Staff Artist Gene Snyder designed the beautiful volume.

Shown here are some pages from this important book. The volume will be available in November 2018 and can be purchased by itself or as part of a handsome boxed set with its companion, *The Great War: U.S. Army Artifacts*.



Deborah A. Stultz is an editor at the U.S. Army Center of Military History.





**Storming Machine Gun**  
 Meuse-Argonne Offensive, France  
 1918  
 Charcoal and pastel on paper, 18¼" × 27¼"

Harding followed the tanks into battle during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive from their launching point at Avocourt and he continued to document their activities until he could no longer keep up. His notes from the period are disjointed impressions, meant to recall feelings and images when he later revisited them: "the dead Boche near dugout, the long stream of blood, the shells arriving as we sat there."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Krass, *Portrait of War*, p. 229.

— 4 —



Smith sketched this view of Cantigny from the vantage point of the Americans. He later reflected that "at the end of this dispute over which of us should have Cantigny, there was very little of Cantigny to have. The drawing will verify this statement. The sketch was made in the direction in which our troops made their attack, and it shows to some extent the advantage that the possession of this town had, situated, as it was, on a hill, over troops that were dug-in below it. And that is exactly why we took it."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

**Cantigny**  
 Cantigny, France  
 1918  
 Gouache and pencil on paper, 8¼" × 11¼"

— 27 —

This impressionistic rendering of a medic carrying a wounded soldier to safety is one of Woolf's most moving World War I pieces. He spoke very highly of the spirit of the American soldiers: "Everyone conveys the impression that he is there for the business of helping to win the war, and, after the American fashion, nothing is permitted to interfere. The boys are fine specimens of manhood, physically and mentally."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



*A Trench Ambulance on the Firing Line*  
France  
1918  
Oil on canvas, 30" × 22"



*The Observer*  
France  
1918  
Etching on paper, 9<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" × 12<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>"

This etching depicting a concealed observer could almost be viewed as a self-portrait. As the holder of a pass allowing him to travel where American troops were located and to record their activities, Hornby's primary role was as an observer. The artist took this task to heart, recording such details as the camouflage concealing this soldier, while creating works of art.



Scott again removes all traces of individuality from the soldiers he depicts in this drawing, outfitting them in full gear and gas masks. Their enlarged eyes appear to glow, adding to the alien-like mood of this scene.

*Machine Gunners*  
France  
1918  
Pencil and crayon on paper, 12" × 18"

This colorful image of a diving American biplane presents a romantic view of the Air Service, which began the war with only 131 officers and 1,087 enlisted men. Expanding and training troops quickly, despite slow production of aircraft, the Air Service had grown to over 78,000 by the signing of the armistice.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The total strength of the Air Service as of 11 November 1918 was 7,726 officers and 70,769 men. Of these, 6,861 officers and 51,229 men were then in France; Shipley Thomas, *The History of the A.E.F.* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1920), p. 385.



*Join the Air Service and Serve in France*  
J. Paul Verrees, 1917  
Color lithograph on paper, 37" × 25"

# FRENCH INFANTRY MUSKET

## M1728 (CHARLEVILLE)

BY PAUL MORANDO

During the Revolutionary War, the French provided substantial military and logistical support to help secure an American victory over the British. The import of weapons and other materiel, including thousands of “Charleville” muskets, proved crucial in winning the war and solidified France’s commitment to American independence. The early years of the revolution saw a shortage of arms in the colonies, partially due to Britain’s 1774 ban on firearms imports and later its seizure of firearms and gunpowder. Along with the Intolerable Acts, the confiscation of arms from American colonists greatly contributed to the outbreak of war in April 1775. The following year, the Continental Congress formed a secret committee to purchase weapons from France. By 1778, when France openly entered the war, they were shipping muskets directly to America.

The example featured here is a French .69-caliber M1728 Infantry Musket popularly referred to as a Charleville musket. It will be on exhibit in the “Founding the Nation” gallery of the National Museum of the United States Army. The display consists of eighteenth-century weapons and artifacts that highlight the “Beginnings of the Army” during the American Revolution.

What makes this particular musket unique is that it is the only known example related to the state of Delaware. The barrel is marked on the face with “DEL. State N.C. no 94” and the wood stock is branded “DEL. STATE N.C.” These markings refer to the State Arsenal in New Castle, Delaware, which still stands today. This weapon would have been manufactured in one of three French arsenals: Charleville, Mauberge, or St. Etienne. This model was the second version of the musket, which was first adopted in 1717. The main difference between the two was that the barrel of the M1728 was attached to the stock by three bands rather than just one. This modification became the standard for all versions that followed. Later, the M1763 Charleville musket served as a model for the first American Springfield musket made in 1795.

Approximately 375,000 M1728s were produced in France, but it is unknown how many came to North America. What is known is that the Charleville musket was a key weapon for American soldiers and a fitting symbol of France’s unwavering support of America’s fight against British colonial rule.

Paul Morando is the chief of exhibits at the National Museum of the United States Army.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Douglas E. Nash Sr.** enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1974 and graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1980. He retired as a colonel in 2006 after thirty-two years of service in a number of different armor, cavalry, and special operations assignments. He has master's degrees in international relations and military history. Nash is the author of several books, including *Hell's Gate: The Battle of the Cherkassy Pocket, January–February 1944* (Southbury, Conn., 2002) and *Victory Was Beyond Their Grasp: With the 272nd Volksgrenadier Division from the Hürtgen Forest to the Heart of the Reich* (Bedford, Pa., 2008), which was nominated for the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction. He is currently serving as the senior historian for the Marine Corps History Division.



National Archives

A German soldier crouches under a barbed wire fence with a knocked out American M8 Light Armored Car in the background near Malmedy, Belgium, c. December 1944.

# KESTERNICH



## The Battle that Saved the Bulge

BY DOUGLAS E. NASH SR.

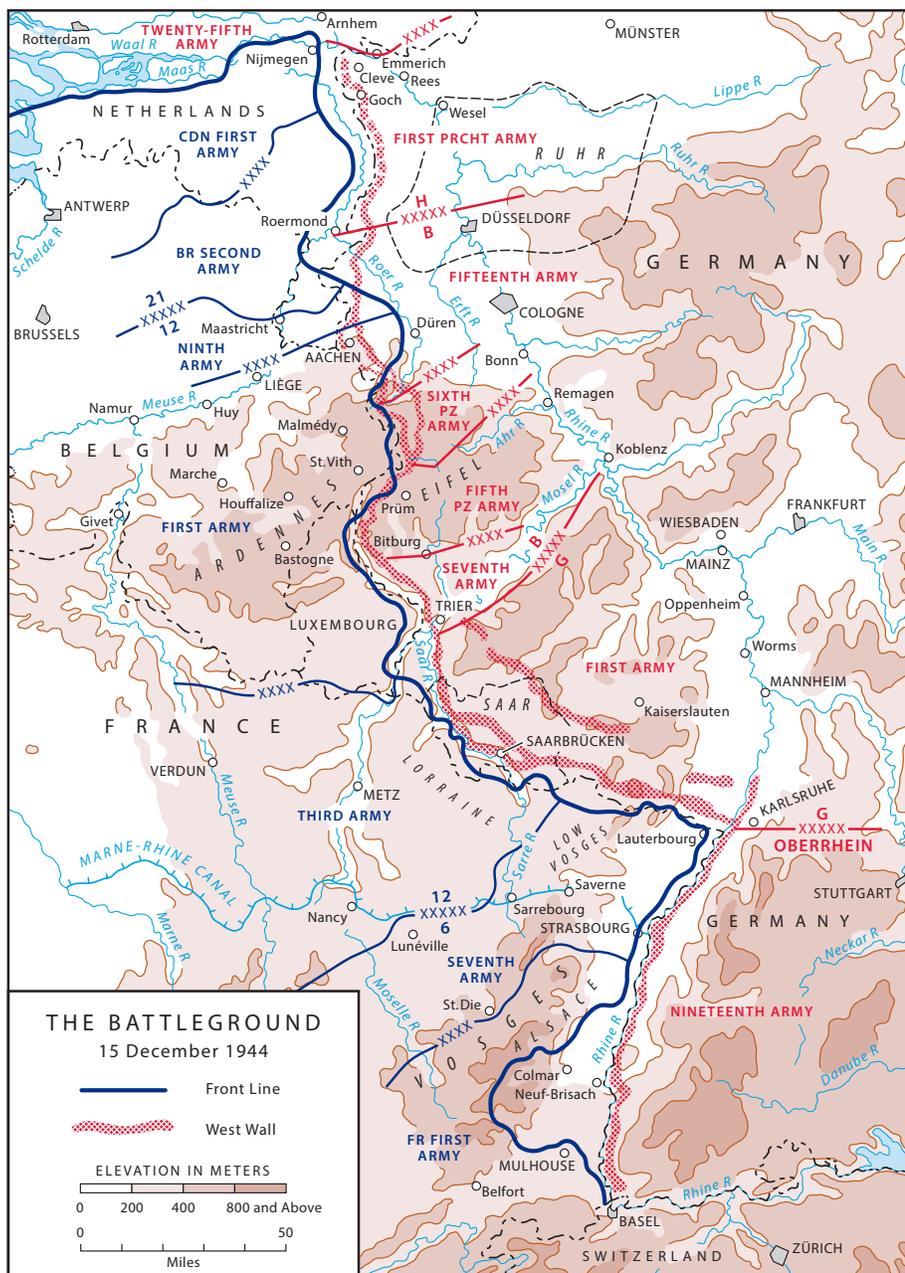
The Battle of Bulge, the epic confrontation between American forces and the armies of the Third Reich that took place from 16 December 1944 until 28 January 1945, was the largest land battle ever fought by the U.S. Army. In terms of the number of men, tanks, and cannon committed to the fight, as well as the number of casualties on both sides, nothing before or since can compare. Of the 610,000 men who took part in the campaign, over 82,395 Americans were killed, wounded, or missing.<sup>1</sup> It was the last gasp of Adolf Hitler's once-vaunted *Wehrmacht*, making its final attempt to reverse Germany's dwindling fortunes with a daring offensive designed

to split the U.S.-British coalition with a strike by two panzer armies through the Ardennes toward the strategic port of Antwerp.

Hitler himself envisaged the attack in September 1944 as the answer to Nazi Germany's seemingly unsolvable strategic dilemma. The Führer believed that if only he could deal a devastating blow to the Allies, he could knock them out of the war and then turn once more to the East where his troops could then administer a crushing defeat upon the steadily approaching Red Army. The forces for such an operation, which the *Wehrmacht* planning staff estimated would require thirty divisions, ten of which would be armored, would

have to be carefully gathered and concealed to achieve strategic surprise when they launched the attack in November 1944.<sup>2</sup> For a variety of reasons, including tank production and delivery schedules, delays in fuel procurement, and last but not least, the Allies' insistence on attacking toward Aachen in the north and Colmar in the south, Hitler's grandiose *Wacht am Rhein* (Watch on the Rhine) offensive was finally rescheduled for 16 December.<sup>3</sup>

The various accounts of the American triumph in the Ardennes usually recognize the valiant stand at Bastogne by the 101st Airborne Division and the equally gallant delaying action of the 7th Armored



General Middleton, c. December 1944



Bruce C. Clarke, shown here as a lieutenant general, c. 1955



General McAuliffe, c. February 1945

Division at St. Vith. Historians also acknowledge lesser-known encounters at Elsenborn, Lutzkampen, and Diekirch and other desperate holding actions by the 2d, 99th, 106th and 28th Infantry Divisions and the 9th and 10th Armored Divisions. All these engagements, large and small, combined to slow and finally stall the German offensive, robbing it of its momentum and, most of all, the precious time upon which the operation relied for success. The stories of sacrifice by thousands of American soldiers during the Battle of the Bulge are legion, as are the

commanders who led them, such as Generals Troy H. Middleton, Bruce C. Clarke, Anthony C. McAuliffe and George S. Patton, to name a few. But if one were to mention the Battles of Kesternich and Monschau and the names Parker and Dolph, most historians, or the few remaining veterans of the Battle of the Bulge for that matter, would likely scratch their heads and wonder why these places and names are even relevant today and what connection they have with the better-known battle—that raged to the south. But the fighting that occurred in



Field Marshal Model, c. 1944

these two locations, particularly Kesternich, which at the time many considered an American defeat, constituted nothing less than the battle that saved the Bulge.

To understand the vital role that the Battle of Kesternich played in the overall context of the Battle of the Bulge, an understanding of the German concept of the operation is essential. Hitler's plan, to be executed by Field Marshal Walter Model's *Army Group B*, envisioned that the main effort, consisting of *Schutzstaffel* (SS) General Sepp Dietrich's *Sixth Panzer Army* with nine divisions—including four panzer divisions—would punch through thin American defenses in the Schneifel region. The Germans would then begin a right-wheeling movement that would quickly reach the Meuse River, taking Liege in stride and quickly push on toward Antwerp, capturing that city and isolating British Army Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's 21st Army Group in only seven days. On the left, Lt. Gen. Hasso von Manteuffel, with four panzer and three infantry divisions, would command the supporting effort, *Fifth Panzer Army*, which would protect Dietrich's left flank as it advanced, reaching the Meuse at Namur before terminating its advance at Brussels. The other



General Dietrich, c. 1944

supporting effort, consisting of Lt. Gen. Erich Brandenberger's *Seventh Army* with six infantry divisions, would push out toward the southwest and seize defensible terrain facing south to block any attempt by General Patton's Third Army to attack the German flank. Six to seven divisions would be in *Army Group B* reserve, and the entire offensive would be supported by a massive amount of artillery and rocket batteries—the largest concentration of German firepower ever seen in the West.<sup>4</sup>

During the early stages of the plan's development, the German chain of command recognized the crucial importance of protecting *Sixth Panzer Army*'s right flank, which would be vulnerable to any American counterattack originating from the Aachen area through the road networks converging at the towns of Monschau, Eupen, and Limbourg. Consequently, the mission of protecting this vulnerable asset was assigned to Maj. Gen. Otto von Hitzfeld's *LXVII Corps*, consisting of the *272d Volks-Grenadier Division* (VGD) on the far right (northern) flank and the *326th VGD* on the left. Both would advance simultaneously at dawn on 16 December and seize the area between Monschau in the south and Lammersdorf in the north within five hours.



General Manteuffel, c. 1944

Both divisions would immediately push on through the Hohes Venn forest toward the Vesdre River at Eupen in another five hours, reaching their objective and going on the defensive between Eupen and the town of Limbourg by the end of the first day.<sup>5</sup> Here, Hitzfeld's corps, codenamed "*Korps Monschau*," would then dig in, hold firm, and block any attempt by U.S. forces to move through Eupen and attack into the exposed flank of the *I SS Panzer Corps*, which constituted *Sixth Panzer Army*'s main effort that would attack through the Losheim Gap. A *Fallschirmjäger* (parachute) battle group led by Col. Friedrich von der Heydte would jump into the Hohes Venn forest the night before the attack to seize key highway intersections to prevent American reinforcements from being brought into play and assist Hitzfeld's attack as necessary, a plan known as Operation *Stösser* (Thruster).<sup>6</sup> Hitzfeld's right flank in the Hürtgen Forest would be covered by the neighboring *LXXIV Corps*, with its *85. Infanterie-Division* charged with carrying out limited attacks designed to tie down American forces and prevent them from interfering with the operations of the *272d VGD* to its south.

