

ARMY HISTORY

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ARMY HISTORY

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Issue Cover: *Troops training on Champe Rocks, c. 1944* / Photograph by Peter Gabriel, courtesy of the New England Ski Museum
Top Right: Machine gun unit of the 26th Division going into action near Belleau, 19 July 1918
Center: American airplanes ready to start on patrol duty

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

The Fall 2019 issue of *Army History* offers two excellent articles, information about volunteering at the new National Museum of the U.S. Army (NMUSA), a look at some truly unique Army art, a quality selection of book reviews, and notes from both the director of the Center of Military History (CMH) and the Army's chief historian.

The first article, by Nathan A. Marzoli, examines the Army's efforts to conduct low-mountain training in the United States during World War II. Rather than invest in the creation of costly specialized units, the Army showed that standard infantry divisions—with some modification and training—could be taught to fight in mountainous terrain. Marzoli details these efforts and explains why this program was a highlight in the training of ground combat troops and a key component in the Army's battlefield success.

The second article, by Gene Fax, argues that General John J. Pershing's misguided fixation on open warfare during World War I was detrimental to the American Expeditionary Forces' combat effectiveness. He explains that the Army's experiences, doctrine, and training leading up to the American entry into the war largely ignored the four years' worth of fighting that had been going on in France. Fax attempts to show how the Army derived its battle tactics of the time from Civil War era-doctrine and that Pershing's attempts to issue new combat instructions and doctrine were feeble at best.

The NMUSA feature details the burgeoning volunteer program at the Army's soon-to-open national museum. This piece serves as a call for volunteers and highlights the museum's desire for diversity among its volunteer staff. NMUSA is currently accepting volunteer applications and readers of *Army History* are encouraged to apply.

This issue's Army Art Spotlight focuses on some rather "comical" artwork as the Army Museum Enterprise's chief of art examines a select few cartoons from a collection of over 1,000 pieces that appeared in *Yank* magazine.

The CMH director discusses heritage promotion programs and how these "pay the rent for history." Differing from academic and official historical work, these programs "raise [CMH's] profile in the service, foster esprit de corps, and demonstrate relevance and productivity to nonhistorians." The chief historian discusses the Vietnam War series and the work of the Center's graduate research assistants.

Finally, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank our readers for many of their kind notes and emails about the quality of *Army History*. Our small staff works very hard to put out a top-notch publication every quarter and it is very reassuring to hear from our readership and know that we are having an impact. I welcome all your comments and constructive criticisms; hearing from you really does bolster our morale and makes a difference.

Bryan J. Hockensmith
Managing Editor



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“THE BEST SUBSTITUTE”

U.S. ARMY
LOW-MOUNTAIN
TRAINING IN THE BLUE
RIDGE AND ALLEGHENY
MOUNTAINS, 1943–1944

BY NATHAN A. MARZOLI



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PERSHING'S
“OPEN
WARFARE”
DOCTRINE IN THE
LIGHT OF AMERICAN
MILITARY HISTORY

BY GENE FAX





THE CHIEF'S CORNER

CHARLES R. BOWERY JR.

PAYING THE RENT



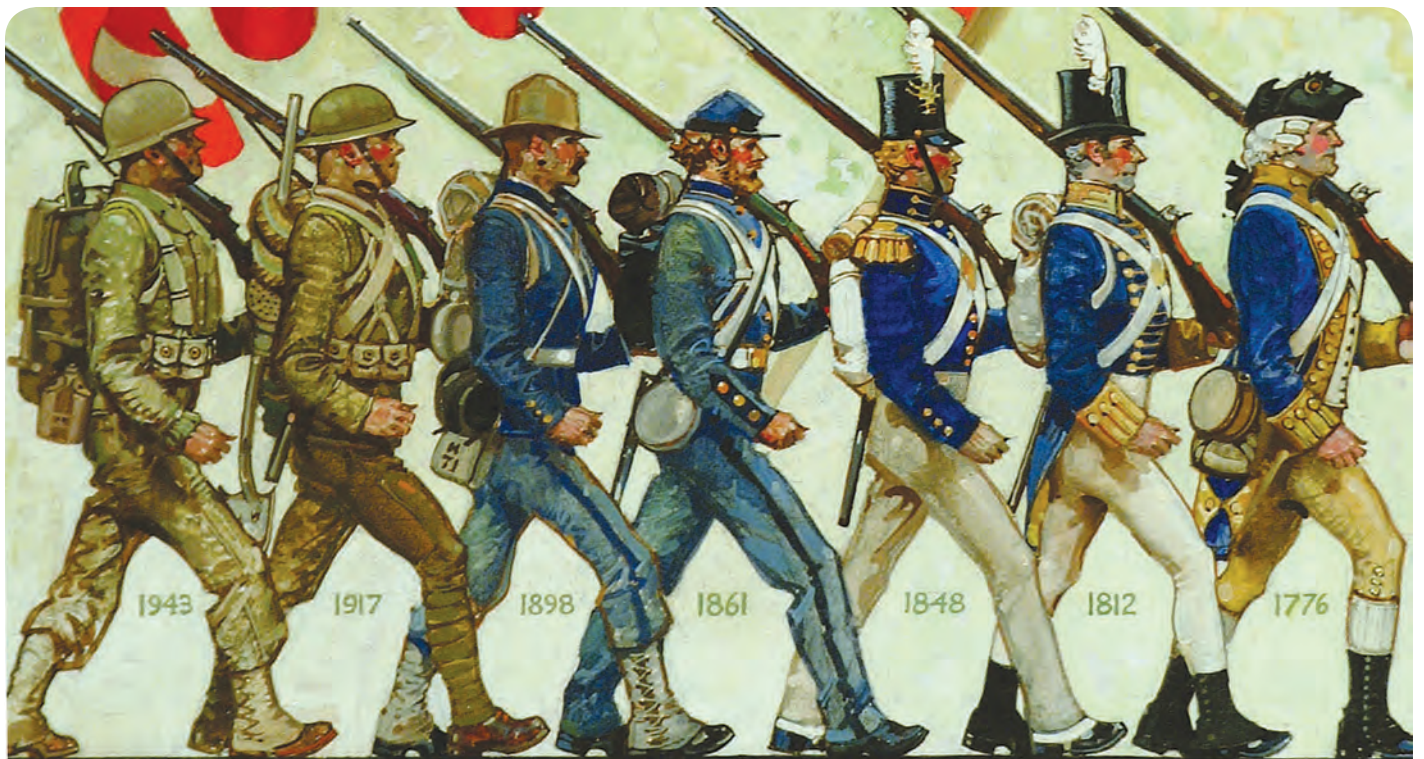
My U.S. Navy counterpart, R. Adm. (Ret.) Samuel J. Cox, has a saying that at the Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC), “heritage pays the rent for history.” What he means is that heritage promotion programs, distinct from academic and official historical work, raise NHHC’s profile in the service, foster esprit de corps, and demonstrate relevance to nonhistorians. Crucially, they give the organization’s research, writing, and official historians the space and opportunity (as well as the budget and force structure) they need to do their critical work. We know that historical work, especially full-length published projects, takes significant time. The benefits and importance of this work often are not clear to leaders and staffs who are focused on the here and now.

As CMH becomes a full-fledged subordinate of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) on 1 October and takes on additional enterprise missions for the Army, we will continue to have conversations about how heritage work and historical work are important in different ways, but can use the same themes and materials. The end product for both should be greater historical literacy and overall effectiveness across the force. I hope that the Educate-Inspire-Preserve motto remains an “elevator speech” for our missions and I encourage every member of Career Program 61, as well as all of the Army’s history educators, to be mindful that heritage and history both have value in different ways

at different times. What should be constant are the rigor and quality that we apply to everything we do.

Heritage programs and products can be a critical facilitator for two of TRADOC’s primary missions: recruiting and initial entry training. We are excited to begin collaborating with U.S. Army Recruiting Command and the TRADOC Center for Initial Military Training. The service, exploits, stories, and personalities of more than 240 years of Army history, innovatively delivered to various audiences, should be a wellspring of inspiration for American citizens to serve in their Army. Already, the Army Museum Enterprise is positioned virtually everywhere citizens enter the service and become soldiers, and impending reform initiatives will ensure that we offer high-quality museum programs to the force.

All of these “rent” payments can whet the force’s appetite for our historical education and publications. The end result is a force with improved perspective and critical thinking skills and a vibrant workforce of historians, archivists, and museum professionals who remain at the forefront of their scholarly communities. I always appreciate your good ideas for both history and heritage programs, so keep them coming as we continue to educate, inspire, and preserve.



NEWSNOTES



NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM CMH

The Center of Military History (CMH) is pleased to announce the publication of two new titles in the U.S. Army Campaigns of the Vietnam War and the U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I series. The first, *The Drawdown, 1970–1971*, tells the story of how the U.S. Army executed a fighting withdrawal from Vietnam in 1970 and 1971. It examines the strain soldiers experienced from fighting an unpopular war which, for America at least, was winding down gradually. Included in the story are the incursions into Cambodia in 1970 and Laos in 1971, as well as many engagements inside South Vietnam. By December 1971, the United States still had 157,000 military personnel in South Vietnam, but only 12,000 of them were combat infantry. The United States would remain at war for more than a year, but the days of offensive ground operations by the U.S. Army had come to an end.

The second publication, *The Russian Expeditions: 1917–1920*, relays the story of the Army's little-known expeditions in Russia at the end of the First World War. In early 1917, the Allied coalition in World War I was in crisis as German pressure pushed the Russian Empire to the brink of collapse. Desperate to maintain the Eastern Front against the Central Powers, the Allies

intervened. However, with their resources committed elsewhere, they needed a source of military forces for deployment to Russia. President Woodrow Wilson agreed to supply American troops for two expeditions: the American North Russia Expeditionary Forces and the American Expeditionary Forces–Siberia. Unfortunately, there was no specific or long-term objective in Russia. Without a clear mission or tangible achievements, the expeditions eventually faded into obscurity.

These booklets have been issued as CMH Pub 76–7 and 77–9, respectively. Both publications are available in PDF format on the CMH Web site and will be available in hardcopy for Army requisition from the Army Publishing Directorate and for purchase by the public from the Government Publishing Office.

87TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR MILITARY HISTORY

The 87th Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History (SMH) will convene at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia, on 30 April–3 May 2020. Hosted by the Army Historical Foundation (AHF), the theme of the conference is “Policy by Other Means.” Meeting information, including the call for papers, the SMH 2020 Panel Builder,

and hotel room reservations, can be found on the SMH web site at <http://www.smh-hq.org/smh2020/index.html>. Additional information is located on the AHF web site at <https://armyhistory.org/smh2020>.

CMH WINS TWO AHF DISTINGUISHED WRITING AWARDS

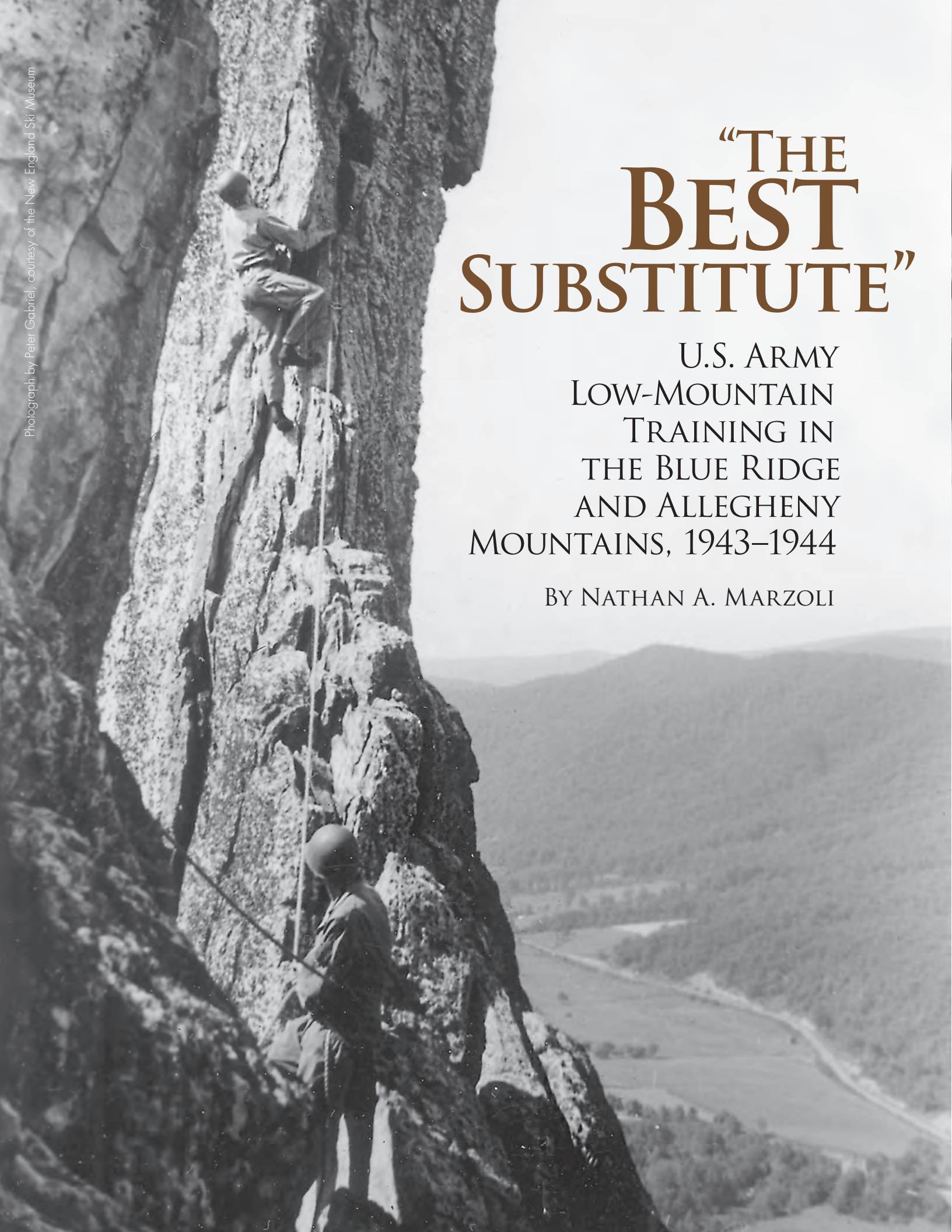
CMH is the recipient of two AHF Distinguished Writing Awards. The first, “America’s Army of Democracy: The National Army, 1917–1919,” by John A. Boyd, appeared in the Fall 2018 issue (No. 109) of *Army History* and won in the Army Professional Journals category. The second, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, won in the Reprint category. The Historical Products Division at CMH edited and updated this volume—the layout was completely revamped, approximately 85 percent of the photographs were replaced with high-resolution scans of the original pictures, and all of the maps were redrawn. The book is available for download in both PDF and ePub formats at https://history.army.mil/news/2018/180416_battlefieldOfEurope.html.



“THE BEST SUBSTITUTE”

U.S. ARMY
LOW-MOUNTAIN
TRAINING IN
THE BLUE RIDGE
AND ALLEGHENY
MOUNTAINS, 1943–1944

BY NATHAN A. MARZOLI





(Above) An Army camp in the West Virginia Maneuver Area (WVMA) near Bowden, c. 1944
(Left) Soldiers climb up Champe Rocks, c. 1944

A cloud of dust kicked up behind a solitary jeep as it sped along a rough and winding mountain road. The driver, Pvt. Anthony Silvia of the 305th Infantry, 77th Infantry Division, shivered in the brisk late-November air, but he had an important message to deliver to 3d Battalion headquarters. Suddenly, something—possibly an unexpected sharp turn in the road, a patch of ice, or simply fatigue—caused him to lose control of the vehicle, sending the jeep careening over a cliff and into a deep ravine. Private Silvia was lucky. He crawled away from the wreck, badly shaken but with only minor injuries. Although his regiment was on maneuvers in the United States, Silvia received an intimate lesson in the challenges of conducting combat operations in mountainous terrain.¹

These lessons were exactly why the U.S. Army had Private Silvia and the rest of the 305th Infantry tramping around the mountains of West Virginia for two weeks in November 1943. Even before the United States entered World War II, the Army had begun training a small number of troops for combat at higher elevations where snow and ice lay year-round. But this program was limited and highly specialized; it was much more likely that standard units would have to be employed in “low-mountain” terrain, where no timberline or summer snow existed. Luckily, the Appalachian Range and its Allegheny Mountains were easily accessible for units stationed on the East Coast and closely mimicked this landscape. The proposed invasion of Sicily—a rugged and craggy island with a poor road network—in early 1943 created an immediate need to prepare units for combat in this type of terrain. Thus, the Army finally went forward with a low-mountain training program. Initially in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests of Virginia and then in the Monongahela National Forest of West Virginia, the Army conducted a series of mountain maneuvers from 1943 to 1944 for the units of seven different standard infantry divisions: the 28th, 31st, 35th, 36th, 45th, 77th, and 95th.²

Even considering the relative brevity of these maneuvers, the low-mountain training program was a key part of the U.S. Army’s success in World War II. It did not matter that the Army never planned to transform these divisions into specialized troops; the true importance of the maneuvers was that they proved standard infantry divisions—with slight modifications—could operate effectively in rugged terrain. This allowed the Army to limit the scope of costly specialized training and instead devote resources to employing more versatile standard divisions in mountainous operational theaters. Furthermore, the maneuvers conducted in Virginia and West Virginia from 1943 to 1944 provided soldiers with the skills necessary to survive and succeed against an enemy entrenched in rough and hilly terrain. The hard-fought successes of the standard infantry divisions in places like Sicily and continental Italy prove that the low-mountain training program was a true bright spot in the U.S. Army’s training of ground combat troops during World War II.³

THE ORIGINS OF THE LOW-MOUNTAIN TRAINING PROGRAM

The low-mountain training program originated before the United States even entered World War II.⁴ As war raged around them for two years, the U.S. Army was aware it soon could become ensnared in a conflict in any corner of the globe. “No theater for the employment of American troops can be dismissed from consideration as fantastic,” reported a 1940 War Department G-3 memo.⁵ The Army was particularly interested in mountain and winter warfare. Given the initial victories of the highly specialized Finnish winter troops against Soviet forces in December 1939, the abject failures of standard Italian divisions in Albania, and a report that the Germans were preparing specialized troops for use in Alaska and the Canadian and American Rocky Mountains, it was clear some contingent of U.S. soldiers should train for operating in such an



General McNair

environment. “While it appears improbable at the moment,” the same memo cautioned, “it is conceivable that our ability to fight in winter terrain might be of major, even decisive importance.”⁶

Despite the considerable interest within the War Department to establish a mountain and winter warfare training program, Army leaders also shared a major concern with the practicality of organizing units for such highly specialized missions. An army confronted by a major war needed to conserve resources for more versatile conventional training, and to some high-ranking officers, particularly Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, the chief of staff for General Headquarters, U.S. Army (GHQ), it seemed illogical to address a specific combat situation that might never materialize. The proponents of alpine training eventually won out. But as a compromise, the program initially would be limited in scope.⁷ Instead of immediately organizing an entire specialized division, McNair believed that “efforts for the present [should] be directed toward the development of an infantry battalion and an artillery battalion, capable of operating effectively in mountainous terrain and containing a minimum of pack transportation and a maximum of motor transportation.”⁸

The Army inaugurated the program on 15 November 1941 with the activation of a reinforced battalion of the 87th Infantry Mountain Regiment (soon redesignated as the 87th Mountain Infantry), commanded by Lt. Col. Onslow S. Rolfe, at Fort Lewis,



Onslow S. Rolfe (left), shown here as a brigadier general, speaking with displaced persons near Landsberg, Germany c. 1945.