The overall operations plan for Model's *Army Group B* stressed flank



Generals Brandenberger and Erich von Manstein confer during Operation BARBAROSSA, June 1941.



General Hitzfeld, c. 1944

German Federal Archives

protection as a necessary condition for success, as did Hitzfeld's, whose own order emphasized the importance of covering the advance of the armored units on his corps' left. Hitzfeld's order stated, "In fulfillment of this assignment, the corps will defend the Vesdre sector with absolute resoluteness. It will become our new front line!" After providing guidance and zones of attack for each division, the corps' order concluded with the exhortation, "The guiding principle for every action we take: Eyes focused on the right! Onward to Eupen! Onwards [*sic*] to the Vesdre at Eupen and Limburg!"<sup>7</sup>

This emphasis was not lost on his two division commanders, who echoed Hitzfeld's sentiments in their own orders just as forcefully. Should Hitzfeld's two divisions achieve their objectives on time as planned, his corps would then turn right to block any American attempt to shift reinforcements intended to stop the German advance. Corps artillery, engineers, and antitank units would then reinforce the defenses to prevent any American troops from getting through. By sealing off the routes through Monschau, Eupen, and Limbourg from the north, where the bulk of the U.S. First and Ninth Armies were arrayed, any American

troop movements intended as reinforcements would then be forced to make a wide, circuitous detour to the west through Namur and Marche.

The road movement distances involved, should the Americans be blocked from moving reinforcements through this area, were significant. Instead of a thirty-mile, one-hour ride in a two-and-a-half-ton truck from Aachen to Malmedy or Elsenborn via Eupen traveling at twenty-five miles per hour, any U.S. reinforcements would have to be diverted westward around the Hohes Venn through Hasselt, Namur, and Marche using other main supply routes before they could arrive in Malmedy. This would necessitate a 180-mile detour requiring at least seven hours in perfect weather conditions with no competing traffic, no refueling or rest stops, and no mechanical breakdowns—conditions that simply did not exist in December 1944.

In reality, a move of such proportions involving an infantry division of 16,000 men would likely require at least ten hours, and that would only apply to the lead regiment. Follow-on elements of the division would need additional time.<sup>8</sup> Units would then need to be unloaded, marshalled, and marched on foot

to the desired defensive positions in the Schnee Eifel region, which, given the fluid combat situation that existed during the first several days of the offensive, may take at least ten hours more. Such a move would not only take nearly a day longer than moving through Eupen, but would also place them at some point during their movement in open country, squarely in the path of the oncoming *I SS Panzer Corps*.<sup>9</sup>

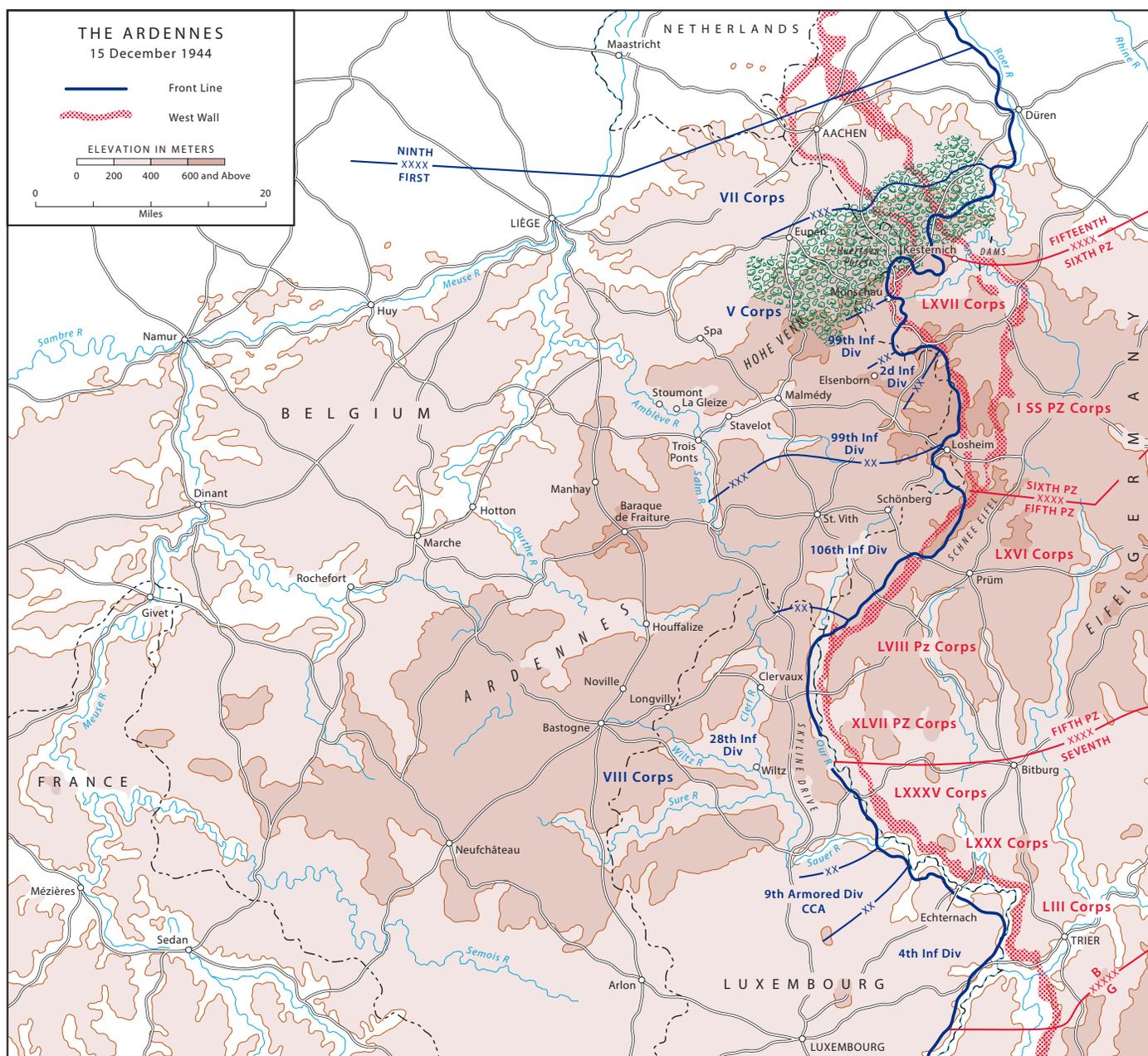
Intelligence reports indicated that the fought-out 8th Infantry Division lightly held the ten-mile-wide stretch of the front lines through which the corps would attack between Lammersdorf and Höfen. The 8th had exhausted itself during costly fighting for the towns along the Brandenburg–Bergstein Ridge and Hill 400 during the previous two weeks. The Germans expected this division to limit its activities to local patrolling and absorbing thousands of infantry replacements. To its south lay Col. Cyrus A. Dolph's 102d Mechanized Cavalry Group, a unit that was rich in light armored vehicles but lacking in ground troops to hold its wide defensive sector. To the south near Höfen, Hitzfeld's corps faced a regiment from the untested 99th Infantry Division, which had recently arrived in Europe and tasked

with occupying a quiet defensive sector stretching from the area south of Monschau to the Losheim Gap. German intelligence analysts believed that it had been sent there to gain combat experience before being committed to battle.<sup>10</sup> Altogether, German military intelligence believed that *LXVII Corps* faced no more than two infantry regiments and a thinly spaced mechanized cavalry group with only two squadrons. They expected little action from the Americans on 16 December, except for occasional combat patrols and harassing artillery fire.<sup>11</sup>

To carry out his attack, Hitzfeld's two infantry divisions would have six infantry regiments with a total of twelve infantry battalions, two division artillery regiments, a "Volks" artillery corps with two artillery regiments and two rocket-launcher brigades, as well as combat engineers, anti-aircraft, antitank, and assault gun battalions. In all, Hitzfeld's plan as written would hurl over 30,000 men against the American forces in his assigned zone of attack, backed up by over fifty assault guns and tank destroyers, 228 artillery tubes of all calibers, and 108 rocket launchers.<sup>12</sup>



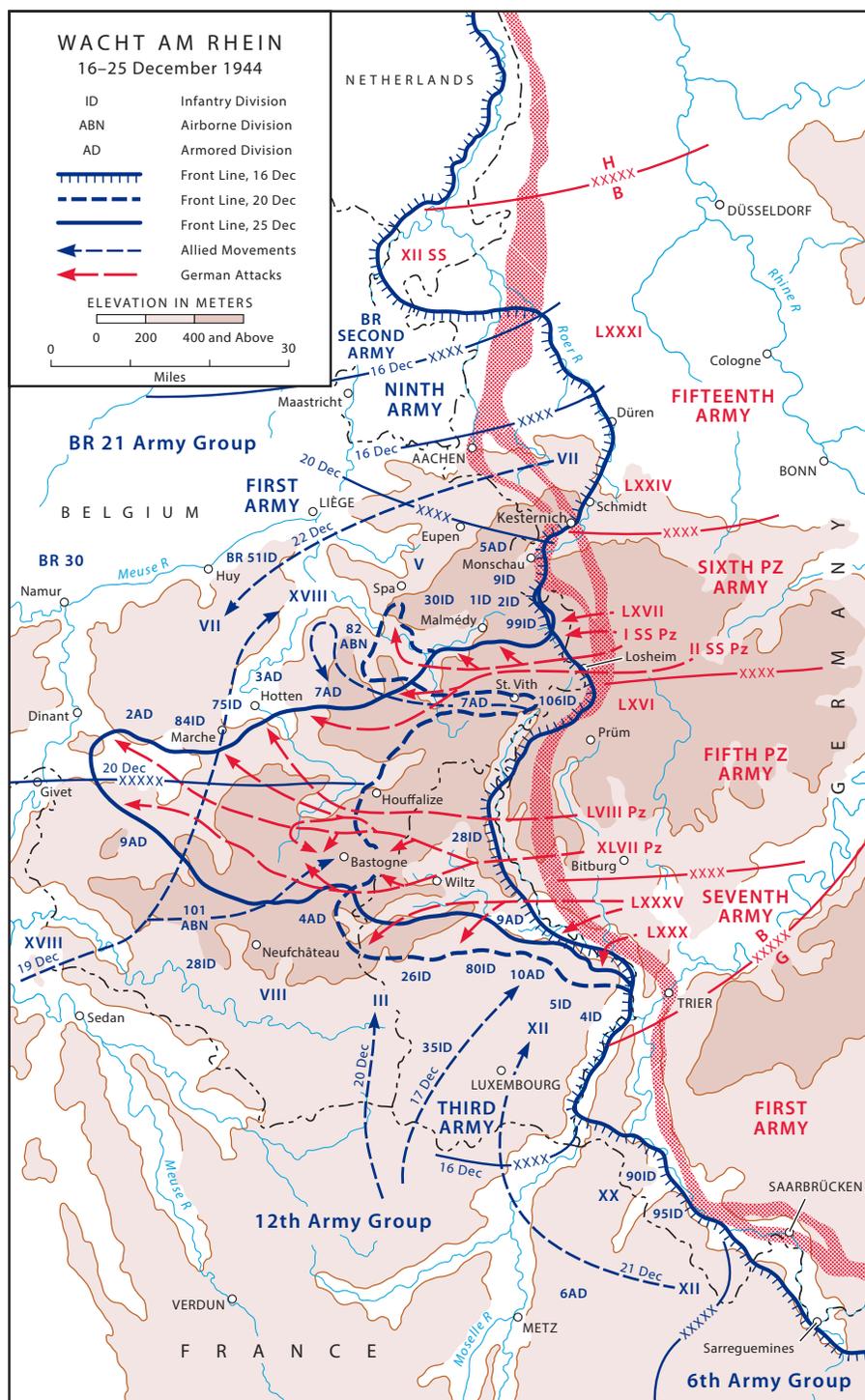
Colonel von der Heydte, c. 1944



The 46-year old Hitzfeld was up to the challenge; an experienced and highly competent leader, he had proven himself as a division commander during the invasion of the Soviet Union where he had earned the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves. His two division commanders, Maj. Gen. Eugen König of the 272d VGD and Brig. Gen. Dr. Erwin Kaschner of the 326th VGD, were just as experienced and were highly regarded by their contemporaries as combat leaders and tacticians with a wealth of experience fighting both the Red Army and Western Allies. To the south, the Sixth Panzer Army's main effort, I SS Panzer Corps, would attack between Elsenborn and the Losheim Gap with two infantry divisions making the initial penetration, followed by the main attack by the 1st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions.<sup>13</sup> In addition to enjoying a three-to-one advantage on the ground and an enormous advantage in artillery, Hitzfeld's corps also would have the benefit of complete surprise, or so he and his subordinate commanders thought.

While the German offensive preparations continued apace, Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges, commander of the U.S. First Army, prepared to resume the offensive to capture the Roer River dams, a goal that had eluded him since September, when a series of costly attacks through the Hürtgen Forest had left him nothing to show for his efforts, save a few dozen square miles of cratered

terrain, several ruined towns, and over 30,000 casualties. No fewer than three major division-level attacks had been launched from the northern and northwestern approaches to the dams between 14 September and 8 December, leading to the capture of the towns of Lammersdorf, Hürtgen, Vossenack, Gey, and Bergstein. However, each offensive culminated before achieving decisive results,



Portrait of Colonel Dolph



and the attack against the town of Schmidt by the 28th Infantry Division ended in disaster. This time, Hodges would try the southwestern approach through Lammersdorf and Wahlerscheid.<sup>14</sup>

Completely unaware of the impending German attack, Hodges directed Maj. Gen. Leonard Gerow, commander of V Corps, to use two of his infantry divisions, the 78th in the north and 2d in the south, to conduct their own attack on 13 December and punch through German lines near Lammersdorf and Wahlerscheid, respectively. The 78th Infantry Division, which had only arrived in Europe in mid-November, would seize Simmerath and Kesternich before pushing on to seize the Urft and Paulushof Dams, a mere five miles away. The center would continue to be held by Dolph's 102d Mechanized Cavalry Group, which would conduct aggressive patrolling designed to distract the enemy from the attack's true objective.

The veteran 2d Infantry Division would move up to a position just behind the front lines of the 99th Infantry Division near Elsenborn and conduct a supporting attack through Wahlerscheid toward the town of Dreiborn before linking up with the approaching 78th Division. If all went well, not only would the long sought-after dams finally be in American hands, but the bulk of both the 272d and 277th VGDs would be trapped and destroyed. As yet, the Americans were unaware of the presence of Kaschner's 326th VGD. Remarkably, the concept of operations for both the German and American plans featured attacks through the same villages. The key advantage, then, would lie with whomever attacked first.<sup>15</sup>

Records indicate that neither side had any inkling of what was about to unfold. The Americans completed their preparations for the attack by 12 December; the movement of the 2d Division into its attack position north of Elsenborn had gone completely undetected, though the Germans had detected an increase in American vehicular activity. German preparations were much more elaborate, involving the movement of two regiments from the 272d VGD



General König, c. 1944



General Kaschner, c. 1944

from positions near Gey and Bergstein beginning on the night of 12–13 December via a circuitous route that would skirt the west bank Roer River to avoid detection. While en route, both regiments would absorb over 1,000 infantry replacements to fill their ranks, which had been depleted in heavy fighting during the past three weeks.<sup>16</sup> A series of forced foot

marches brought up the 326th VGD from its assembly area near Bonn. They would arrive in its frontline positions during the night of 14–15 December, relieving the 277th VGD, which would then slip to the south that same evening to join the I SS Panzer Corps.<sup>17</sup> The timing of all of these events would be crucial to the overall success of Hitzfeld's mission.