Washington. Although they did not yet have a definitive mission—Rolfe was unsure if he was to prepare a cadre for future mountain training or a combat unit for use overseas—this small group spent their first winter conducting basic military training and taking ski instruction at nearby Mount Rainier. The following year, Army Ground Forces (AGF), the successor to GHQ, expanded this limited program. On 3 September 1942 at Camp Carson, Colorado, the Army activated a Mountain Training Center. Its primary mission was to train Rolfe’s troops. On 16 November, it moved to the newly constructed

Camp Hale, 9,000 feet above sea level at Pando, Colorado. The 1st Battalion, 87th Mountain Infantry, therefore transferred from Fort Lewis to Camp Hale and the remainder of the regiment was activated, with the existing four pack artillery battalions consolidated into the 89th Mountain Artillery. A cavalry reconnaissance troop formed from the 4th Cavalry, a unit that had some prior experience in winter-warfare training. Signal, medical, quartermaster, engineer, ordnance, military police, antitank, and anti-aircraft units also were activated, along with a headquarters company.⁹



Camp Hale, Colorado, c. 1943

By the spring of 1943, these troops had not formally organized into a division, even after spending the winter under the auspices of the new Mountain Training Center. But General McNair still allowed the mountain and winter warfare program to expand its scope and mission. As the Army ramped up its plans for Operation Husky, the proposed Allied invasion of Sicily, AGF recommended that the standard infantry divisions slated for the landings participate in limited maneuvers in a mountainous environment similar to that of the island. They decided that the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia—specifically, the sprawling Pedlar and Glenwood Districts of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, located roughly one hundred miles west of Richmond—with its “heavy undergrowth, numerous large streams, limited observation and poor road net” would be an ideal location to conduct the training.¹⁰

TRAINING IN THE BLUE RIDGE OF VIRGINIA

In early 1943, a team of officers and men from the Mountain Training Center departed the snowy Colorado peaks of Camp Hale for the rolling Blue Ridge, where they would serve as technical advisers at a maneuver area created specifically for the new low-mountain training program. AGF established the headquarters in the foothill town of Buena (pronounced locally as “B-yew-na”) Vista, Virginia, and constructed two main camps for trainees in or near the surrounding national forest. One, located near the logging community of Lowesville, was known as



Soldiers stand in formation at Camp Hale, Colorado, c. 1943

North Camp, whereas the second, at Arnold Valley along the James River, became South Camp. The 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions, both slated to participate in Operation Husky, were scheduled to train at the newly christened Buena Vista Maneuver Area from 1 March to 15 April 1943.¹¹

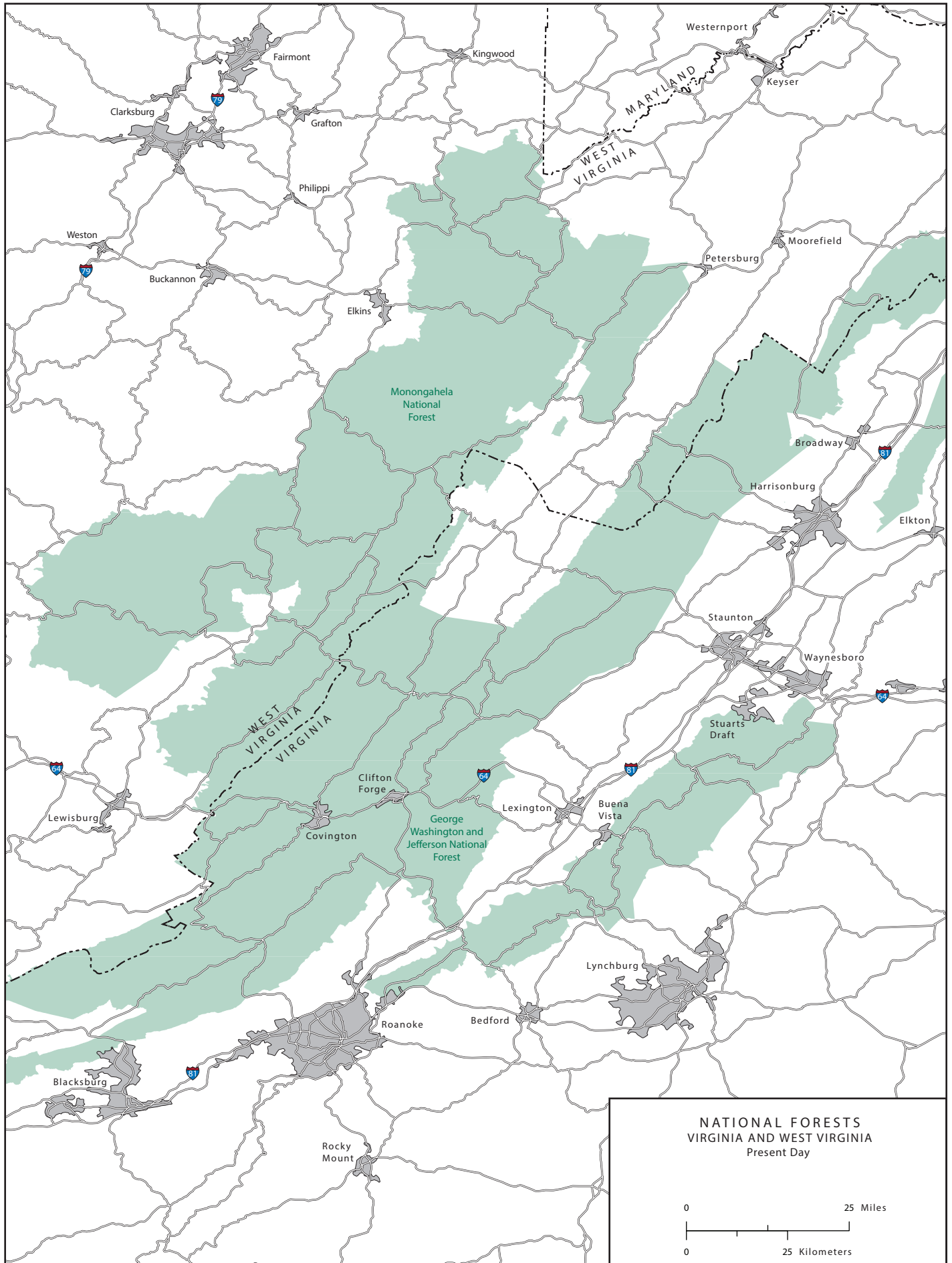
The main objective of the training program as laid out by AGF was simple: “to familiarize the units with operations in mountainous and primitive terrain.” More specifically, AGF designed the program to (1) “accustom units to the conditions of mountain operations, characterized by independent action of small infantry units supported by artillery

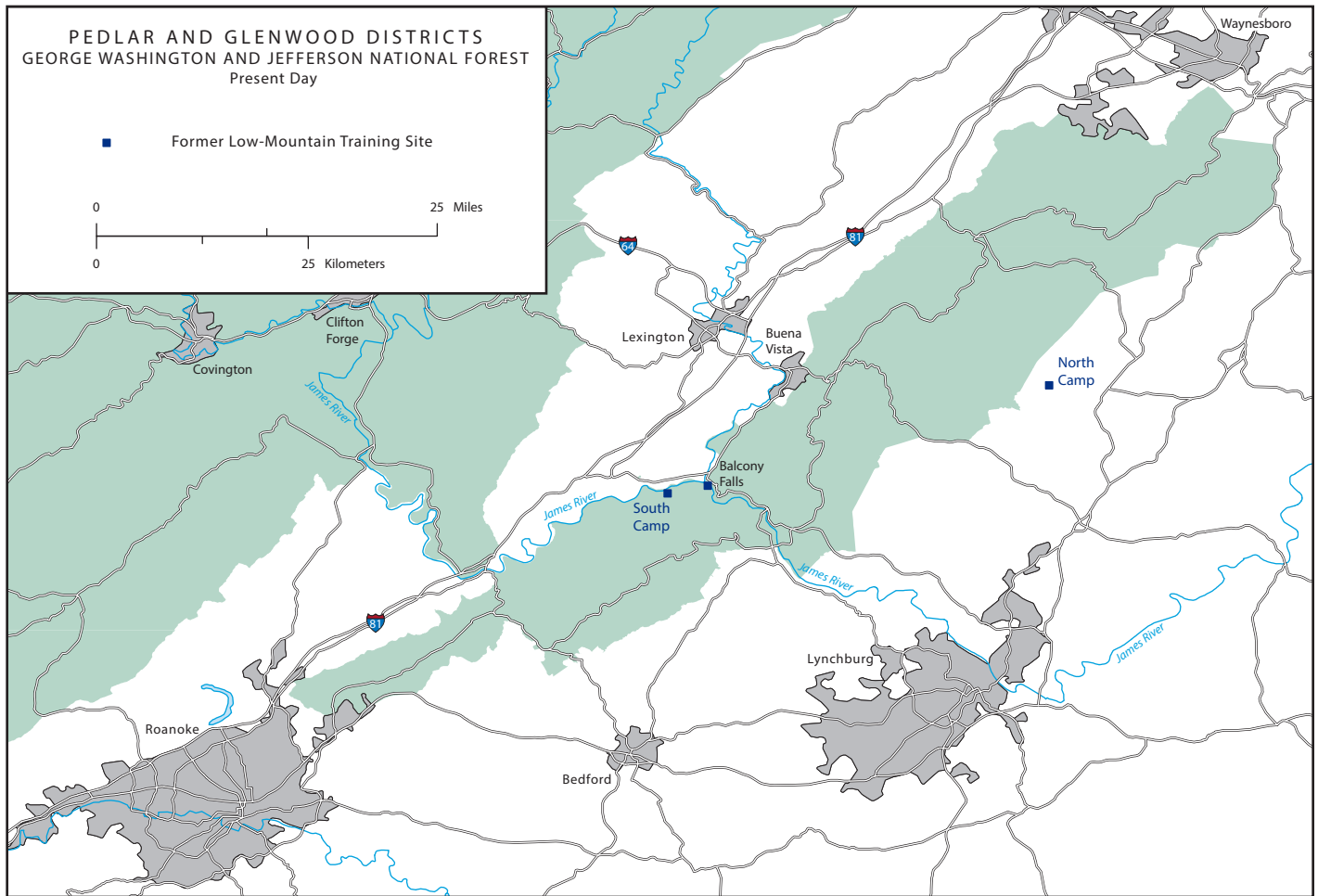
to seize key terrain features in order to open lines of advance for wheeled vehicles”; (2) to “train in deliberate operations with limited objectives from one terrain phase line to another, developing keen appreciation of terrain on the part of all commanders”; (3) to “obtain superior conditioning of troops”; (4) to “train infantry units . . . to operate without transport, carrying only essential weapons, ammunition, and rations”; (5) to “train artillery units . . . to support infantry action in mountainous country [which] will require practice in the maintenance of communication, liaison, and the selection of battery positions to overcome difficulties imposed by the terrain”; (6) to “develop the ability of supply agencies to operate along canalized lines of communication and to improvise the necessary means to overcome nature obstacles peculiar to the terrain”; and (7) to “train the divisional engineers in the hasty extension of roads, and the improvement of trails in rock and primitive terrain [which] will require continuous reconnaissance and planning to make the maximum use of existing roads and trails in the area and the establishment of a well controlled block system to prevent traffic snarls on the narrow roads.”¹²

From each division, the regimental combat teams (RCT)—provisional combat organizations formed by augmenting an infantry regiment with supporting units to make it autonomous—were to participate in exercises for about ten days.¹³ AGF divided the training into two phases. The first segment, lasting about five days, consisted



Soldiers marching with skis at Camp Hale, Colorado, c. 1943





of preliminary exercises and marches to acclimatize soldiers to the rugged terrain. The second phase was a series of free, two-sided maneuvers under simulated combat conditions. A small number of selected men, approximately five to ten per rifle company, one artillery liaison detail per light artillery battalion, and five men per regimental intelligence platoon, also received instruction at an assault rock-climbing school. Two officers and seventeen enlisted instructors from the Mountain Training Center staffed the school. Although these men resided at South Camp, the rock-climbing training area was actually further along the James River, near Balcony Falls. In addition to receiving lessons in knot tying, rappelling, belaying, and piton use, these soldiers learned how to properly move heavy weapons, such as the 81-mm. mortar, using a rope and pulley system.¹⁴

Owing to the hurried establishment of the new maneuver area, AGF inspectors found the Mountain Training Center staff “a little wobbly on some of their technique and procedure,” but the technical advisers also proved their value by quickly picking up on major issues within the RCTs of the 36th and

45th Infantry Divisions.¹⁵ Most notably, they found a disturbing lack of effective leadership at the squad, platoon, and company level; complacency in security measures; inadequate reconnaissance of roads and trails; and poor physical conditioning of the soldiers. By drawing commanders’ attention to these issues, the technical advisers provided them with the necessary tools to better prepare soldiers for combat and to help save lives.¹⁶

The training also proved to AGF that a standard triangular division could operate in low mountains, given certain conditions. First, division personnel had to be in peak physical shape, because of the obvious differences encountered from operating on level ground. Second, the standard division needed some sort of road network—albeit even a primitive one—that permitted the use of 2.5-ton trucks and 105-mm. field howitzers. Even then, a large number of vehicles tended to keep a division road-bound and dangerously inflexible. To mitigate this, the Mountain Training Center recommended pooling surplus vehicles, while also touting the quarter-ton jeep as the only truly reliable vehicle in mountainous terrain. When

moving off-road, divisions packed all heavy equipment—the heavy infantry weapons, radios, and ammunition—on the backs of the soldiers, usually using a packboard. This device allowed men to more effectively carry equipment in small loads—not exceeding forty pounds—on their backs. Machine gun and mortar teams, as well as artillery, signal, engineer, and medical units, all required packboards to carry their special items and equipment.¹⁷

The maneuvers at Buena Vista also underscored the necessity of decentralization of command and resources during low-mountain operations. “The Commander’s ability to influence an action will be limited by poor road nets for moving reserves, hill masses which mask his supporting fires, and poor communication,” Capt. Robert C. Works, a technical adviser from the Mountain Training Center, remarked in the notes he compiled for AGF following the Virginia maneuvers. Works emphasized that the rugged terrain and limited road networks could isolate a unit at any time, making it vulnerable to an enemy ambush; for this reason he recommended that units as small as the platoon be self-sufficient for extended

periods. Mountain operations therefore called for three levels of small unit combat teams, in addition to the standard RCTs. The largest such unit would be a battalion combat team, consisting of an infantry battalion, an antitank company platoon, a squad of an antitank mine platoon, a cannon company platoon, a battery of the 105-mm. howitzer battalion, and an engineer squad. Next came the company combat team, consisting of an infantry company, two sections of infantry platoons from another company, and a section of an antitank platoon. The smallest echelon of suggested autonomous units was the platoon combat team, consisting of a platoon of infantry, a mortar squad, and one section of machine guns, either light or heavy. Captain Works believed training in these organizations was essential because it allowed a rifle platoon leader to better understand the capabilities of his attached enlisted men and their diversified weapons.¹⁸

Whereas these lessons in low-mountain operations obviously were invaluable for the soldiers of the two divisions about to land in Sicily and continental Italy, the maneuvers at Buena Vista were also important to AGF and the maturation of the training program. The alpine troops training at Camp Hale certainly were important in case the need for such soldiers arose, but the Virginia maneuvers made it clear that a slightly modified standard division could also train to handle mountain warfare in all but the most extreme combat scenarios. Fortuitously, this matched General McNair's preference that AGF concentrate on the production of standard units, and only provide specialized training when it absolutely was needed. AGF therefore had a clear justification to continue the low-mountain training program, especially given the escalating fight in Italy.