### 7th Armored Division tanks near St. Vith, c. December 1944



Both of Hitzfeld's divisions were to be in place and ready to commence their attack in the early morning hours of 16 December. A predawn artillery barrage would rain over the American frontline divisions, designed to pin the G.I.s in their foxholes while German infantry swarmed over them. Several batteries of searchlights would illuminate the direction of the intended attack to help guide the infantry. It was a complex scenario made all the more challenging by the fact that neither of Hitzfeld's subordinate commanders knew the exact details of the overall plan until 14 December, when Hitzfeld and his staff at *LXVII Corps* headquarters briefed them in the village of Dalbenden, ten kilometers southeast of Gemünd. Hitzfeld himself, who was aware of the general outline of the offensive, did not receive his own copy of the *Sixth Panzer Army's* plan until 8 December, giving him only four days for him and his staff to draft and issue the *LXVII Corps* order.<sup>18</sup>

Generals König and Kaschner, therefore, had less than two days to draft their own division's plan, leaving precious little time for regimental, battalion, and company

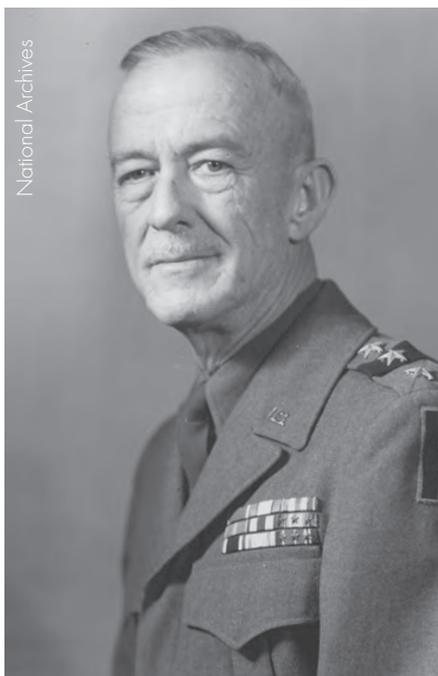
commanders to draft theirs, conduct assault rehearsals, and carry out reconnaissance of the routes to their assembly areas. In fact, Hitler himself forbade any kind of frontline reconnaissance from being carried out, except on a case-by-case basis, approved personally by him.<sup>19</sup> He did not want to run the risk of compromising *Wacht am Rhein* should anyone be captured while conducting a reconnaissance, but this overly cautious approach made it nearly impossible for subordinate commanders to adequately prepare their units for the attack. This decision would have fatal consequences in the days to follow.

While Hitzfeld's men and thousands of other German soldiers arrayed along the front lines in the Schnee-Eifel and the Ardennes feverishly completed their last-minute preparations for the attack, the U.S. Army V Corps initiated its own offensive at dawn on 13 December. Maj. Gen. Edwin P. Parker's untried 78th Division burst forth from its positions around Lammersdorf and stormed Simmerath after a short but powerful artillery preparation, catching the men of *Grenadier Regiment* 982 of the *272d VGD* completely by

surprise. By noon most of the village was in American hands. To its north, Parker's 311th Infantry Regiment, temporarily attached to the 8th Infantry Division, began its diversionary attack through Raffelsbrand to tie down the defenders in their bunkers.<sup>20</sup> To the south, Maj. Gen. Walter M. Robertson's veteran 2d Division attacked out of the Elsenborn area, grinding its way through the surprised but well dug-in troops of the *277th VGD*. Supported on their right by a regiment from Maj. Gen. Walter E. Lauer's green 99th Division, Robertson's troops, after navigating German minefields and barbed wire obstacles, fought their way into the clear and were well on their way to Wahlerscheid by the end of the day.<sup>21</sup>

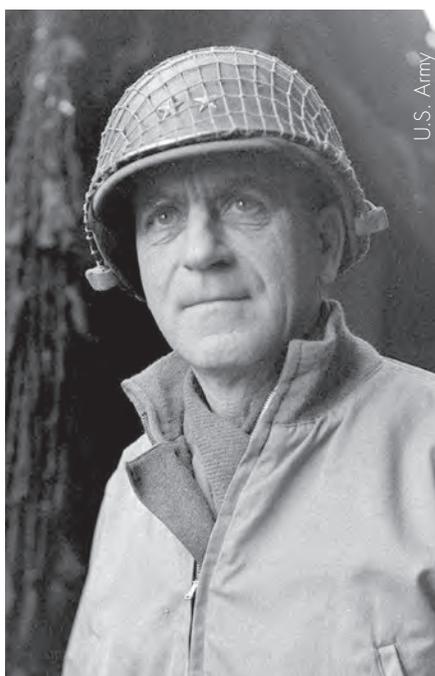
After a brief pause to reorganize its attacking columns, the 78th Division's 309th and 310th Infantry Regiments continued pushing on, seizing the town of Rollesbroich and the western outskirts of Kesternich by late afternoon on 13 December. After crossing the wide open fields west of the town, a single antitank gun emplaced in a concrete bunker kept the Americans from entering Kesternich. The 309th Infantry, rein-

General Hodges, c. 1944



National Archives

General Gerow, c. 1944



U.S. Army

General Parker, c. 1944



Courtesy of International Magazine Services



Courtesy of the Austrian National Library

**General Robertson making an address from a radio station in Salzburg, 6 June 1945**

forced by a battalion from the 310th, halted while it waited for an artillery barrage to soften up the German defenses. When the accompanying tank company from the 709th Tank Battalion refused to lead the attack out of fear of German *Panzerfausts* (one-shot antitank rockets), the lead infantry company of the 309th continued the attack without them and managed to take several houses on the west edge of Kesternich by nightfall after heavy fighting.<sup>22</sup>

Unbeknownst to General Parker and the commanders of the 309th and 310th Infantry Regiments, German troop movements tied to the *Wacht am Rhein* timetable already were coming into play. The leading elements of *Grenadier Regiment 980* of König's division began arriving in their forward attack positions near Kesternich at the same time that Simmerath fell to Parker's troops. Though intended to play a key role in the division's impending attack, this regiment, led by Col. Ewald Burian, appeared at the right place and the right time to challenge the



U.S. Army

**General Lauer, c. 1944**

American attack. Still, the German high command was unaware of American intentions as late as the midafternoon of 13 December, believing that the attacks by both the 2d and 78th Divisions were mere probing attacks.<sup>23</sup> It was not until the U.S. assault continued the following morning when Hitzfeld, his army commander Sepp Dietrich, and *Army Group B* headquarters grew truly alarmed after they received word that all but the eastern portion of Kesternich had fallen.

Over the next two days, as the 78th enjoyed success, the attack by the 2d would stall near Wahlerscheid at a place nicknamed "Heartbreak Crossroads." Here, its 9th Infantry Regiment would suffer heavy casualties as it attempted to overcome the stubborn defenses erected by the *277th VGD*, as it attempted to extricate itself in time to get into its own attack positions by midnight on 15 December. In contrast, the 78th basked in its initial accomplishment, pleased that the attack by two of its unproven regiments had progressed so well. Although its 311th Infantry had suffered heavy losses



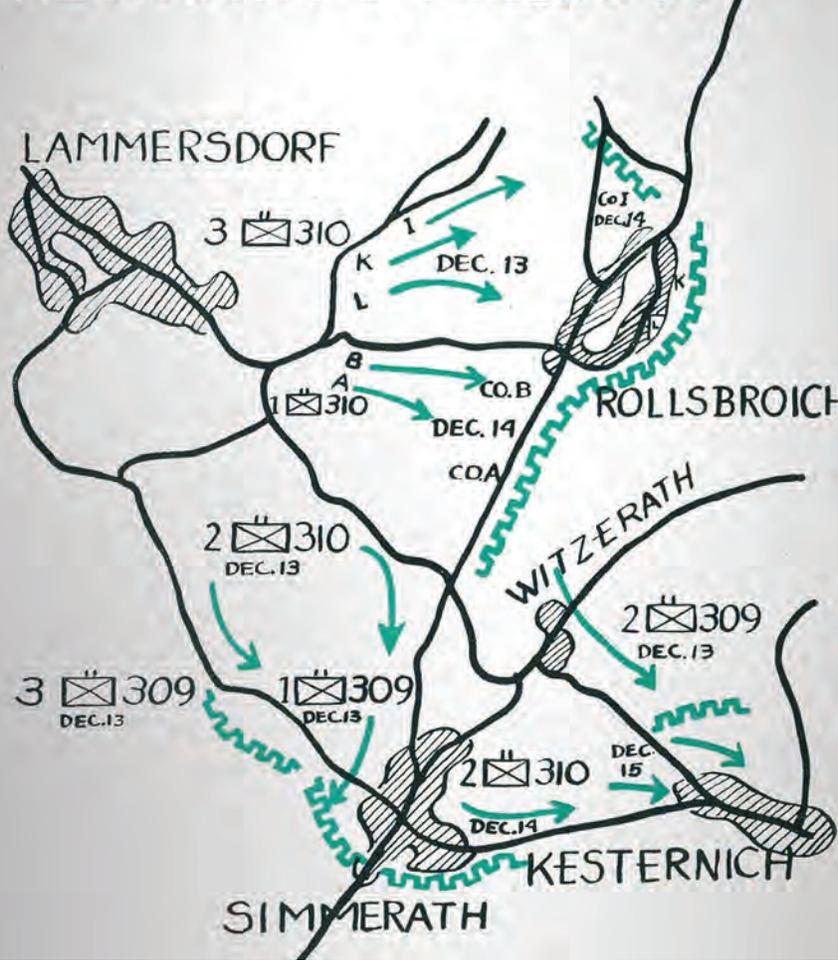
German Federal Archives

**Colonel Burian, c. 1944**

fighting on the division's left flank at Jägerhaus and Raffelsbrand while achieving little of note, the rest of the division's attack had gone very well indeed.<sup>24</sup> General Parker and his staff were confident that all of Kesternich would be in American hands by midday on 15 December and that the division would be well on its way to the Roer River Dams by the following morning.

The American optimism of 14 December would prove to be misplaced. Shocked by the 78th Division's successful surprise attack, *Army Group B's* commander realized that if the American advance continued, it would jeopardize last-minute preparations for the Ardennes Offensive. For on that very day, the SS panzer divisions of the *Sixth Panzer Army*, Model's spearhead, moved from their assembly areas west of Cologne to forward attack positions in the Schnee Eifel region. Control of Kesternich and the Roer River Dams would place U.S. forces on the high ground overlooking the Cologne plain where they would have an unobstructed view of the German movement and imperil the

# THE ATTACK ON DEC.13-14



Map drawn by Capt. John W. Burner, 1949

very units tapped to conduct the main effort with an attack from the rear.<sup>25</sup> Model could not let this threat stand unanswered.

To counter the Americans, Model ordered Dietrich to use whatever means necessary to throw back the U.S. attack. However, he could not use any panzer divisions, as they were to prepare for their upcoming attack undisturbed. Dietrich then told Hitzfeld on the morning of 15 December to do whatever it took to stop the 78th Division, but would have to rely on his own corps' resources to do so. Having little choice, Hitzfeld decided to divert major elements of the 326th VGD to reinforce the 272d VGD, which still had two of its three regiments on the move and were not scheduled to arrive until late afternoon of 15 December.<sup>26</sup> Taking a whole battalion and parts of another from one of Kaschner's infantry regiments, Hitzfeld paired them with a battalion from *Grenadier Regiment 981*, approaching on foot from Gey. Hitzfeld then directed the commander of the 272d VGD to

American troops pass knocked-out German tank destroyers in Kesternich, c. December 1944



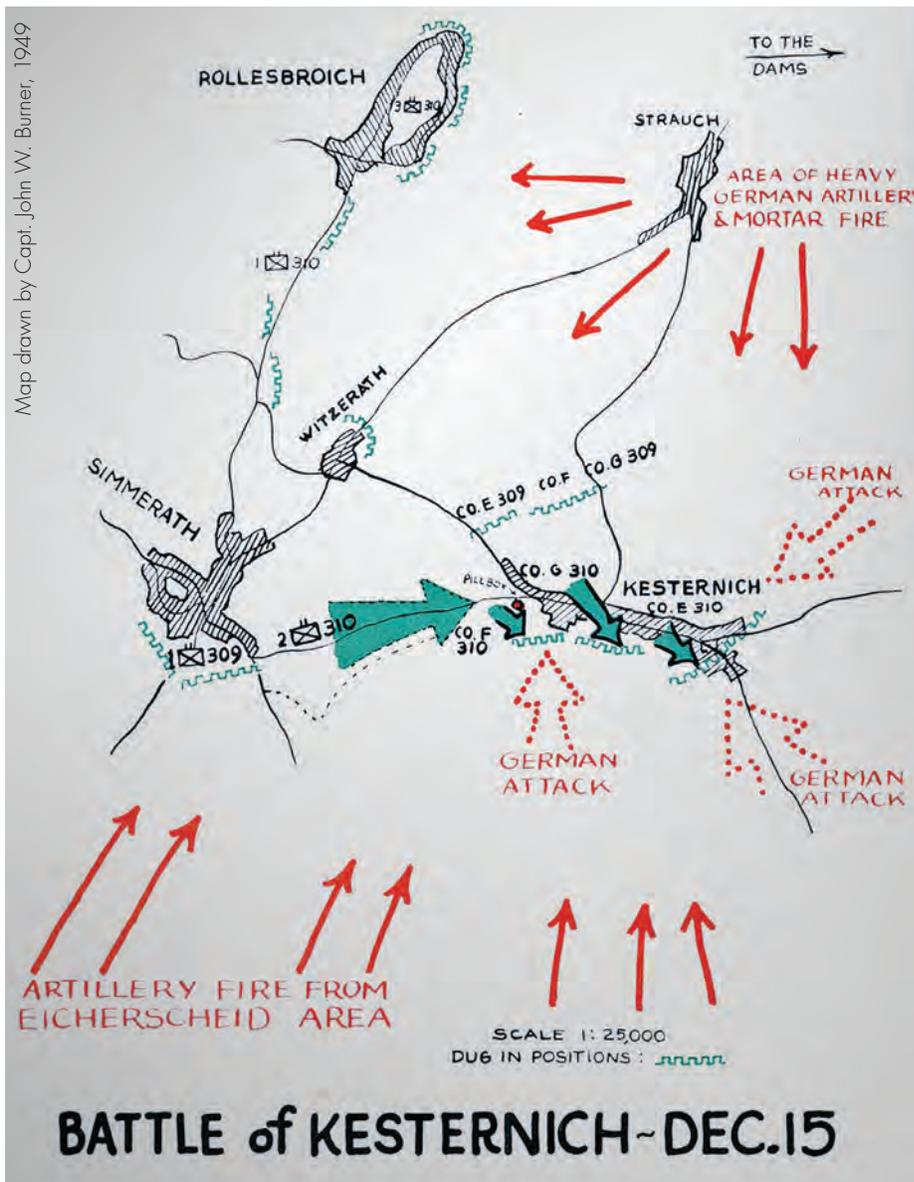
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**German prisoners of war under guard  
in Kesternich, c. December 1944**

launch his attack early that evening so as to release the battalions from the 326th VGD that same night, allowing them to join the rest of the division for its own attack on the morning of 16 December—the start date for the offensive. Thus a series of cascading events was set in motion that would ruin Hitzfeld’s carefully choreographed attack.<sup>27</sup>

Preceded by a short but accurate artillery barrage by one hundred guns, the two and a half German battalions surged into Kesternich in the early evening of 15 December, catching the troops from Parker’s division unawares. After overcoming initial resistance, the German attack, spear-headed by three tank destroyers and an armored 37-mm. *Flak* (anti-aircraft) half-track, quickly pushed through to the western outskirts of the town, capturing 300 men from 2d Battalion, 310th Infantry Regiment, in the process. By midnight it was all over and the Germans had regained control of Kesternich.<sup>28</sup> The threat posed by the 78th Division’s attack had been erased, but the damage was done. Hitzfeld’s corps had been thrown into disarray not only by the American’s surprise attack, but by the extraordinary effort it took to get sufficient forces into place to carry out the counterattack.