Because of some concerns about the maneuver area in its Virginia location—the Army had butted heads with the National Park Service, the National Forest Service, and the city of Lynchburg—and that the maneuvers of the last combat team had been delayed forty-eight hours due to forest fires, AGF decided to shift the maneuver area west and away from the Blue Ridge. In the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia, the Army would continue training the divisions assigned to the XIII Corps.¹⁹

THE WEST VIRGINIA MANEUVER AREA

On 23 June 1943, the Army sent an official news release to local West Virginia newspapers announcing the opening of a



Downtown Elkins, West Virginia, c. 1940

new maneuver area, headquartered in the city of Elkins in Randolph County. The area was massive; it spanned five counties and AGF created it through the purchase and lease of 2,180,742 acres in and around the Monongahela National Forest. The command of the entire operation fell to the XIII Corps. Service units were the first soldiers to trickle into Elkins. The 94th Signal Battalion transferred from Buena Vista to install and maintain a system of communications throughout the maneuver area, and the 63d Quartermaster Battalion arrived to furnish the laundry services for up to 40,000 personnel. A number of other

service troops soon arrived in Elkins as well, including the 44th Evacuation Hospital, and various quartermaster, military police, engineers, ordnance, and other support elements.²⁰ Thirteen officers from the Mountain Training Center, which effectively became the Mountain Training Group in the summer of 1943, would continue to serve as technical advisers for each RCT during these maneuvers.²¹

RCTs from five infantry divisions in the XIII Corps received instruction in low-mountain operations at the new West Virginia Maneuver Area. The first to arrive was the 28th Infantry Division,



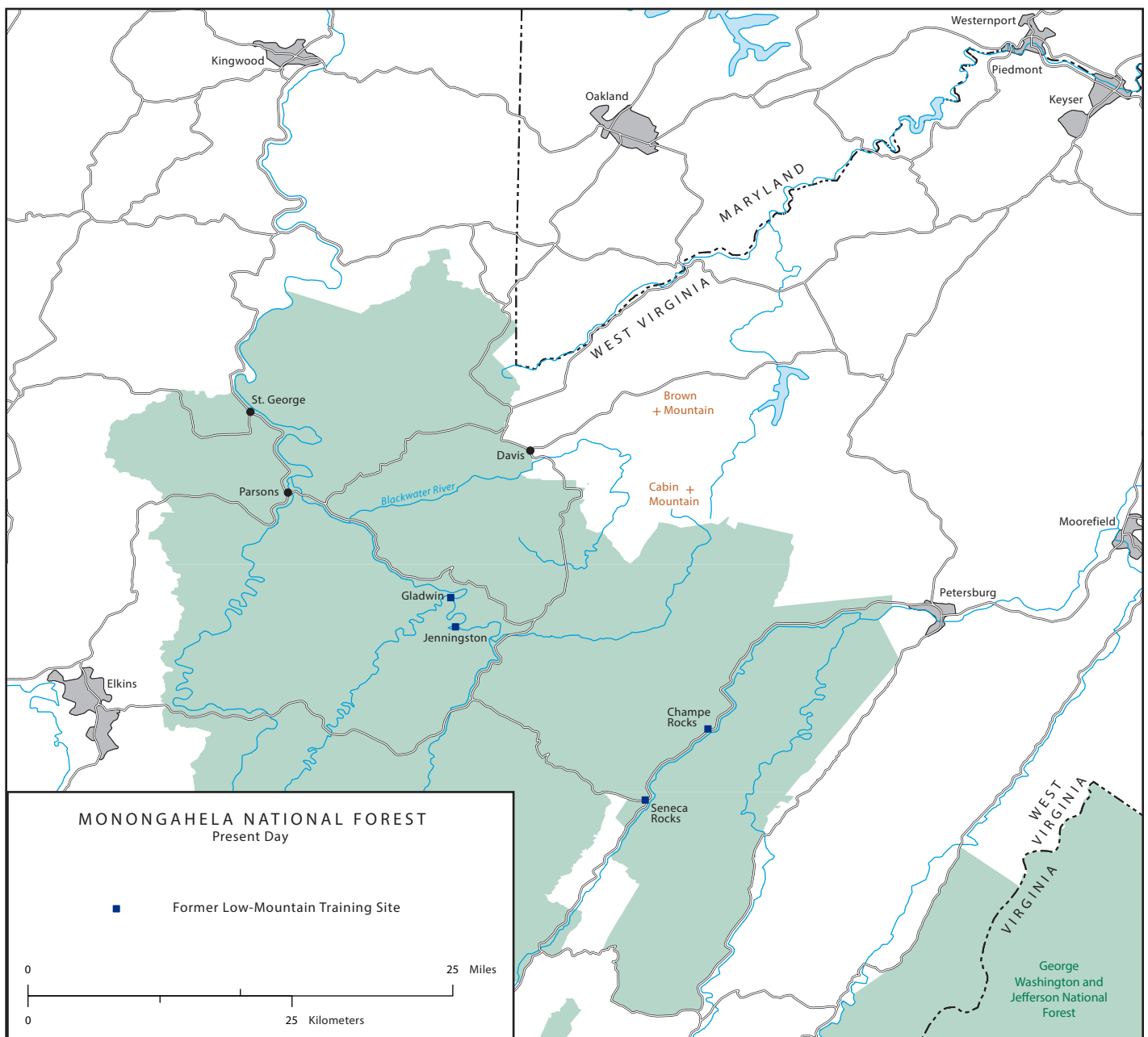
A view of the Canaan Valley, c. 1944

consisting of the 109th, 110th, and 112th RCTs, which trained from 1 August to 30 September 1943. They were followed by the 31st Infantry Division from 25 September to 20 November 1943, consisting of the 154th, 155th, and 167th RCTs; the 77th Infantry Division from 10 October 1943 to 12 January 1944, consisting of the 305th, 306th, and 307th RCTs; the 35th Infantry Division from 21 February to 28 March 1944, consisting of the 134th, 137th, and 320th RCTs; and lastly, the 95th Infantry Division from 18 April to 27 June 1944, consisting of the 377th, 378th, and 379th RCTs.²² The 343d Medical Group also received six weeks of training in December 1943 and

January 1944 to test the limits of battlefield casualty evacuation and treatment in hazardous winter weather and craggy terrain.²³

The training program at the West Virginia Maneuver Area naturally built upon the lessons learned with the 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions at Buena Vista. The focus of the training continued to be on physical conditioning and the decentralization of command. During the first week, trainees received instruction in mountain and night driving, packboard usage, and cross-country marches for physical conditioning, and concluded with squad, platoon, and company exercises.²⁴

The second week of the training consisted of two battalion and two RCT problems. During the first RCT exercise, which lasted roughly two days, one battalion combat team detached as the “Red” force to operate against the rest of the RCT (labeled “Blue” forces). The 305th RCT, for example, held regimental exercises near the small community of Jenningson on Dry Fork. Late on the evening of 27 November 1943, commanders received information that the hypothetical “Red Division” was concentrating in the vicinity of Piedmont, 45 miles to the northeast, and had sent forces to the west. Red patrols had also been sighted nearby along the Dry Fork. The RCT was to attack at 0700 the following day. Their goal was to





A present-day view of Seneca Rocks

establish a bridgehead over Dry Fork, with the objective of moving north and east to seize a high ridge running from Pointy Knob #1, to Chimney Rock, to Pointy Knob #2, and destroying all enemy forces encountered along the way. The cannon company was to fire on Red positions both north and south of the Jenningson bridge, and the antitank company was to establish road blocks and protect approaches from the rear. This field exercise went relatively well for the combat team; after some heavy “fighting” with Companies A and D, 302d Engineers (Red), 2d Battalion, successfully captured Pointy Knob #1 by 0900 the following morning. The battalion wrestled Chimney Rock from the Red forces by midday, and even managed to capture three ambulances, an antitank gun, and three jeeps before the technical advisers terminated the problem at 1245 on 30 November.²⁵

The combat teams reunited for the second, shorter RCT maneuver, which pitted them against a theoretical enemy to allow for live-fire exercises.²⁶ This regimental maneuver kicked off for the 305th RCT at 0830 on 2 December 1943. Technical advisers informed commanders that a hypothetical enemy held a line of high ground at the very northern end of the Canaan Valley, stretching from Brown Mountain to Cabin Mountain. The 1st and 2d Battalions, with two companies of the 302d Engineers attached, led the attack from the 305th’s initial line near Bearden Knob, approximately 1.5 miles to the south. The 3d Battalion remained in reserve, and the cannon and antitank companies

positioned themselves on the west slope of Cabin Mountain to provide fire support and to repel an enemy mechanized counterattack from the north.²⁷ Although these final exercises were brief—they usually lasted only a few hours—it was excellent practice for all the units involved, especially the artillery battalions and mortar teams.²⁸

The assault rock-climbing school first established at Buena Vista continued to be a part of the West Virginia program’s curriculum. At a base camp in Seneca, thirty-two soldiers and three officers from the 10th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop provided climbing instruction to roughly 200 officers

and enlisted men from each RCT using the nearby Seneca and Champe Rocks.²⁹ The XIII Corps told the incoming combat teams that potential trainees did not need any special talents—they just had to be “men with average strength and common sense”—but preferred soldiers from rural or mountain areas.³⁰ The instruction at the Seneca school was extensive, and covered a variety of subjects in twelve training periods over fourteen days. Each class consisted of the instructor and ten trainees. During the first half of the training, the instructor taught students the proper use of ropes, how to tie knots, and belaying on specially built wooden towers, nicknamed “corn cribs.” Before moving to the next phase, the instructors washed out the four weakest men. The remaining six students, forming two rope parties of three men each, received another week of advanced—and potentially dangerous—training on the Seneca and Champe Rocks. Using the exposed rock faces as teaching tools, the instructors taught soldiers the use of hand and foot holds, rappelling, piton usage, party climbs, night-climbing techniques, and basic medical evacuations.³¹

Feedback on the entire training program from AGF inspectors, Mountain Training Group personnel, and the RCTs reiterated many of the lessons learned from the earlier maneuvers in Virginia. Much like the 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions, most of the faults reported by the Mountain Training Group stemmed from inexperience within the RCTs. One recurring problem was the failure of soldiers to use appropriate cover