When 16 December dawned, instead of having twelve infantry battalions supported by two assault gun battalions and over a dozen artillery battalions, Hitzfeld only had three and a half battalions and no assault guns. Instead of bringing all three of its regiments to bear against U.S. troops holding the line between Konzen and Lammersdorf, the 272d VGD would have to defend itself against continued American efforts to retake Kesternich. By 15 December, it was obvious that the 272d would not be able to participate in the offensive at all. To König’s south, Kaschner’s 326th VGD desperately tried to get its troops into position by dawn on 16 December, but it



was an impossible task. The delays in relieving the two battalions that participated in the Kesternich counter-attack meant that they could not move quickly enough to reach their assault positions between Höfen and Konzen.<sup>29</sup>

To make matters worse, an enormous traffic jam occurred behind

the front lines just as elements of the 326th VGD moved into their assault positions and those of the 277th VGD moved out. This delay meant that a large portion of the German artillery could not get into position during the night of 15–16 December to register their guns and begin firing their preparatory barrages in support of

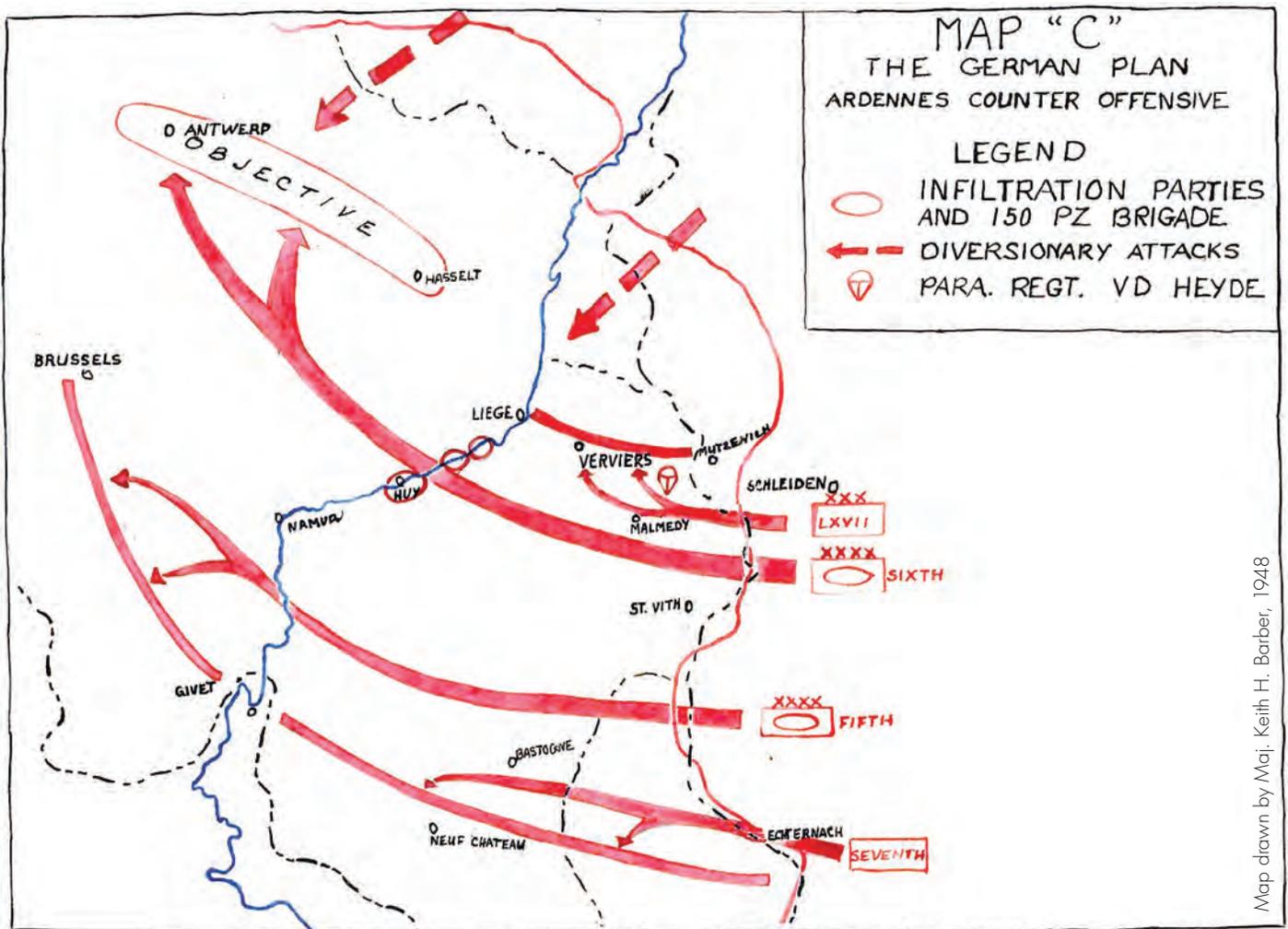
Kaschner's attack. One of Kaschner's grenadier battalions became lost in the woods while moving up to the front and did not show up again until the following morning, while another battalion had been stalled by traffic jams. But Hitzfeld's attack still had to go forward on schedule, regardless of the difficulties his corps faced. Only three battalions and two companies of another were able to cross the line of departure at dawn on 16 December, attacking north and south of Monschau and west of the village of Münzenich.<sup>30</sup>

Instead of overpowering the defending U.S. troops by a three-to-one ratio, Hitzfeld's assault barely achieved a one-to-one ratio, without any assault guns and with insufficient artillery fire. Despite the plan's exhortations to attack simultaneously, none of the Volksgrenadiers' assaults were coordinated, allowing the American artillery to engage each of them sequentially.



National Archives

German troops advancing past abandoned American equipment, c. December 1944



The remaining battalions of the 326th VGD would have to attack as soon as they arrived, without any time to prepare. Von der Heydte's nighttime airborne operation was a costly flop, with most of his men scattered throughout the woods north and south of the Hohes Venn, adding little of consequence to the German endeavor, least of all impacting the movement of American reserves through Eupen as

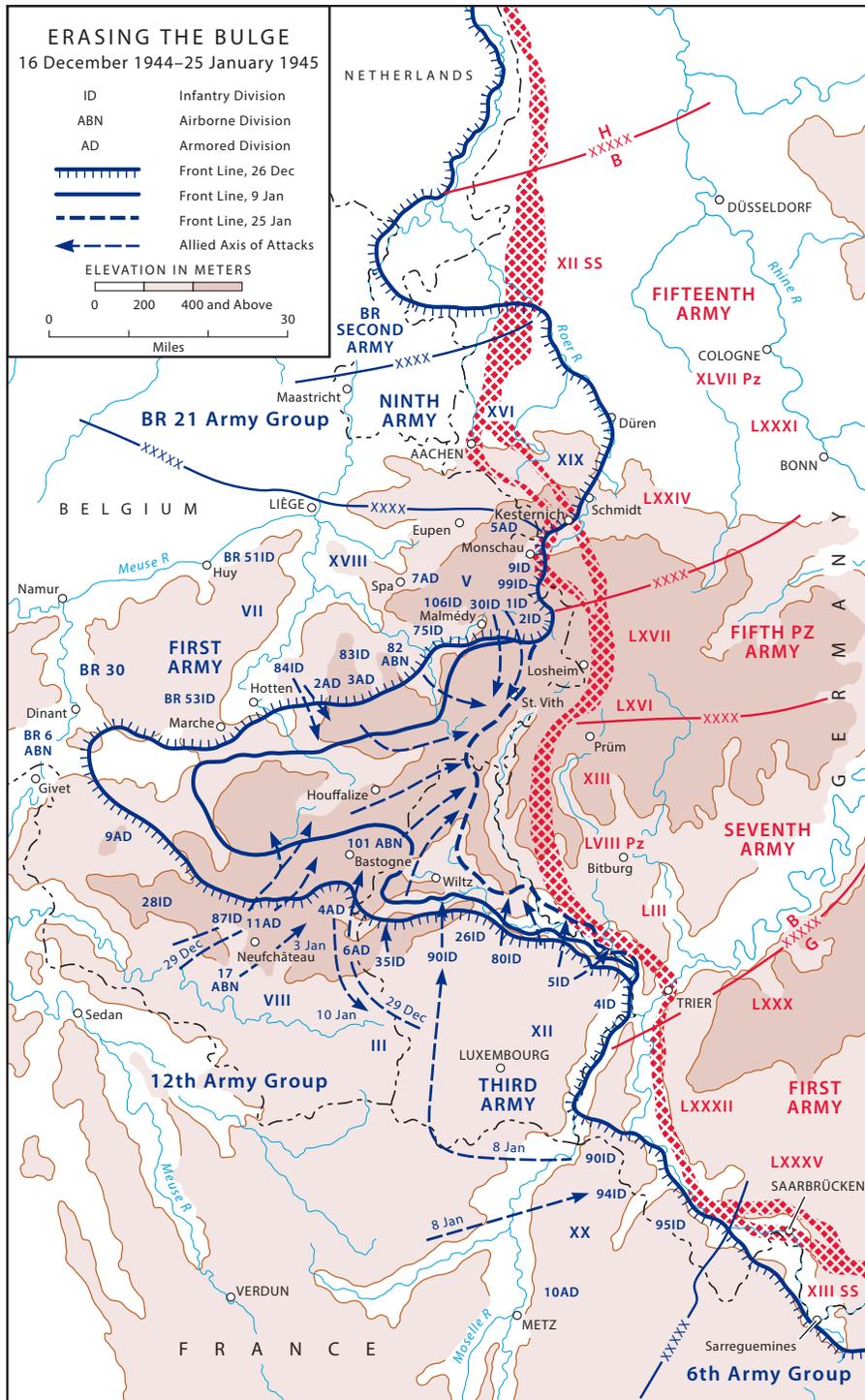
had been hoped.<sup>31</sup> The few men of von der Heydte's *Kampfgruppe* who did land in the right place in the Hohes Venn watched helplessly as column after column of American trucks and tanks roared past them toward the site of the German penetration in the Losheim Gap.

The results were predictable. While the troops from the 326th VGD attacked bravely, a hail of machine

gun and artillery fire by troops from the 38th Cavalry Squadron of the 102d Cavalry Group easily repulsed their uncoordinated assaults north and south of Monschau.<sup>32</sup> On 17 December, German efforts to bypass Monschau came to grief when troops from the 38th Cavalry and an attached infantry company from the 47th Armored Infantry Battalion mowed them down in the open terrain surrounding Monschau.<sup>33</sup> After several hours of this senseless slaughter, Kaschner called off his attacks after losing over 20 percent of the troops who had taken part. Another attempt the following day fared no better, leaving the 326th VGD nothing at all to show for its sacrifice. Monschau and Eupen would not fall that day, or ever.<sup>34</sup>

It soon became evident that Hitzfeld's attack was going nowhere. To replace the 272d, at the time decisively engaged at Kesternich, Hitzfeld was assigned the 277th VGD, then attacking Elsenborn, and ordered to continue the attack. However, the consequences of the failure to seize Eupen and push on through the Hohes Venn to the Vesdre and take Limbourg soon began to bear bitter fruit. On the evening of the first day of the German attack, the 1st Infantry Division, then in First Army reserve near Liege, was alerted for movement to reinforce what appeared to be the start of a major offensive rather than the harassing attack that Twelfth Army Group had initially assessed. By midnight 16 December, the 26th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Division had passed through Eupen and the Hohes Venn, arriving unmolested in their assembly area near the Elsenborn Ridge.<sup>35</sup> The following day, the veteran 30th Infantry Division from XIX Corps of the Ninth Army was alerted for movement, as was the 7th Armored Division.

The lead elements of both divisions began passing through Eupen unimpeded throughout the day on 17 December, arriving near the front lines by the evening of 18 December, where they immediately went into action.<sup>36</sup> Using the First and Ninth Armies' network of paved highways that had been previously designated as main supply routes (MSRs) ensured that the rapid movement of these divisions could





American troops passing through Monschau, c. December 1944

occur without German interference. Traffic regulation control points vectored the long columns of tanks, jeeps, and trucks carrying troops and towed artillery day and night, undisturbed by any German attempts to block traffic. American troops were unaware of just how close the Germans had come to doing just this; a review of the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps maps of the period clearly depicts how these MSR converged in the transportation nodes of Eupen, Spa, Liege, and Malmedy, most of which lay in *LXVII Corps'* zone of attack.<sup>37</sup>

The inability of Hitzfeld's troops to take Monschau and penetrate as far as Eupen to block this movement meant that his corps could not provide any flank protection at all for Dietrich's *Sixth Panzer Army*. The *Schwerpunkt* (main effort) of Model's offensive soon found itself under attack on its northern flank by a number of American divisions moving down from the Aachen area and points north. By 20 December, no fewer than six U.S. divisions—three armored and three infantry—had either begun counterattacks against Dietrich's spearheads in the Schnee Eifel or were preparing to, and all of them had passed through Eupen, Spa, or Liege over the past five days.<sup>38</sup> Several more divisions were to follow by the end of the first week of

the offensive, bringing the total coming down from the north to nine by 25 December. Effectively blunted and with his attack running out of steam, Dietrich was forced to commit his reserve, *II SS Panzer Corps*, but that effort went nowhere as well, despite the Americans' abandonment of the "fortified goose egg" at St. Vith by 23 December.

When Dietrich's leading unit, *Kampfgruppe Peiper*, was trapped on 22 December at La Gleize and forced to walk out after abandoning all of its vehicles, it was obvious that his *Sixth Panzer Army's* attack had completely stalled, a development that forced Model to shift his army group's main effort to Manteuffel's *Fifth Panzer Army* in order for the offensive to maintain momentum.<sup>39</sup> This change of focus enjoyed considerably more success until the attack by its leading *2d Panzer Division* finally was brought to a standstill on Christmas Eve within sight of the Meuse near Dinant at Foy-Nôtre-Dame. This effectively ended Hitler's vaunted game-changing offensive.<sup>40</sup>

Patton's relief of Bastogne on 26 December boosted Allied morale, but in reality, the Germans had already lost the battle a week earlier. Though it would take another month of hard fighting to force Model's

armies back to their starting line, the first five days of the offensive decided the outcome of the Battle of the Bulge. While it is clear that well-led and hard fighting soldiers of the U.S. First and Third Armies had stopped and ultimately defeated Model's troops, it is still not entirely clear, even more than seven decades after the war, why the battle turned out the way it did.

Eclipsed by the bitter fighting that took place in the Schnee Eifel and Ardennes, the struggle for Kesternich 13–16 December 1944 did more than anything else to shape the German offensive before it began and force Model's troops to take the direction they eventually took. Had the 78th Infantry Division not attacked Kesternich when it did and in effect carried out a spoiling attack without actually knowing it was doing so, a superior German force most likely would have overwhelmed the 102d Cavalry Group, taken Monschau and Eupen, and trapped the 78th east of the Hohes Venn. This move would have effectively denied the Americans the use of the critical road network they desperately needed and forced them to take a lengthy detour around the "Bulge" using MSRs farther to the west. Had this occurred, such a diversion would have taken U.S. troops an additional day to carry out their attack and denied them the ability to rapidly reinforce their ranks to stop the German offensive in the Ardennes before it could fully develop. Long overlooked, it takes no stretch of the imagination to say that it was the Battle of Kesternich that saved the Bulge.



## NOTES

1. Roger Cirillo, *The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II: Ardennes-Alsace* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History [hereafter cited as CMH], 1984), p. 53.

2. Percy Schramm, Foreign Military Study MS A-862, *The Preparations for the German Offensive in the Ardennes, September–16 December 1944* (Heidelberg, Germany: His-

torical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe, 1948), p. 63. Maj. Schramm, who maintained the war diary of the *Wehrmachtführungsstab* or Operations Staff of the German Armed Forces at the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW, or German Armed Forces High Command) in Berlin, kept meticulous notes, which he was able to save, and thus has written an invaluable account of the extensive planning that preceded the Ardennes Offensive.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 139–40.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 74–75.

5. Generalkommando LXVII. Armeekorps, *Korpsbefehl Nr. 1 für den Angriff Beiderseits Monschau* (Corps Order for the Attack Astride Monschau), 12 December 1944, 1–2 (hereafter cited as LXVII. Armeekorps) (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration (NADC)).

6. Friedrich von der Heydte, Foreign Military Study MS B-823, *Kampfgruppe von der Heydte, 25 Oct–22 Dec 1944* (Heidelberg: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe), p. 3; Schramm, *The Preparations for the German Offensive*, p. 184.

7. LXVII. Armeekorps, *Korpsbefehl Nr. 1*, p. 2.

8. Distances were calculated using a 1944 U.S. Army Topographical Engineer map of northeast Belgium with the known MSRs as of December 1944 overlaid. Movement times were computed from Chapter 4 of the U.S. Army Field Manual 25–10, *Motor Transport*, dated 12 March 1942, using the standard motorized movement rate of 25 mph for an infantry division.

9. In fact, this is exactly what happened to one American unit, the 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, which was on its way to join the 7th Armored Division when the Germans slaughtered one of its march columns near the Baugnez Crossroads two miles southeast of Malmedy on 17 December by *Kampfgruppe Peiper* of the *1st SS Panzer Division*, an event that became known as the Malmedy Massacre.

10. Schramm, *The Preparations for the German Offensive*, p. 221; *Feindnachrichtenblatt* (Intelligence Bulletin) Nr. 2, 326, Volks-Grenadier Division, 13 December 1944, pp. 1–2 (hereafter cited as *Feindnachrichtenblatt*).

11. *Feindnachrichtenblatt*, p. 3. German intelligence completely missed the arrival at the front lines of the green 78th Infantry Division, which took over the southern half of the

defensive sector of the 8th Infantry Division beginning 11 December 1944.

12. Generalkommando LXVII. Armeekorps, *Hinweise für die Artilleristische Kampfführung* (Artillery Fire Support Planning Instructions), 14 December 1944. This document provided the overall corps fire support plan, including how artillery fires would be integrated with the overall corps plan of attack, the fire support plan of its higher headquarters (*Sixth Panzer Army*), and the order of battle of the artillery and rocket-firing units. The total number of available artillery tubes and rocket launchers was derived from an analysis of the pertinent tables of organization for the units that would be directly supporting Hitzfeld's corps, including divisional artillery of the corps' two Volks-Grenadier Divisions and the supporting *Volks-Artillerie Korps* (corps artillery command).

13. Cirillo, *The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II*, pp. 11–12.

14. A superb background to the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest, with detailed descriptions of the previous offensives leading up to the one that began on 13 December 1944 can be found in Charles B. MacDonald's *The Siegfried Line Campaign* (CMH Pub 7-7-1), (Washington, D.C.: CMH, 1961). An excellent official account of the Battle of the Bulge is Hugh M. Cole's *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge* (CMH Pub 7-8) (Washington, D.C.: CMH, 1965). Both are part of the "Green Book Series" written by CMH that covers the European Theater of Operations in World War II.

15. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, pp. 79–80.

16. Douglas E. Nash, *Victory Was Beyond Their Grasp: With the 272d Volks-Grenadier Division from the Hürtgen Forest to the Heart of the Reich* (Oxford: Casemate Publishers, 2015), p. 120. The numbers of German replacement troops being brought up to restore the strength of the division's infantry component was gleaned from actual movement orders for two separate *Marsch* (reinforcement draft) battalions issued by the *272d Volks-Grenadier Division* (copies in the author's possession), as well as by the personal account of former corporal Gerd Hörner, "*Life and Death in the Hürtgen Forest with the 272d Volks-Grenadier Division*," Hannover, Germany, January 2003.

17. LXVII. Armeekorps, Anlage (Annex) I, *Bereitstellung der Infanterie-Verbände* (as-

sembly areas of infantry units) (Washington, D.C.: NADC), p. 2.

18. Otto von Hitzfeld, Foreign Military Study MS A-935, *LXVII Corps in the Ardennes* (Koenigstein: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe, 1945), p. 3.

19. Schramm, *The Preparations for the German Offensive*, pp. 224–25.

20. 78th Infantry Division Historical Association, *Lightning: The History of the 78th Infantry Division* (Washington, D.C.: The Infantry Journal Press, 1947), pp. 33–34.

21. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, pp. 79–80.

22. Edward G. Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground: The Hürtgen Forest and the Roer River Dams, 1944–1945* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1995), p. 186.

23. Ia Kriegstagebuch, Oberbefehlshaber West (ObWest), *Meldungen und Befehle*, Zwischenmeldung 13 December 1944 (Supreme Commander, Armed Forces Command West, Operations Officer War Diary for ObWest, midday report), hereafter cited as ObWest KTB. (Note: This was von Rundstedt's headquarters, which tracked events leading up to and during the Ardennes Offensive very closely.)

24. AAR, 78th Infantry Division, 1–31 December 1944, p. 15.

25. Ob West KTB, *Tagesmeldung* (evening report), 14 December 1944. German concerns about the advance of the 78th Infantry Division were also highlighted in Edward G. Miller's "Desperate Hours at Kesternich." *World War II* (November 1996): 34.

26. Ob West KTB, entry dated 14 December 1944, Para. 4, 12 (footnote).

27. Nash, *Victory Was Beyond Their Grasp*, pp. 133–34. An irony of the American attack at Kesternich is that the 78th Infantry Division attacked three days before the *272d VGD* was scheduled to begin its own attack as part of the Ardennes Offensive. It is worth pondering what would have occurred had both attacks taken place on the same day. As it was, the collision of these two divisions would have fateful consequences for the fighting that would follow over the next several days.

28. Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, p. 188.

29. Erwin Kashner, Foreign Military Study (MS) B-031, *The Right Flank of the*

*Ardennes Offensive (326th Volks-Grenadier Division)* (Steinlager Allendorf: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe, 1946), pp. 1–2.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

31. Von der Heydte, *Kampfgruppe von der Heydte*, p. 38.

32. Rpt, Headquarters, 102d Cavalry Group (Mechanized), *Defense of the Monschau Sector by the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, 16–18 December 1944*, Annex 1 to Historical Report, 20 February 1945, pp. 1–2.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

34. Erwin Kashner, Foreign Military Study (MS) B-092, *326th Volks-Grenadier Division in the Ardennes 16–25 December 1944*, (Steinlager Allendorf: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe, 1946), p. 5. This MS, a follow-up to MS B-031, offers a more detailed explanation for the failure of the division's attack toward Monschau. The author dwells at length on the unfavorable correlation of forces, yet being a good leader, he tried to do his best to accomplish his mission. At the end of this MS, Kashner laments that by 25 December, his division had been reduced to two under-

strength battalions, a weak combat engineer company, and two weak artillery battalions. Much of the credit for this decimation can be given to Colonel Dolph's 102d Cavalry Group.

35. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, p. 86; Headquarters Twelfth Army Group Situation Map of the Engineer Section (hereafter cited as Twelfth Army Group Situation Map), 16 December 1944, Control Number 2001628569 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress). Twelfth Army Group's situation maps, updated daily, clearly reflected the locations of division-sized units and above, including locations of army and corps headquarters. These maps also accurately portrayed the road and rail network throughout the army group's area of operations, which encompassed Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and northwest Germany. Using these maps in a sequential fashion, the historian can observe the movement of divisions from one location to the next, as well as the roads being taken. The locations of enemy units are also portrayed. This little-used resource is a boon to anyone who wishes to study the fighting in northwest Europe in greater detail.

36. Twelfth Army Group Situation Map, 18 December 1944 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress).

37. Lida Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefield* (Washington, D.C.: CMH, 1991), pp. 272–73. This volume contains a map (Map 8) that portrays First Army Ammunition Installations and Main Supply Routes, 6 June–16 December 1944.

38. Twelfth Army Group Situation Maps, 16–20 December 1944 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress). To attain this number, the writer compared the initial locations of these units on 15 December with their locations on the evening of 20 December. The maps also show the routes these divisions used to conduct their movement. The continuously expanding order of battle of the U.S. First Army as it incorporates these divisions along the northern shoulder of the German penetration is also ably described in Cole.

39. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, pp. 134–35.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 567–68.

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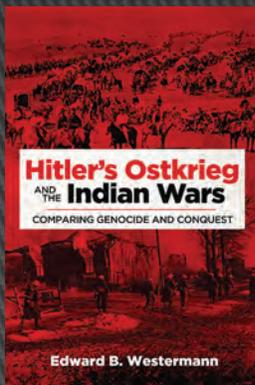
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# BOOK REVIEWS

*Hitler's Ostkrieg and the Indian Wars: Comparing Genocide and Conquest*



By Edward B. Westermann  
University of Oklahoma Press, 2016  
Pp. xiii, 322. \$34.95

## Review by Eugene M. Harding

Walk into any bookstore and you will find a section of works on the study and preservation of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust. Title after title will yield quite similar results with stories all touching on the same points. As the survivors, their persecutors, and the brave soldiers who liberated the victims continue to pass away, the ability of historians and researchers to find new angles from which to study this tragic period will also begin to fade. However, *Hitler's Ostkrieg and the Indian Wars: Comparing Genocide and Conquest* by Edward Westermann breaks this trend.

Anyone who has studied the Holocaust or attended Holocaust workshops can attest that one of the fundamental rules is never to compare suffering. The writer should simply present the history and leave the reader to make his or her own conclusions. Westermann takes a different approach to the study of the Holocaust by not only showing the suffering endured by its victims, but by discussing its similarities to the

atrocities committed in the western campaigns against Native Americans. What makes his work unique, however, is that he draws connections between the two eras that many historians—for one reason or another—have left out. Consequently, the author does not write about a comparison of suffering, but rather examines how the two were more than coincidentally linked.

The book begins with a discussion of the concepts of manifest destiny and lebensraum and their origins. In the introduction, the reader learns that Hitler repeatedly referred to the U.S. pursuit of manifest destiny and likened its path to the one he intended for Germany. As he reportedly said, “Our Mississippi must be the Volga, not the Niger” (p. 3), and it becomes immediately evident that the American government’s plan for conquering the Native Americans was a direct inspiration to the Führer. Both pursuits had an end goal of removing a people seen as inferior and not worthy of living on the land they possessed. These efforts concluded with the invaders taking up residence in the conquered land and turning it into something productive.

A key difference between the two groups of intruders comes to light in Chapter 3, when Westermann shows that even though the intent was similar, the mindset of the commanders conducting the operations was fundamentally different. He explains that American military commanders such as Brig. Gen. George Crook and Col. Nelson Miles “proved ready to use force to punish or coerce the Indians, but still displayed a deep respect and admiration for their adversaries and their culture” (p. 156). As such, the ultimate plan was to assimilate the Native Americans into the United States following the completion of the westward expansion. Even though the two sides were enemies, there was a future for the Native Americans in the nation.

In direct contrast, the German soldiers and the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) shared no such viewpoint of the Jewish and Slavic peoples. Indoctrinated by Nazi ideology, the soldiers and the SS saw these two peoples as subhuman and incapable of assimilation into the postwar German world. In short, there was no place or future for Jews or Slavs in Nazi Germany.

Even though the U.S. government wanted to assimilate the Native Americans, the Indians—much like the people persecuted by the Nazis—suffered massacre after massacre. The author goes to great lengths to show how both groups were hunted down and murdered if they resisted, and this leads to his discussion of the creation of guerrilla warfare.

As a direct result of their persecution, the Native Americans, as well as the Jewish and Slavic peoples, had small groups splinter away from the main population and begin to resist their tormentors. Well-kept documents on the operations of the Native Americans do not exist. As a result, we are left with the verbal histories created largely by their conquerors. Westermann includes a map that shows the locations of the partisan camps and operations during World War II (p. 234), suggesting that the people persecuted by the Nazis were anything but submissive.

The book concludes with Westermann’s supposition that although both historical occurrences were clearly atrocities, the intended end results were not similar. The American government wished to remove the Native Americans from land deemed valuable. The Nazis, however, wished to eliminate an entire group of people based on religious and alleged genetic differences.

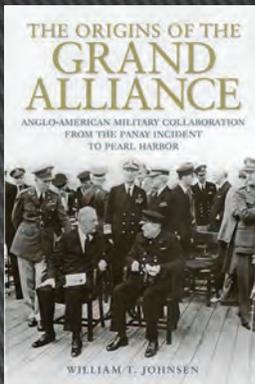
The American drive for westward expansion (manifest destiny) and the quest for living space (lebensraum) of Nazi Germany are two topics that have been around for a long time. The amount of information that exists as a result is monumental in scope and will continue to be so for some time. *Hitler's Ostkrieg*

and the Indian Wars effortlessly tackles the history of these tragedies and creates a fresh and modern view of two histories. This reviewer highly recommends this book for these and other reasons. History does repeat itself to varying degrees, and Westermann proves this in his work. The book brings to light a wealth of new information rarely seen before, and this is a large part of what makes the author's argument unique and worth reading.

**Capt. Eugene M. Harding** is an armor officer and is currently the commander of Delta Company, 2d Battalion, 152d Infantry Regiment, in Bluffton, Indiana. He has been in the Army eight years, is a qualified 5X military historian, and holds two history master's degrees, one in ancient and classical studies and the other in genocidal studies with focus on the Holocaust.