A present day view of Champe Rocks



Photograph by Duke Watson, courtesy of Lowell Skoog

Soldiers practice rappelling off a “corn crib” near Seneca Rocks, c. 1944

approximately 2.5 miles away from the frontline units—a distance great enough that Company F actually lost contact for six hours.³⁶ In the case of the 31st Infantry Division’s 167th RCT, umpires frequently halted the maneuvers so both the Red and Blue forces could untangle themselves and reorganize.³⁷ Poor leadership was also apparent in the general failure of units to implement proper security measures. Mountain Training Group personnel docked combat teams for not employing guards while in assembly areas, keeping security elements too close to the main body of troops, and allowing soldiers to bunch together while the “enemy” was nearby. During the exercises of the 35th Infantry Division, for example, the 2d Platoon, Company F, 134th Infantry, was ordered to cross an icy stream during a hill attack. Although the men waded through the frigid water with little complaint, platoon leaders positioned insufficient men on the opposite bank to protect the crossing of the rest of the unit. Groups of between fifteen and twenty men also clustered together dangerously while preparing to cross.³⁸

The maneuver area’s umpiring system may have been partly to blame for the poor quality of leadership within the RCTs. Due to their limited availability, the expert technical advisers from the Mountain Training Group generally only served as umpires at the battalion and regimental level. Some at AGF even criticized this setup because they thought it deprived commanders of technical expertise during crucial aspects of the training.³⁹ At the platoon and company level, the XIII Corps tagged the junior officers and noncommissioned officers (NCO) of the RCTs as umpires, yet provided them with only a single day of preliminary instruction so as not to interfere with the rest of the maneuvers. Although devised out of necessity, this system negatively affected the training by leaving inexperienced officers and NCOs in command of companies and platoons, and too many inadequately trained umpires in charge of evaluating the maneuvers.⁴⁰

Consequently, the after action reports of the RCTs are littered with complaints about the quality of the umpires. On one fire mission of the 117th Field Artillery Battalion, an umpire clearly did not take the time to read Field Manual (FM) 105–5: *Umpire Manual*, which specified that prone infantry under artillery fire usually only suffered 1 percent casualties, per battery, per minute. He therefore credited the battalion

and concealment during tactical exercises. While on the march, entire companies needlessly silhouetted themselves against the sky by walking upright on exposed ridges. In the case of the 307th RCT, technical advisers and maneuver umpires noticed it on five separate occasions.³² Things were not much better when units engaged the “enemy.” During a visit to the exercises of the 31st Infantry Division in November 1943, inspectors found three batteries of the 116th Field Artillery Battalion in poor tactical positions; the soldiers had arranged the guns too closely, and the only visible concealment was from branches of leafless trees.³³ Infantry units of that division also displayed a disinclination to dig in when confronting enemy forces.

Inspectors caught Companies A, I, and K of the 167th Infantry in the front lines “either sitting or lying in the open making no effort to take cover and concealment.” Even with the enemy less than fifty yards away, Company H was “grouped together sitting by the side of the trail, [with] their weapons still on [their] packboards.”³⁴

Ineffective small-unit leadership was another recurring issue. Mountain Training Group personnel frequently found units completely in the dark about their current situation, and command and control suffered.³⁵ During the maneuvers of the 77th Infantry Division in December 1943, the headquarters of the 2d Battalion, 307th Infantry, set up their command post



Courtesy of Robert C. Whiesel

Mountain Training Group officers' tents at the Seneca Rocks climbing school, c. 1944

with inflicting a preposterous 70 percent casualties on one Red rifle platoon.⁴¹ The commander of the 2d Battalion, 109th Infantry, 28th Infantry Division, reported that the umpires were “too hasty in putting up the white flag when point contacts the enemy,” which interfered with his ability to properly simulate combat conditions. As evaluators, the umpires also did not have to operate tactically; when they sped around the “battlefield” in their vehicles, they choked up convoys, motor pools, and dispersal areas.⁴² The XIII Corps did attempt to improve the umpiring system for each successive combat team, but the director of the West Virginia Maneuver Area bucked any efforts to implement radical change

and instead insisted the umpiring methods were the “best that can be arrived at under existing circumstances.”⁴³ AGF clearly believed the limited scope of the training did not necessitate any major changes, and the standard infantry divisions would get the same benefits even with a faulty umpiring system.

Despite these flaws in the training, the combat teams still learned important lessons in low-mountain warfare. Weather is unpredictable at higher altitudes, and winter usually comes early to West Virginia. The 77th Infantry Division, which arrived at the maneuver area in October 1943, endured perhaps the worst weather of all the combat teams. (Ironically, they ended up in the

Pacific Theater.) After suffering through subzero temperatures during the battalion exercises, the XIII Corps actually canceled the 307th RCT's final regimental exercises because a blizzard struck the maneuver area. Fierce winds whipped snow over the hills, limiting visibility to less than fifty yards at times and coating weapons with ice. The conditions were so bad that Lt. Col. C. E. Morrison, the acting director of the Maneuver Area, commended the soldiers of the combat team for their “fine degree of discipline” and overall lack of grumbling despite adhering to strict regulations prohibiting the lighting of fires while on tactical exercises.⁴⁴ Spring brought warmer weather for the combat teams of the 35th and 95th Infantry Divisions, but melting snow and rainstorms dangerously flooded local waterways. In March 1944, a soldier from the 35th Infantry Division floundered while trying to cross the swollen Blackwater River, just south of the town of Davis. A captain, with a rope tied around his waist, plunged into the frigid waters to try and rescue him, but the raging current swept both of them down Blackwater Canyon. A third man tried to rescue the two stricken soldiers farther downstream, but he too lost his balance in the freshet and splashed into the roaring waters. All three soldiers drowned, and only one man's body was recovered.⁴⁵

The combat teams also found that simply moving from Point A to B sometimes presented a herculean challenge, as the few roads in the maneuver area were winding and narrow and easily jammed with vehicles.⁴⁶ The road network was so bad

Composite file strip images: Soldiers training at Seneca Rocks, c. 1944



during the maneuvers of the 35th Infantry Division that Battery C, 161st Field Artillery Battalion, had to winch their trucks and guns into position, slowing them down to a rate of one mile every three hours.⁴⁷ Given these transportation challenges, many officers requested additional driver training that covered correct transmission usage on steep grades, precaution against straining motors, the value of chains and winches, and the unusual hazards encountered in blackout driving. One oddly specific request came from the commander of the 306th Infantry; the XIII Corps recommended that drivers decrease the maximum speeds for gears by two-thirds while on mountain roads, but some of the men of the regiment had trouble doing the math in their heads and requested new and more exact reference stickers in the cabs of their trucks before entering the maneuver area.⁴⁸

Moving off-road certainly was not any easier. The antitank and cannon companies found it almost impossible to move their 37-mm. and 57-mm. guns and 105-mm. howitzers in places without roads. Units instead found the more portable 81-mm. mortars much more effective at providing fire support, especially when massed together under regimental control.⁴⁹ Combat teams frequently clamored for more instruction in the use of packboards and pack mules, especially after reports from Italy testified to their usefulness in rugged terrain that lacked adequate roads.⁵⁰ In March 1944, the Mountain Training Group answered by transferring the 254th Quartermaster Pack Company from Camp Carson to Elkins.



Courtesy of Robert C. Whetsell

Pack mules and their handlers ford the Dry Fork, c. 1944

Using a similar format to the Seneca school, the 254th, with their 292 animals, conducted an animal management and packer's school in the vicinity of Gladwin, West Virginia, for around 200 men from each RCT of the 95th Infantry Division.⁵¹

Medical personnel arguably became the most familiar with these unique challenges of transportation. Upon entering the maneuver area, the medical units of each combat team traveled to a separate casualty evacuation school. Much of the initial phase of this training was similar to that conducted by the rest of the RCT—with a focus on physical conditioning—but these students also learned how to secure patients

to litters and carry them over cliffs, up and down steep slopes, and across crevices and streams, using a variety of innovative carries and rope methods. The instruction culminated in a night exercise, where soldiers established battalion aid stations near a summit and treated twelve litter casualties before evacuating them to the base of the mountain using a six-man belaying team.⁵²

The medics spent the final phase of the training applying these learned techniques during the battalion and regimental maneuvers with the rest of the RCTs. Medical umpires—NCOs from the RCTs' medical units—generally tagged the simulated casualties, with ten casualties per battalion



Photographs by Duke Watson, courtesy of Lowell Skoog



West Virginia University

Soldiers in Elkins at the telephone center of the West Virginia Maneuver Area

being the minimum allowed and 5 percent of total strength being the maximum per day. The chain of casualty removal followed the standard procedure—company aid man, to battalion aid station, to collecting company, and finally to a clearing company—but the rugged terrain obviously made the process more challenging than on a traditional battlefield, and total evacuation times were above the norm. Night evacuation became nearly impossible; one ambulance from the 306th RCT rode into a ditch and fell on its side when trying to drive after dark, so medical school personnel recommended

holding wounded at battalion aid stations overnight before removing them further to the rear at daybreak.