*The Origins of the Grand Alliance: Anglo-American Military Collaboration from the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor*



By William T. Johnsen  
University Press of Kentucky, 2016  
Pp. xx, 406. \$50

**Review by A. R. B. Linderman**

Upon entering Arlington National Cemetery, one encounters an equestrian statue, not of any American hero, but of British Field Marshal Sir John Dill, Chief of the British Joint Staff

Mission in Washington during World War II. Dill repeatedly smoothed out difficulties in the Anglo-American relationship and, when he died in 1944, was buried among America's honored dead. In *The Origins of the Grand Alliance: Anglo-American Military Collaboration from the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor*, William T. Johnsen, a professor of military history and strategy at the U.S. Army War College, observes that "the importance of the relationship between Dill and [U.S. Army General George] Marshall cannot be overstated" (p. 210). It was one piece of an intimate relationship between the British and American militaries, adeptly chronicled by Johnsen in his latest work.

Johnsen's thesis is that the Grand Alliance, "the most successful military coalition in history," succeeded as the result of "an evolutionary process that took place between the military staffs before the entrance of the United States into the war" (pp. 253–54). At increasingly regular meetings over several years, leaders of the two militaries developed a common strategy, created operational procedures, and coordinated their industries. "Battles and campaigns alone," Johnsen notes, "although vitally important, are never enough to secure victory" (p. xx); this unglamorous staff work laid the foundation for allied victory.

Anglo-American cooperation during the interwar period was inhibited by a variety of factors; Johnsen cites the American refusal to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, the role of the Irish bloc in American politics, the reluctance by American policymakers to use military power, and the disdain of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain for American fecklessness in general and President Franklin Roosevelt specifically. Nevertheless, both sides gradually realized that they lacked the resources to compete with one another.

Meetings between the two militaries began, tentatively, in early 1938. Talks in 1939 and 1940 not only allowed Britain to contract for much-needed war material, but also jump-started American industrial capacity, cultivated habits of compromise,

and, "because the talks on supplies took place openly, [accustomed] the American public and Congress . . . to the idea of Anglo-American cooperation" (p. 79). Extensive "tactical and technical information" provided by the British in 1940 "was priceless and undoubtedly saved hundreds, if not thousands, of American lives in the initial period after American intervention" (p. 128).

In November 1940, more than a year before Pearl Harbor, the military staffs agreed to fight a defensive war in the Pacific while concentrating on Germany first. In the spring of 1941, both nations agreed on further details of such matters as areas of responsibility, command procedures, and military missions in each country. In July 1941 U.S. forces arrived in Iceland to relieve the British garrison. Two months later U.S. naval vessels began escorting convoys between Iceland and the Eastern seaboard, even though not formally at war.

Johnsen does not sugarcoat the many squabbles between the two powers, but is also cautious about their significance. "In a global war, where strategic requirements always exceed available resources, there had to be mechanisms for ensuring the appropriate allocation of material and resources necessary to support strategy" (p. xx). That the two militaries hammered out such mechanisms is proof of their unity, in spite of the limited resources.

This study underscores the importance of human actors. For those making decisions in the years before Pearl Harbor, the significance of those decisions was not always clear: "Most [trends] remained shrouded in secrecy, doubt, risk, miscalculation, and an opponent's decisions. . . . Thus, if today it appears that they took small, halting steps or missed opportunities, such outcomes are more apparent in retrospect" (p. 5). One of the gems of this work are the biographical sketches throughout, which add depth and orient readers who may not be familiar with some key individuals.

Johnsen is careful to avoid a sense of inevitability. He notes, for example, that "although in hindsight the situa-

tion in Latin America may not look serious, it was a significant concern for U.S. political and military leaders” (p. 85). In May 1940 Roosevelt ordered 10,000 soldiers airlifted to Brazil to prevent the Germans from seizing territory there. As late as May 1941, American planners feared German forces might advance from Vichy territory in northwest Africa into Brazil.

Many studies of the Grand Alliance place considerable emphasis on Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Although they played pivotal roles in establishing Anglo-American cooperation, the difficult work of setting priorities and procedures was done by others. Johnsen argues, for example, that Churchill’s visit to Placentia Bay aboard HMS *Prince of Wales* in August 1941 was most important not for the Roosevelt-Churchill meeting it produced, but because the chiefs of staff on both sides were afforded the opportunity to meet, plan, and build rapport.

The picture of Roosevelt that emerges is not a flattering one. Johnsen is careful to be evenhanded, but repeatedly describes situations where Roosevelt’s refusal to provide clear guidance to his subordinates—likely in an effort to keep his options open—imposed hardships on the men trying to resolve practical measures for fighting the Axis Powers. Churchill comes off better than Roosevelt, but Johnsen notes occasions where Churchill was not the Atlanticist of mythology, when, for example, in the summer of 1940 he nearly turned down naval talks with the United States.

Throughout prewar planning, commitments were a problem. Understandably, the British wanted the Americans to make them; just as understandably, the state of American politics before Pearl Harbor made concrete, public commitments extremely unlikely. What is surprising in all of this was that the British repeatedly asked anyway, demonstrating “just how tone-deaf they were on this issue” (p. 95).

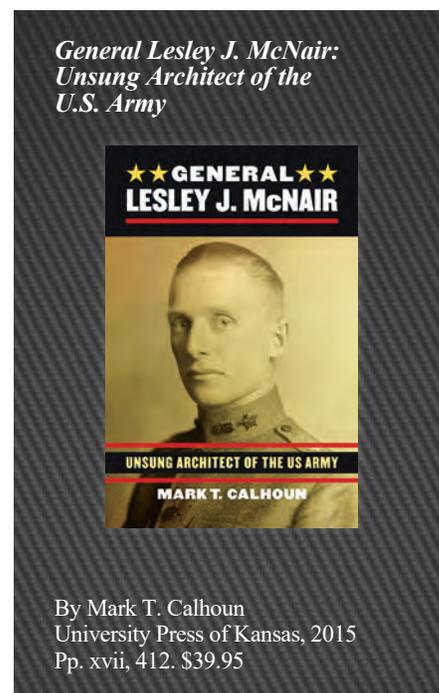
When full staff talks began in early 1941, lack of meaningful joint mechanisms placed the U.S. at a disadvantage. The British services generally

presented a unified organization, but the U.S. military consisted of two very distinct services. Indeed, it was in order to mirror the British Chiefs of Staff Committee that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were established in the first place. The British came well prepared to meetings; American efforts were often ad hoc and last-minute.

Another recurring irritation was the question of the Far East. Both sides underestimated their Japanese opponent. Moreover, Johnsen faults Britain’s approach to the matter. “Although continually stressing the importance of Singapore, they did not appear interested in actually defending the supposed keystone of the empire,” even to the point of expecting the United States to denude the West Coast in order to guard Singapore (p. 123). Churchill scolded the Admiralty that “anyone could have seen that the United States would not base a battle-fleet on Singapore and divide their naval Forces” (p. 142). The Americans made their decision about how to prioritize limited resources; the British had trouble admitting they did not have adequate resources to defend Singapore, and subsequently paid the price for attempting to do so.

This book is a valuable contribution to the literature on the Grand Alliance, a well-researched and clearly written argument that success in war often begins long before the battlefield.

**A. R. B. Linderman** holds a Ph.D. in history from Texas A&M University and is the author of *Rediscovering Irregular Warfare: Colin Gubbins and the Origins of Britain’s Special Operations Executive* (Norman, Okla., 2016).



## Review by Eric R. Price

If the relentless challenge facing historians is to find something new to say about a subject, first-time book author Mark Calhoun has well exceeded that mandate. Calhoun’s volume, *General Lesley J. McNair: Unsung Architect of the U.S. Army*, provides a wealth of new information about a largely marginalized, when not maligned, figure in the historical accounts of World War II. More importantly, the author uses the story of McNair as a vehicle to better understand the U.S. Army’s performance during World War II.

It is hardly surprising that McNair remains mainly forgotten in American history. Soft-spoken and intensely private, the enigmatic general died in Normandy early in World War II, the unfortunate victim of an errant American air strike. Yet, his near absence from the historical narrative has less to do with his early death and more to do with his relegation to staff assignments for most of his military career. Ironically, Calhoun demonstrates throughout that it was these noncommand assignments that made McNair a central figure in the Army’s preparations for the war and provided the skills that led to General George C. Marshall calling McNair the “brains of the Army” (p. 311).

Throughout his career, McNair demonstrated wide-ranging interests in military training, modernization, officer education, and the development of the experiments needed to make progress in these areas. Featured heavily throughout the book is his interest in testing. For instance, McNair oversaw several studies related to changes in equipment, doctrine, and organizations over the course of his career. This included tests on new mountain artillery systems in 1911–1912, operations between the coastal artillery and air service in the defense of Oahu in 1923, and efforts to redesign division structures in 1937. More indirectly, as the deputy commandant of the Field Artillery School, McNair supported experiments designed to improve the integration and control of artillery fires in support of ground maneuvers in 1929. In each case, McNair applied rigorous standards to processes designed to modernize equipment and doctrine. He applied this same rigor to the analysis of doctrine, training, and weapons systems on the eve of World War II.

Calhoun demonstrates the care with which McNair approached his responsibilities in conducting such tests and deconstructs the logic behind the recommendations the general made to the War Department. He shows that McNair's approach to studying problems and formulating recommendations was sound, even if his conclusions proved not to be correct after the fact. This suggests that McNair was far more qualified for some of his key assignments than previous historians gave him credit. For instance, some have criticized McNair's central role in the 1941 General Headquarters Maneuvers, suggesting that his direct involvement in planning for the event and the authorship of the umpire manual indicate an effort to exert influence on the outcome. However, Calhoun argues that McNair's experience in the development of combined arms doctrine, in the design of divisions, and in umpiring of the 1939 maneuvers and observing the 1940 maneuvers show that McNair's qualifications to prepare the Army for war were "probably unmatched by any other officer in the army" (p. 229).

Interestingly, even as the author shows that McNair was more qualified for some of his assignments than previous historians believed, he also rebuffs suggestions that McNair was wholly to blame for controversial decisions he made during the war. The most prominent criticism is that McNair was directly responsible for the Army's adoption of antitank guns in lieu of an effective tank to match against enemy armored formations. It is true that McNair had long advocated for guns as the primary means for defending against tanks. However, Calhoun argues that the adoption of the 37-mm. antitank gun had more to do with the inability of the War Department to produce and quickly transport heavy tanks to the European theater than with what constituted the best defense against enemy armor (p. 234). More broadly, the writer asserts, "McNair enjoyed less decision-making authority and autonomy during World War II than some accounts assert," suggesting that Marshall acted as final arbiter in the department's decision making (p. 329).

Advocating for McNair's influence on World War II preparations while simultaneously suggesting that the general lacked authority in decision making is perhaps the weakest part of Calhoun's argument. How could McNair be the architect of the World War II Army and at the same time not be held accountable as the decision maker? What Calhoun shows is that McNair developed many of the systems for assessing doctrine, equipment, training, and personnel selection even while he was rarely in the position to approve the recommendations that resulted from those assessments.

Thus, while *General Lesley J. McNair* tells an important story about this lesser-known general, Calhoun also uses McNair's career to illuminate the processes by which the Army developed and tested doctrine and equipment, made decisions on organizational design, and selected soldiers for service within the Army. Each of these examples shows that the War Department was far from being complacent

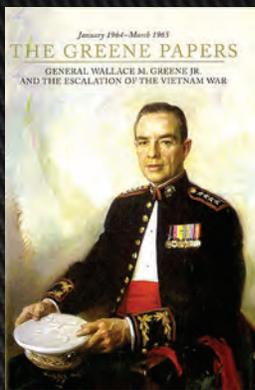
about a conflict that appeared to be just over the horizon, as many historians have suggested. Instead, Army leaders carefully considered the lessons of the First World War: the potentialities associated with a renewed global conflict, the opportunities presented by emerging technologies, the development of new weapons systems, and the doctrine needed to incorporate these new systems into an effective fighting force. Thus, writer contributes to the recent revisionist trend in World War II history that credits the outcome of the war, in part, on American successes rather than just German failures. Unlike other revisionists, he does not base his case on the belief that American success was driven by an indomitable spirit to overcome shortcomings in doctrine, training, and equipment. Instead, Calhoun argues that the Army prepared for war against the Axis by developing sound doctrine, streamlining organizational structures and acceptable equipment, and conducting realistic training, so that American success was a function of learning how to fight effectively with the tools at hand. McNair's role in this, argues Calhoun, stands as "one of the most remarkable achievements of the war" (p. 308).

From its title or table of contents, a potential reader might be tempted to think that this book is merely a biography of a tangential character in the history of World War II. Fortunately, it is not. Instead, perhaps due to the limited availability of McNair's personal papers, the author uses the general as a lens through which to correct prevailing narratives about the inadequacy of the U.S. Army, both in its preparation for the war and its performance throughout it. This makes the book an excellent reference on American preparations for World War II and U.S. Army professional military education. Equally important, Calhoun's well-written book provides the best look to date at McNair and illustrates the value of organizational leadership in an institution that often places a premium on direct leadership at the expense of those who lead the systems and processes that create institutional-level success.

**Eric R. Price** is an assistant professor at the School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in U.S. history at the University of Kansas.



*The Greene Papers: General Wallace M. Greene, Jr. and the Escalation of the Vietnam War, January 1964–March 1965*



Edited by Nicholas J. Schlosser  
Marine Corps University Press, 2016  
pp. xxxviii, 366. \$59

### Review by Greg McCarthy

*The Greene Papers* is a collection of writings from the original documents of U.S. Marine Corps General Wallace Greene, the twenty-third Commandant of the Marine Corps. The one hundred items cover a fourteen-month period ending in early 1965 and were declassified in 2011. The work unfolds in strictly chronological fashion and the editor's notes are minimal, usually identifying some principal or offering a slight correction. This provides the reader with an original source, real-time assessment of Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) discussions in the critical run-up to the major deployment of ground forces to Southeast Asia. The records are interspersed with several 1972 summaries of Greene's oral history recollections on specific

documents or events. Those comments were made before the peace agreement and fall of Saigon, so Greene was speaking of a still-ongoing war.

The basic contours of America's involvement in Vietnam have been established at least since the publication of the *Pentagon Papers* (New York, 1971) and David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* (New York, 1972). Former National Security Adviser H. R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York, 1997) added detail (and blame) to deliberations of the JCS. *The Greene Papers* confirms in dry detail the many unchallenged assumptions and rosy scenarios that led to the commitment of substantial ground combat troops. The collection also provides contemporaneous evidence that as early as January 1964, Greene's first month of a four-year term, the situation was deteriorating and needed greater U.S. commitment or outright abandonment.

The specifics remain troubling. Vietnam was a textbook case of mission creep, ends-means misalignment, a limited war yielding limited results, and ad hoc decision making that regularly omitted key players and options. General Maxwell Taylor, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), often misrepresented the JCS views to President Richard M. Nixon, but ingratiated himself to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, much to the detriment of his role as principal military adviser to South Vietnam, and later, its U.S. ambassador.

In Greene's writings, President Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara are noted for their indecisiveness and micromanagement, respectively. Johnson follows Kennedy's lead in *not* relying on the National Security Council for policymaking and discussion. Greene paints a picture of at least half the Joint Chiefs regularly being kept in the dark about various White House decisions, learning about directives through the media or word from the theater. McNamara's dismissive overconfidence is

on display throughout. In what sounds like modern controversies, Johnson's frustrations with policy leaks led to his vow to fire any leakers, and he later ordered the FBI to investigate his own staff (p. 340).

The basic outlines of the policy challenge appear in early 1964. Greene's initial trip to South Vietnam in January found U.S. advisers with minimal enthusiasm for a job they estimated would take two to three years. He assesses colonels there as only "average." It is almost eerie how prescient some the JCS concerns are: is General William Westmoreland, the commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968, tough enough to face down politicians? In May 1964, Greene foresees that "we are about to become deeply involved" in Vietnam, maybe bigger than in Korea. The Secretary of Defense may be discredited, he notes. Even McNamara in March 1964 is increasingly nervous. In late 1964, Greene believes that a major war will not be popular.

The Joint Chiefs face a series of escalating exchanges, including the still-controversial Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964 resulting in nearly unanimous approval of a congressional resolution to respond. The reader may note an unusual alliance forming between Greene and Air Force Chief of Staff General Curtis LeMay. The two are the resident "hawks," seeking decisive engagement and strong commitment (although Greene leaves open the possibility of walking away altogether). Further, Greene and LeMay are both outspoken at times within the JCS that the chiefs' views must be presented to the president. Although he is not above describing LeMay as belligerent and fumbling in one exchange with McNamara, LeMay's retirement in early 1965 deprives Greene of his closest ally.

Johnson makes only minimal appearances in the book. There is a cameo by Daniel Ellsberg, in pre-*Pentagon Papers* notoriety. Cyrus Vance, a future Secretary of State, regularly appears as Deputy Secretary of Defense but leaves little impression. A *New York Times* editor tells senior Johnson officials his reporters have a

better read on the country than the administration.

McNamara discussed, unprompted and on multiple occasions, preemptive strikes on embryonic Chinese nuclear facilities, predicting it would otherwise be an enormous problem in coming decades. The domino theory (the idea that the loss of Vietnam would inevitably lead to the Communist takeover of the remainder of Southeast Asia) and Communist Chinese dominance over Vietnam are both taken as axiomatic (but have been widely disputed since).

Greene's documents make clear that the American leaders never forged the kind of partnership with South Vietnam that would succeed when tested. Successive U.S. ambassadors expressed regular frustration with the mediocre leadership of South Vietnam. At the same time, on at least two occasions, leaders (the U.S. ambassador and the intelligence community, respectively) overestimated their survivability.

Congress has a slightly larger role than expected in Greene's writings, given its virtual rubber stamp in response to the Gulf of Tonkin incident. Johnson urges the intelligence community to share its findings with Sen. Barry Goldwater, his opponent in the 1964 general election. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. Richard Russell, viewed generally as a hawk, tells Greene in October 1964 that he told Director of Central Intelligence John McCone to install a South Vietnam puppet demanding U.S. withdrawal. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Earle Wheeler, assesses the early 1965 Congress as indifferent or opposed to Vietnam (p. 278). Sen. Albert Gore Sr., a Democrat from Tennessee and the father of the future vice president, gives one official "hell" in February 1965 for why the United States is in Vietnam at all. The chiefs discuss how much to tell Congress in open hearings.

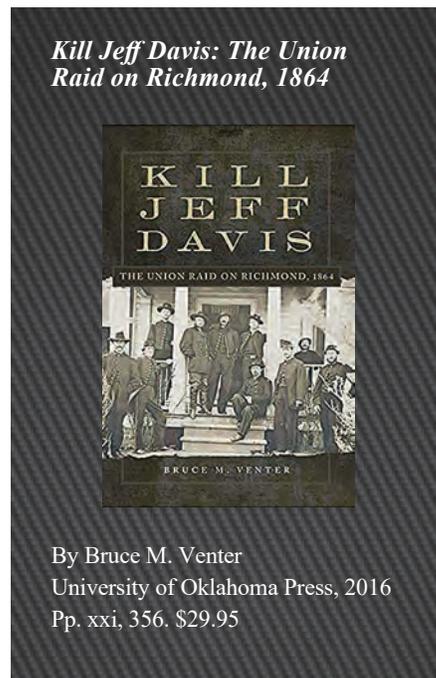
McNamara's guidance to the JCS in early 1965 is to ask for more force than needed and to avoid Korean War-style failure. The story ends abruptly (and without even a coda of an editorial comment) in March 1965 as the 9th

Marine Expeditionary Brigade takes its position in Da Nang.

As a narrator, Greene, who died in 2003, seems reliable and mostly avoids score-settling, although his animus toward McNamara is not disguised, decrying his "whiz kid management techniques" at one point. Greene's 1972 oral history summaries are not as illuminating as the original documents.

Perhaps the only thing worse than a decision by committee is one made by part of a committee. Lamenting the piecemeal approach, Greene concludes that "nothing has been learned from history on the proper application of military power" (p. 253). He seemed to have grasped in its early stages that our Vietnam effort was doomed, but did not voice the subsequent regret of his contemporary, Army Chief of Staff General Harold Johnson, that he should have resigned in protest. It is worth noting that Greene was the first Commandant of the Marine Corps to serve as a full member of the JCS, and Marine observers may appreciate the intimate thoughts of a wartime commandant. The book will also be of great interest to Vietnam War scholars seeking primary sources and of general use to the larger body of works addressing the decision-making processes of the war. *The Greene Papers*, though a snapshot in time from only one-fifth of the Joint Chiefs, revisits Vietnam in all its awful complexity.

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### Review by Garrett A. Close

Union Army Brig. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick's ill-fated 1864 raid on Richmond, Virginia, with its supposed aims of killing Confederate President Jefferson Davis, setting the rebels' capital ablaze, and freeing 13,000 Union prisoners of war from Libby Prison, makes for a compelling story. However, despite the intriguing nature of the raid, few historians have explored it in depth. Bruce Venter remedies this lapse in Civil War historiography with the excellent *Kill Jeff Davis*, a well-researched and interesting account of the people and events involved in one attempt to strike at the heart of the Confederacy. In the book, Venter examines the raid at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, then discusses why it ended in failure.

Venter's work focuses on Kilpatrick and his subordinate commander, Col. Ulric Dahlgren, as they led the Union raid. The author describes the actions taken by each commander on their way to Richmond, along with the stiff resistance they encountered as they approached the city. He tells of their attempts to leave Confederate territory, and how Dahlgren, unable to communicate with Kilpatrick, was ultimately killed in the process. Venter concludes by describing the aftermath of the raid, including the Confederate

response to documents they discovered on Dahlgren's body that stated his objective: to kill Jefferson Davis. The writer argues that these documents were likely genuine, but that it was probably Dahlgren, not his superiors, who made the decision to kill the Confederate president.

Venter's exploration of the strategic level of war is chiefly concerned with how President Abraham Lincoln chose to exercise national power in shaping Kilpatrick's mission. Lincoln met with Kilpatrick before personally approving his mission to attack Richmond and free Union prisoners of war, the raid's original objectives. The author argues, though, that the decision to kill Davis was not made by Lincoln. He says that while the president likely "had no problem taking Davis prisoner . . . no evidence exists that Lincoln wanted him dead" (p. 248). He also reveals that Lincoln was a close confidant of the father of Dahlgren, and that this relationship may have led to Dahlgren's selection to serve under Kilpatrick on the raid. Venter makes a credible case that this had a negative impact on the raid's outcome, as Dahlgren had not yet fully recovered from his foot being amputated mere months before the start of Kilpatrick's mission.

Venter later delves into the operational level of war. He discusses Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler's failed raid on Richmond, which preceded Kilpatrick's mission but shared similar objectives. The author adds the story of Brig. Gen. George Custer's diversion toward Charlottesville and discusses its effects on Kilpatrick's raid. Throughout the narrative, he includes detailed information on Confederate forces, including the decision by the Confederates to destroy Libby Prison and kill the Union prisoners of war inside if any attempt was made to free them.

While *Kill Jeff Davis* recounts the politics and campaigns leading to Kilpatrick's mission, the book is at its best while examining the raid at the tactical level. Venter provides vivid descriptions of terrain, environmental conditions, and units' actions and offers sound exposition on the potential thought processes of commanders

and analyses on why combat actions succeeded or failed. The author's assertions are well supported; his book is heavily footnoted and relies on sources such as official records, regimental histories, newspaper accounts, unpublished diaries, reminiscences, and Army archival sources previously unused by historians.

Not content simply to describe the circumstances surrounding Kilpatrick's raid on Richmond, *Kill Jeff Davis* also provides a comprehensive explanation for why the cavalry expedition failed to accomplish its objectives. Venter argues that multiple factors, including issues with weather, knowledge of terrain, command and control, logistics, and a lack of secrecy each played a role in the outcome of the raid. He paints a picture of the cold, rainy weather that followed the cavalry, muddying fields, filling rivers, and slowing the raiders' movement at times when speed was critical. The author shows how Dahlgren failed to effectively use scouts and how his resulting navigational errors delayed his command, preventing them from effectively supporting Kilpatrick in Richmond. Venter also aptly depicts the command and control issues that hindered the mission. At one point, Dahlgren attempted to contact Kilpatrick for guidance, so he sent scouts to ask Kilpatrick to signal him with rockets. He was apparently undeterred by the fact that the same rockets had been absolutely ineffective at keeping the two cavalymen in contact throughout the mission thus far. Logistics also proved challenging, as evidenced by the fact that Dahlgren's element, when it was ambushed near King and Queen Courthouse, was almost out of ammunition. Finally, Venter argues that the raid required secrecy to succeed, but that "from the outset that rarest of military commodities was compromised" as knowledge that the raid was to occur was fairly widespread (p. 260).

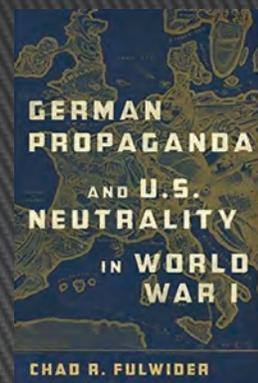
If the writer stumbles at all in *Kill Jeff Davis*, it is in finding a balance between telling the overall story and exploring its details. He typically does a good job of both, but occasionally his enthusiasm to explain an event in depth interrupts the forward

momentum of the narrative. In one example, he devotes an entire chapter to Martin Robinson, a guide who lost his way and was later brutally killed by Dahlgren. Historians will undoubtedly appreciate Venter's efforts here, but more casual readers may find such lengthy asides somewhat dry. This is, however, a very minor quibble. Venter deserves great credit for contributing to the historical record in such a fascinating way, and anyone interested in the Civil War would be well served in reading *Kill Jeff Davis*. His book will likely appeal to casual readers, military professionals, and historians alike.

**Maj. Garrett A. Close** received his master's in strategic intelligence from the National Intelligence University. He served with the 3d Cavalry Regiment in Iraq and currently works as an intelligence officer in the 1st Cavalry Division.



*German Propaganda and U.S. Neutrality in World War I*



By Chad R. Fulwider  
University of Missouri Press, 2016  
Pp. xi, 274. \$60

**Review by Nicholas M. Sambaluk**

In *German Propaganda and U.S. Neutrality in World War I*, author Chad R. Fulwider makes sure from

the outset to lay out the importance of his topic, asserting that “the battle for American public opinion” was “the most decisive battle of World War I” (p. 3). German propaganda efforts were intended to reinforce U.S. neutrality during the conflict, but Fulwider explores these endeavors and the reasons they ultimately failed.

Perhaps the principle German failing was that officials in Berlin concocted a selective and largely inaccurate understanding of German Americans. The German government assumed that these immigrants and their descendants, making up about a quarter of the U.S. population at the time, constituted a pool of latent support for the Fatherland. This view ignored the fact that the fealty of turn-of-the-century German Americans to their heritage, customs, food, and faith did not necessarily translate into loyalty to the Second Reich. In fact, many had emigrated precisely because they saw economic or political opportunities in the New World that had been lacking in Germany. Furthermore, the biggest organization for the immigrant and descendant population was the National German American Association, a consciously nonpartisan entity sympathetic to American noninvolvement in the war and disinterested in serving simply as a mouthpiece for Berlin’s messaging.

Complementing Berlin’s misconception of German American society was its misunderstanding of how best to address American audiences. Fulwider repeatedly demonstrates that the German government favored the use of overt propaganda documents on the assumption that the stamp of government authorization would lend further credibility to the message. Contemporary German American scholars noted that this might be effective in Germany but was counterproductive in the United States. While Berlin utterly failed to learn this lesson, London seized on the opportunity from the outset to establish subtle, unattributed, and vastly more effective propaganda modes in the neutral United States, contouring the national debate about the war.

The author notes that German efforts were confused, ineffective, and frequently contradictory. Repeated shifts in U-boat policy came without warning to the people charged with running propaganda efforts in the United States, and propagandists were frequently sent scrambling to react to events. Funding for covert sabotage efforts by agents of the Army and Navy were questionably routed along diplomatic and business channels. Discovery of these efforts tainted the German government’s propaganda message. Other more passive German methods included the creation of the Bridgeport Projective Company as a dummy business that “tied up construction firms, specialized technical equipment, and resources that could not be exploited by American capitalists” to sell munitions to Britain and France (p. 130). This, too, was uncovered and deepened suspicion of German spokesmen and diplomats.

One area in which Fulwider finds the German effort notably botched was in its failure to more energetically support the creation of war propaganda films for foreign consumption. Although a film company was created for the purpose and was “the most promising vehicle for redirecting the American perception of Germany,” it “foundered due to a shortage of funding and a lack of faith and insight on the part of officials in Germany” (p. 143). The problem was due less to a lack of resources than to Berlin’s poor choices, as Fulwider explains in a footnote “the Germans wasted hundreds of thousands of dollars attempting to funnel arms to [rebels in] India, money that could have been spent through the American Correspondent Film Company to produce better German film propaganda” (p. 221).

Fulwider does an effective job showing how early and how completely the United States’ economic dealings with the Entente powers made it a less-than-neutral country. Despite the nation not officially entering the war until April 1917 and conducting a hectic mobilization that prevented large-scale participa-

tion in European combat until the following summer, U.S. businesses from arms manufacturers to horse breeders were doing a lively business with Germany’s enemies within weeks of war’s outbreak, and by September 1915, U.S. policy had shifted to allow economic credits to London and Paris as well as the extension of half a billion dollars of loans to the Allied powers. Thus, “the United States was an integral participant in the ‘European war’ by mid-1915, in economic terms, if not overtly as a declared belligerent” (p. 50).

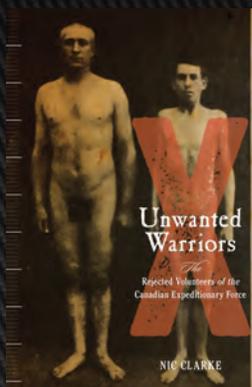
German propaganda efforts were a failure. From the start of the war, the cutting of Germany’s trans-Atlantic cables had put the country at a messaging disadvantage. Britain’s naval dominance, its trade with the United States, its blockade of Germany, and its broad definition of contraband posed monumental problems for Germany. Crucial mistakes by the German policymakers themselves compounded their difficulties. As a result, by the time the United States entered the war, “German-Americans quickly closed ranks with their fellow citizens by contributing heavily to liberty-bond drives” (p. 115) and by serving in the armed forces. This did not prevent a deep and nasty cultural campaign against things and people associated with Germany during the war period. In terms of social history, “the experience of German-Americans reveals that even those groups who seemed to have successfully integrated and assimilated into society could also be easily marked out yet again and discriminated against on the basis of perceived disloyalty” (p. 9).