Despite the challenges, the trainees were mostly successful during the exercises. Critiques by the technical advisers generally only highlighted occasional ineffective coordination and liaison between aid stations, the clearing and collecting companies, the collection points, and a general failure of umpires to properly tag all personnel. Even when umpires properly tagged casualties, some did not want to play along; technical advisers reprimanded one enlisted man in the 154th Infantry when he discarded the casualty tag attached to him.⁵³

The 343d Medical Group also participated in extended mountain evacuation maneuvers in the vicinity of Parsons, St. George, and Jennings from 13 December 1943 to 11 January 1944. Despite horrid weather conditions, including several days of subzero temperatures and periods of snow, sleet, and rain, the group conducted exercises similar to the RCT's medical units, but on a much larger scale. The 343d's size of approximately 40 officers and 800 enlisted men pushed the limits of the school. Participants complained of not enough technical advisers to go around, even though no combat teams were training at the time—but the experience and knowledge gained in caring for battlefield casualties were worth the inconveniences. Units showed persistence and creativity in devising ingenious ways of evacuating wounded soldiers when faced with the rugged terrain and inclement weather. The

489th Collecting Company, for example, constructed "litter sleds" to help transport sixteen casualties up a steep, slippery, and snow-covered 900-foot hill. Overall, the XIII Corps was impressed with the group's performance, as the evacuation times gradually decreased by the end of the training period. "The officers and men should be commended," wrote medical school commander Capt. Morris Herman, "for their zeal and cooperation in fulfilling the task assigned them."⁵⁴

Although lessons in the challenges of mountain mobility and medical evacuation were important, the greatest dividend for the soldiers who trained at the maneuver area was the most fundamental. "The physical benefit of training in this area is . . . very great," wrote Maj. Gen. Alvan C. Gillem in a January 1944 report of the West Virginia Maneuver Area to General McNair. "Commanders gain a better appreciation of the physical capabilities of their men. Resourcefulness pays big dividends as these rugged hills offer definite obstacles to successful military operations."⁵⁵ Many officers from the combat teams echoed this sentiment. Lt. Col. Adam J. Dreibelbies, commander of the 2d Battalion, 112th Infantry, believed that although much of the training was comparable to other maneuvers, the mountain exercises were overall "superior . . . as pertains to the physical hardening and conditioning of personnel."⁵⁶ Lt. Col. William Houghton, the 112th's 3d Battalion commander, called the training



U.S. Army

General Gillem



Courtesy of Linda Reiley Clark

Adam J. Dreibelbies, shown here as a colonel, c. 1945



Daniel B. Strickler, shown here as a major general, c. 1951

“highly beneficial” because the troops had “attained greater physical endurance,” which even trumped in value learning to “cope with the difficulties of mountain fighting, control, and supply.”⁵⁷ Another battalion commander reported the program brought his men “to a state of physical hardening” that would enable them to endure even more extensive training in the future.⁵⁸ Yet this excellent physical conditioning came with a cost; many commanders reported their men needed more food than the standard ration because of the strenuousness of traversing the rugged terrain under simulated combat conditions. The requests for additional rations were never granted, however. The XIII Corps responded that the permanent service troops had adjusted and got along just fine with the standard ration.⁵⁹

It was clear the low-mountain training program, even with its flaws, was extremely valuable for the troops that received it. Operations in the mountains posed “a difficult problem in time and space that can only be understood by actual service in [that] terrain,” as one battalion commander reported. “I feel this . . . training has given every Officer and man of this Command,” he continued, “a broad prospective in the differences in operating here and in the normal terrain.”⁶⁰ Reiterating this opinion, an officer of the 154th Infantry thought the RCT exercises were worthwhile because they “ably presented the many problems and difficulties to be surmounted that [they were] intended to illustrate and emphasize.”⁶¹ Lt. Col. Daniel B. Strickler of the 109th Infantry called the training program

“well balanced,” as it “[challenged the] interests and enthusiasm of all officers and men,” and impressed upon them “the value of camouflaging [sic], control between units in mountains, and all around security.”⁶² Col. James A. Webb of the 167th Infantry praised the training program by reporting it was “of material benefit,” and expressed his utmost appreciation to the technical advisers for their hard work during the maneuvers.⁶³ Despite this obvious success of the training program, however, the increasing demands for manpower for the expanding war in Europe would soon prove to be the death knell for the West Virginia Maneuver Area.

CLOSING OF THE MANEUVER AREA AND THE END OF MOUNTAIN TRAINING

The entire U.S. Army mountain and winter warfare training program neared its end when the specialized alpine troops—now formally designated as the 10th Mountain Division—training at Camp Hale began preparations for their move overseas in mid-1944. With no soldiers left to instruct, the Army inactivated the Mountain Training Group, and transferred the majority of the remaining personnel to the 10th Mountain Division before it departed for Italy. This did not immediately affect the instructors and technical advisers who

remained at the West Virginia Maneuver Area, as they had been permanently transferred to the XIII Corps in March 1944.⁶⁴ But all divisional maneuvers in the United States were on the decline. The Zone of Interior had been largely stripped of service units to meet the increasing demands overseas, and not enough troops remained to assist entire divisions during field training. AGF closed the large California-Arizona Maneuver Area in April, and canceled maneuvers in Tennessee and Louisiana as the readiness dates for participating divisions loomed.⁶⁵

The writing clearly was on the wall for the West Virginia Maneuver Area and the low-mountain training program. AGF G-3 seemed to have always been keen on the training the XIII Corps conducted in the Alleghenies. Assistant Chief of Staff Brig. Gen. John M. Lentz, in a January 1944 conversation with the XIII Corps G-3, said that he “would like to keep it going if it is not an undue hardship,” because it was “a good toughening set-up.” But by that spring and summer, the demands for soldiers overseas simply would not allow for the program to continue. The final units to participate in the mountain maneuvers were the RCTs of the 95th Infantry Division, which departed Elkins only a few weeks after D-Day. The headquarters of the West Virginia



General Lentz (center) with unidentified officers, c. 1945

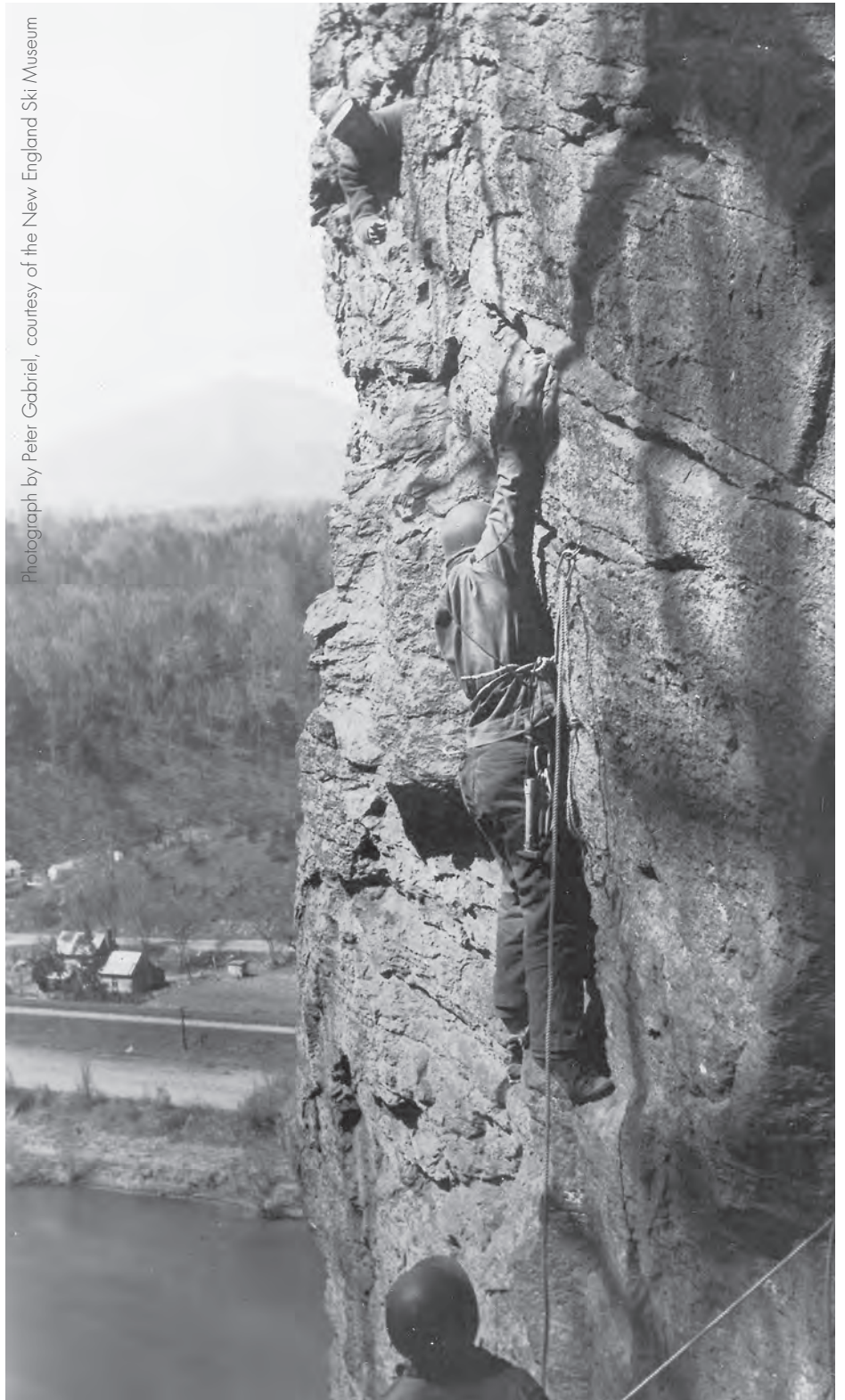


General Middleton

Maneuver Area permanently closed its doors on 1 July 1944.⁶⁶

Despite its hasty formation and brevity, the training program paid tremendous dividends for the Army. The first two divisions trained at Buena Vista, the 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions, discovered the usefulness of the maneuvers almost immediately after they entered combat. "The mountain training in the Virginia primitive area was valuable," Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton, the commander of the 45th Infantry Division, reported in November 1943 after several months of fighting in Sicily and mainland Italy. "In mountain warfare you must remember control . . . you have an abnormal situation in mountains like these. You can't scale the peaks and you can't use the valley which are [both] mined. This means you must work the slopes." Middleton even thought the training in Virginia was "the best substitute" for actual combat in the mountains. "We could learn about the difficulty of taking care of ourselves, trying to dig in in rocky terrain, [and] taking care of mortars," he wrote.⁶⁷