In conclusion, the reader is presented with a deeper understanding of one aspect of World War I history that reinforces some important points, including the lessons that errors in strategy and perception can deal the heaviest blows and that mindsets can be dynamic, malleable, and manipulated. *German Propaganda and U.S. Neutrality in World War I* is a worthwhile and important read for anyone interested in World War I or the impact of strategic messaging.

**Dr. Nicholas M. Sambaluk** is an associate professor of strategy at the Air University eSchool of Graduate Professional Military Education at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He is the author of *The Other Space Race: Eisenhower and the Quest for Aerospace Security* (Annapolis, Md., 2015), which was named “Air Power History Book of the Year” in 2016 by the Air Force Historical Foundation. His forthcoming book *21st Century Warfare: The Impact of Cyber Warfare, Social Media, and Technology* will be published by ABC-Clio in 2019.



*Unwanted Warriors: The Rejected Volunteers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force*



By Nic Clarke  
University of British Columbia  
Press, 2016  
Pp. xi, 239. \$32.95

**Review by Peter L. Belmonte**

In *Unwanted Warriors: The Rejected Volunteers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force*, author Nic Clarke, a historian with the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, writes that somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 men were declared medically unfit to serve in the Canadian armed forces between 1914 and 1918 (p. 3). These men, rejected at recruiting sta-

tions or in staging camps, suffered a stigma that, in some cases, the author equates to wounds suffered on the battlefield. In considering and evaluating contemporary records, Clarke seeks to answer a series of questions: “[H]ow did the military authorities come to define what constituted the minimum physical standards for service? How did medical examination work? In what ways, and why, did concepts of military fitness differ between Canadian military authorities, Canadian medical professionals, and laypeople? How did such differing constructions impact recruiting, recruits, and those rejected for service? How did civilian societies view, and treat, those deemed unfit to serve? How did those turned away as unfit navigate their rejection for service?” (p. 9).

Before proceeding into his narrative, Clarke reminds us about the use of the term “lowered standards” when discussing physical requirements: “[W]e should be careful not to attribute an overly negative connotation to the word ‘lowered’ when discussing the changes to the Canadian Expeditionary Force’s minimum physical standards. Although these standards were lowered in the sense that less was required of some recruits, the changes implemented did not impact negatively on the ability of individual recruits to successfully carry out their mission or that of the force as a whole” (pp. 8–9).

In the first chapter, the author covers the evolution of Canadian military medical standards for recruits and the regulations governing medical and physical exams. These standards changed over time. From the black-and-white “fit” and “unfit” designations in effect in 1914, the categories became much more nuanced and broadened. Recognition that modern warfare required different types of service and duties prompted a reevaluation of standards. Men unfit for combat in the trenches could still be fit and useful for duties behind the lines or even garrison and administrative work in Canada. Such a realization resulted in a categorization scheme that placed men in one of several categories, from A to D, with subcategories within each

group. A similar scheme was in effect for the United States Army at the time.

In the next chapter, Clarke shows how Canada’s increasing demands for men resulted in a general lowering of standards as the war progressed. Even before the manpower crunch was felt, the Canadian Army lowered its standards regarding dental health, height, chest girth, and vision, among other things. Furthermore, the different branches of service had differing standards; height requirements for heavy artillery were different than those of the infantry, for example. Even among support units there were differences in standards between railroad construction battalions, forestry battalions, and Dental Corps units, for instance.

Clarke examines some failures in the system in Chapter 3. As early as 1914, with the “fit/unfit” rating system basically still in effect, some Canadian soldiers were arriving in England with obvious impairments. These included amputated limbs and noticeable severe limbs; indeed, some of the examples cited by the writer are astounding. The number of unfit men arriving in Europe was enough to cause civilian and military leaders a great deal of concern, and in turn, they issued further instructions and cautions. This chapter also recounts the efforts by recruits, medical officers, and unit commanders to subvert the medical inspection process in order to fill their ranks, which added to the problem of unfit men arriving in Europe.

Chapter 4, as the title states, explores the “Clashing Concepts of Fitness.” Civilian and military notions of fitness did not always agree, and the civilian concept often had some influence on doctors’ decisions. Many civilians simply could not understand why a healthy, hearty logger, for example, should be rejected for military service because he had bad teeth. Other ailments and conditions didn’t hinder a man from civilian employment, and both prospective recruits and civilians questioned the military’s wisdom in rejecting some applicants.

Visibly, most of the men rejected for service appeared to be physically “fit” enough for service. Consequently, they were frequently the targets of overzeal-

ous ladies pressuring men to enlist, or even aggressive recruiters seeking men to fill the Army's ranks. The Army and some communities developed various badges and pins that these men could wear to indicate to observers that they had tried to enlist but had been rejected. This, of course, cut both ways: it showed that a man had willingly tried to enlist, but it also was a beacon telling the world that he was, in some way, substandard. Chapter 5 gives a statistical review of large samples of these substandard men, looking at such factors as religion, occupation, age, etc.

In Chapter 6, Clarke looks at the cost of rejection. For those men eager and willing to volunteer, being declared unfit had a devastating impact. The results ranged from suicide to self-exile. According to the author, "many rejected volunteers, whether they chose death at their own hands or carried the scars of their rejection, became uncounted casualties of the Great War" (p. 113).

Of course, not all the men rejected for service were trying to get to the front. Some men eagerly sought rejection as a way of avoiding the front. Such men went out of their way to point out disqualifying medical conditions to doctors conducting their examination. Likewise, wives, parents, and siblings of men in the ranks wrote letters to civilian officials and military commanders seeking to get their loved ones discharged. The letters invoked age, infirmities, and family obligations in order to sway official decisions.

In his final chapter, Clarke summarizes the preceding sections and reviews the changes in Canadian Army medical examinations and classifications promulgated during World War II. Several appendices summarize the changes in regulations and categories in the Canadian military throughout the war years. Clarke's endnotes are helpful and detailed, and his bibliography will give researchers plenty of opportunities for further study.

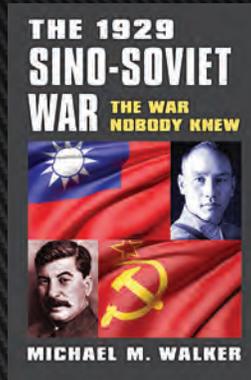
This book is an interesting and very worthy addition to World War I historiography. Such a work could be written from any combatant nation's perspective; let's hope that others will

take up the mantle and more carefully examine these "unwanted warriors."

**Peter L. Belmonte** is a retired U.S. Air Force officer and freelance historian. He holds a master's degree in history from California State University, Stanislaus, and is the author of several books including, *Italian Americans in World War II* (Dixon, S.C., 2001), *Days of Perfect Hell: The U.S. 26th Infantry Regiment in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, October–November, 1918* (Atglen, Pa., 2015), and (with Alexander F. Barnes) *Forgotten Soldiers of World War I: America's Immigrant Doughboys* (Atglen, Pa., 2018).



*The 1929 Sino-Soviet War: The War Nobody Knew*



By Michael M. Walker  
University Press of Kansas, 2017  
Pp. xiii, 400. \$39.95

### Review by Eric Setzekorn

The clash of empires in northeast Asia is a subject that continues to resonate in history and contemporary politics. Michael M. Walker's *The 1929 Sino-Soviet War: The War Nobody Knew* details the brief but pivotal conflict between the Soviet Union and the Republic of China, concluding that the Soviet victory paved the way for a much stronger Japanese interest in Manchuria. While Walker pres-

ents a compelling argument for the importance of the 1929 conflict, the confused nature of the fighting and numerous actors, each with distinct goals and motivations, makes the historical narrative difficult for a casual reader to easily comprehend despite the author's valiant efforts. Although successful in achieving Walker's goal of creating a "drum and trumpet operational history," *The 1929 Sino-Soviet War* is more appealing to the military history specialist rather than a broad audience.

The heart of the author's analysis is the vital role of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER), which connected Soviet territory in Siberia and the Far East by cutting across Manchuria. Built by the Russian government in the 1890s and early 1900s, the CER linked Chita and Vladivostok by transiting the northeastern province of what was then the Qing Empire, cutting travel time but involving Russia in complicated local politics. The 1905 Russo-Japanese War, 1911 Chinese Revolution, and 1917 Russian Revolution fractured the political system of the region, leading to the rise of local military forces and frequent skirmishing. Booming economic growth fueled by World War I, the rise of soybeans as a commercial crop, and the surging population of the city of Harbin further complicated the situation, leading to Manchuria becoming the "Wild West" of northeast Asia. In the 1920s, the combination of uncertainty and opportunity continued as local warlords, military proxies of great powers, and rapid economic development resulted in a vibrant and dangerous borderlands region.

Into this maelstrom, the Zhang family, the most powerful of local warlords, and the Kuomintang Party under Chiang Kai-shek sought to gain control of the CER for reasons of prestige and economic benefit. Driven by nationalism and a desire to solidify public support by opposing "imperialism," these two leaders maneuvered their military forces to extract concessions from the Soviets. Walker expertly describes the confusing Chinese political atmosphere of the 1920s, often dubbed the "Warlord

era,” but at times the number of names and dates becomes overwhelming. The Soviet motivations are more straightforward, as Joseph Stalin attempted to reclaim and solidify pre-1917 Russian prerogatives, while at the same time presenting the Soviet Union as a revolutionary ally of the Chinese. Curiously, the individual motivations and decision making of both the Chinese and Soviet leadership is given little examination. For example, the military training and political background of Chang Hsueh-liang, the most important local Chinese leader, is skimmed through in one paragraph. Several key issues, such as the fact that Chiang Kai-shek’s son was a de facto hostage in the Soviet Union during this period, are not mentioned.

The book’s best moments are in the later chapters in which Walker examines the decisive Soviet offensive in the fall of 1929 that destroyed Chinese aspirations of gaining control of the CER. Directed by General Vasily Blyuker, large-scale and skillful Soviet preparations for the conflict gave them a crucial advantage in fighting on both the western and eastern borders of Manchuria and along the Sungari River that flowed through the center of the region. Although the size of the theater of operations was enormous, the scale of the fighting was small, with only 1,000 Soviet and 9,000 Chinese casualties. The sharp, sudden victory of the Soviets was noted by Chinese and Japanese observers as heralding a

return of Russian involvement in the Far East after a decade of civil war and isolation. The author argues that the Soviet ascendance led to a shift in Japanese thinking to focus on a potential Manchuria threat, an intriguing but weakly supported assertion.

Although a lengthy book, with 297 pages of text and over 100 additional pages containing notes, a bibliography, and an index, there is limited space devoted to the general military history of the era and interwar developments. Walker highlights the role of airpower and the increasingly heavy weight of artillery used by the Chinese and Soviets, but there is no attempt to link the fighting in Manchuria to other interwar conflicts such as the Chaco War in South America or the Spanish Civil War. This is a missed opportunity to engage with the high level of interest in interwar military developments.

A more serious issue is a heavy reliance on extremely dated sources and English language material. While there is a smattering of Chinese and Russian language material utilized, the overwhelming majority of sources are English language, which is problematic for a topic that had few American or British observers, and where none of the primary participants released large numbers of documents for translation. In addition, Walker’s insights into the Chinese domestic political scene are hindered by the use of scholarship that is decades old. For example, his lengthy discussion of the Chinese

“warlord era” uses material written by Ch’i (1966), Ch’en (1968), Sheridan (1966), Wu (1968), and Gillin (1960). While their scholarship was sound and remains useful, newer works on the period, such as Ed McCord’s *The Power of the Gun* (Berkeley, Calif., 1993), are inexplicably not used.

Overall, *The 1929 Sino-Soviet War* has great value for a specialist, and specific chapters will be of great utility to students of the 1920s Soviet and Chinese military forces. Casual readers of military history will struggle with many of the chapters that focus on the intricate Chinese politics of the period. For those looking for a “David Glantz-style” approach to 1920s Chinese military affairs, Walker has presented a professional and competent work on the volatile and fascinating history of northeast Asia.

**Eric Setzekorn** is a historian with the U.S. Army Center of Military History and an adjunct professor at George Washington University. He is the author of *The Rise and Fall of an Officer Corps: The Republic of China Army, 1942–1955* (Norman, Okla., 2018).



# CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

JON T. HOFFMAN



## PERSONNEL MATTERS

A number of personnel changes have taken place at the Center of Military History (CMH) in recent months. First among them, Mike DeYoung took over as the new program manager for Career Program (CP) 61, replacing Ed Clarke. Many of you already know Mike as the term employee who has been spearheading our World War I commemorative efforts. His extensive knowledge of the Army historical community and his well-known facility for developing personal relationships with colleagues contributed heavily to his selection. In addition, Mike spent many years in the Army managing significant programs, including the expansion and improvement of the service's Congressional Fellowship effort, so he has the demonstrated experience to build upon the already strong foundation of CP61. In the coming months we hope to get him out to the field to personally introduce himself to as much of the CP61 workforce as possible.

In an earlier Footnote I noted that we planned to establish a second master author position by converting one of our two existing writing division chief billets. That process has been completed, and after an open hiring action that evaluated candidates both internal and external, we selected Dr. Thomas Boghardt. Thomas has worked at CMH for a decade and has been a writing historian for the past several years. He is in the process of revising the completed first draft of a major book on Army intelligence in Germany from 1944 to 1949, part of our Cold War series. Before coming to CMH, Thomas was the historian for the International Spy Museum and has two commercially published books to his credit, both covering aspects of World War I intelligence, along with a monograph and dozens of articles.

Our initial crop of graduate research assistants (GRAs) completed their year at CMH on 31 July. They more than amply validated the GRA concept by their many valuable contributions to the work of the Center. David Johnson, from Texas Tech, brought a background in Vietnamese history and was an obvious choice as a research assistant for our two authors working on volumes in the Vietnam War series. Justin Blanton, from the University of North Carolina, seemed an unlikely fit given his focus on ethnic

and colonial history in South America, but his knowledge of Brazil and Portuguese proved a perfect complement to the work of our Spanish-speaking historian writing a volume in the Cold War series on the Army in Latin America. Grant Harward, of Texas A&M, wrote his dissertation on the Romanian Army's role in the Holocaust and proved to be a strong contributor as a researcher and information paper writer for the HQDA Studies and Support Division. Wesley Hazzard, of the University of Southern Mississippi, specializes in the American military intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and worked for our Force Structure and Unit History Division. He received a letter of appreciation from the Adjutant General of the Army for unearthing records at the National Archives that have proven critical in the review of Presidential Unit Citations for World War II divisions. Mason Watson, of Ohio State, focused his studies on Britain in World War I and thus was a natural fit to assist in the ongoing one hundredth anniversary commemoration. He performed above and beyond when he stepped in to do additional research and writing and helped complete one of our commemorative pamphlets after the original author was sidetracked by other obligations.

In addition to garnering work experience, the GRAs have been exposed to the federal history community through a regular professional development program. They received briefings and tours from the history programs of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Department of State, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as well as the Central Intelligence Agency and Marine Corps museums. CMH ultimately hired Watson and Harward as CP 61 Pathways interns; Watson will work in the Histories Directorate and Harward with the Army Medical Command history office. The Navy hired Blanton as a contract historian. Johnson and Hazzard returned to their schools to wrap up their Ph.D.s with dissertation fellowship grants from the Center. The next crop of GRAs reported for duty on 1 August and will have their hands full filling the shoes of their predecessors.



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