The following year, even after departing Italy, the 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions ended up in the Vosges mountains of France, another region similar to the southern Appalachians. Although by this time the divisions had sustained immense casualties, a core group of experienced men and officers remained who understood the importance of applying their mountain training while fighting across rugged terrain. Applying the lessons learned on the Blue Ridge, especially in the decentraliza-



Photograph by Peter Gabriel, courtesy of the New England Ski Museum

Soldiers ascending Champe Rocks, c. 1944

tion of command, saved lives for these divisions until the end of the war.⁶⁸

The low-mountain training proved so effective for soldiers fighting in Sicily and continental Italy that the Fifth Army continued the program for divisions that had already arrived in theater. General McNair had always advocated for overseas special-

ized training because it would be much more realistic for units to train in the actual operational environment. Finally following his wishes, a small group of technical advisers, including five officers and fifteen enlisted men from the Mountain Training Group, provided instruction on rock climbing, marching, and pack mule usage to divisions



A present-day view of the Canaan Valley

on rest periods in reserve or in rear areas from late 1943 into the spring of 1944. The 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions received a refresher course on what they learned only months earlier in Virginia, but it was entirely new material for the soldiers of the 3d, 34th, and 88th Infantry Divisions.⁶⁹

In the end, none of the divisions that trained at the West Virginia Maneuver Area operated in terrain like that of the Mountain State. The 28th, 35th, and 95th participated in the drives across France and Germany, and the 31st and 77th battled jungles and the Japanese in the Pacific Theater. Nevertheless, the specialized training was beneficial to these five infantry divisions. The extremes of the rugged terrain had a tendency to magnify problem areas; a member of the XIII Corps G-3 section had it right when he claimed the battalion and RCT exercises highlighted “weaknesses that divisions didn’t know existed.” In other words, the intricacies of mountain warfare itself may not have been of the utmost import to these

units, but the maneuvers did help to make leadership aware of specific problems that, if not corrected, could cost lives once they got into a combat zone.⁷⁰

The Army may have closed the doors at the West Virginia Maneuver Area by summer 1944, but lessons learned by both the RCTs and the technical advisers from the Mountain Training Group provided valuable material for two important field manuals published in November and December 1944: FM 70-15, *Operations in Snow and Extreme Cold*, and FM 70-10, *Mountain Operations*. Whereas the former dealt primarily with conditions encountered with the 10th Mountain Division at Camp Hale, *Mountain Operations* included much of the knowledge gained in Virginia, West Virginia, and Italy, including the necessity of decentralization of command, the difficulties of employing heavy artillery and large vehicles on narrow mountain roads and trails, the importance of the 81-mm. mortar, and the intricate details of military rock climbing taught at the Seneca school.⁷¹

From that point forward, U.S. Army soldiers preparing to enter combat in rugged terrain could learn from these new field manuals without having to participate in a special two-week program. This was the intrinsic value of the training. It was not important for every RCT to participate in the maneuvers, but the lessons learned from the few that did provided the Army with the knowledge and experience to publish doctrine for mountain operations instruction to any units that needed it in the future.

With this in mind, it is hard to consider the maneuvers conducted near Buena Vista and Elkins anything but a success. The Army proved it could identify a problem area and quickly scrape together an effective training program to increase the potency of its soldiers, even if the instruction was brief and only directly involved a limited number of units. This entrepreneurial and adaptive spirit, showcased by the brief but invaluable training program conducted in the mountains of Virginia and West Virginia,

ultimately helped the U.S. Army fight and win battles of the Second World War.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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11. Govan, Study No. 23, p. 9; Rpt, Huffner, 15 Apr 1943, sub: Rpt on the training conducted by this HQ in the George Washington National Forest, Pedlar District, and Jefferson National Forest, Glenwood District, per instructions CG AGF's. The Army leased two houses (staff officers' quarters and infirmary), a garage (HQ), and a hotel (enlisted quarters and mess) in Buena Vista. The 76th Div provided HQ troops, whereas the 94th Signal Bn constructed and operated the umpire control system. The 36th Inf Div ultimately was removed from the Sicily operation because it was deemed to be too inexperienced. It did, however, eventually land in Italy. Schedule, A Div, HQ, MTC, Folder Buena Vista, VA MTC Feb–Apr '43, Box 71, Entry 29, Gen Rclds of HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

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25. HQ, 305th CT, FO #1, 28 Nov 1943, Folder Unit Jnl File 77th Inf Div 305th Inf Regt, WVMA 28-30 Nov, Box 9903, RG 407, NACP.

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33. Rpt, Brig Gen J. G. Christiansen to CG, XIII Corps, 23 Nov 1943, sub: Visit to W.Va. Maneuver Area, 9-14 Nov 1943, Folder W.Va. Maneuvers 1943, Box 732, Entry 55, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

34. Lt Gen L. J. McNair to CG, XIII Corps, sub: Visit to W.Va. Maneuver Area, 23-25 Sep 1943, Folder W.Va. Maneuvers 1943, Box 732, Entry 55, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

35. Rpt, Col A. W. Gower to CG, XIII Corps, 4 Nov 1943, sub: Rpt on CT-306; Memo, Lt Col Robert L. Cook for A.C. of S., G-3, AGF, 30 Oct 1943, sub: Observations During Visit to W.Va. Maneuver Area, 25 Oct 1943. All in Folder W.Va Maneuver Area, Box 72, Entry 29, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

36. Rpt, Morrison to CG, XIII Corps, 26 Dec 1943, sub: Rpt on CT-307, 77th Inf Div.

37. McNair to CG, sub: Visit to W.Va. Maneuver Area, 23-25 Sep 1943.

38. Memo, Director's HQ, WVMA, sub: Comments on CT-109, Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area; Brig Gen J. G. Christiansen to CG XIII Corps, 2 Mar 1944, sub: Visit to W.Va. Maneuver Area, 24-26 Feb 1944, Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area. All in Box 72, Entry 29, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

39. Christiansen to CG, 2 Mar 1944, sub: Visit to W.Va. Maneuver Area, 24-26 Feb 1944.

40. Rpt, Col A. W. Gower to CG, XIII Corps, 4 Oct 1943, sub: Rpt on Training of

Combat Team 167, 31st Inf Div, Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area, Box 72; Rpt, Col A. W. Gower to CG XIII Corps, 4 Nov 1943, sub: Rpt on CT-306, Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area, Box 72; Rpt, Col W. Chapman to Director, WVMA, 26 Oct 1943, sub: Rpt, Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area, Box 72; Ltr, Maj Gen A. C. Gillem to Lt Gen McNair, 13 Jan 1944, Folder Mountain & Winter Training Background, Box 71. All in Entry 29, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

41. War Department, Field Manual 105-5: *Umpire Manual* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1942), pp. 19-20; McNair to CG, sub: Visit to W.Va. Maneuver Area, 23-25 Sep 1943.

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44. Rpt, Morrison to CG, 26 Dec 1943, sub: Rpt on CT-307, 77th Inf Div.

45. "Three Soldiers are Drowned in Canaan Valley," *Grant County Press*, 30 Mar 1944.

46. Memo, Director's HQ, WVMA, sub: Comments on CT-109; Rpt, Col Edward M. Starr to Director HQ, WVMA, 4 Oct 1943, sub: Rpt at the end of First Phase of Training; Rpt, Col W. Chapman to Director, WVMA, 26 Oct 1943, sub: Rpt All in Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area, Box 72, Entry 29, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

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Maneuver Area; Rpt, Starr to Director HQ, 4 Oct 1943, sub: Rpt at the end of First Phase of Training; Rpt, Chapman to Director, 26 Oct 1943, sub: Rpt All in Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area, Box 72, Entry 29, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

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50. Rpt, Gower to CG, 4 Oct 1943, sub: Rpt on Training of Combat Team 167, 31st Inf Div; Rpt, Thouron to Director HQ, 16 Aug 1943, sub: Rpt on Training; Rpt, Lt Col Adam J. Dreibelbies to Director HQ, WVMA, 6 Aug 1943, sub: Rpt of Bn Comdr-End of 1st Six-day training Period; Rpt, Maj Harold S. Martin to Director, WVMA, 16 Aug 1943, sub: Recommendations for future units receiving Mountain Training; Rpt, Lt Col William S. Houghton to Director HQ, 13th Corps, 7 Aug 1943, sub: Recommendations after 6 days of Mountain Training; Rpt, Lt Col Frank D. Miller to Commanding Ofcr, 307th CT, 21 Dec 1943, sub: Recommendations on Mountain Training; Memo, Col Carl H. Jark for A.C. of S., G-3, AGF, 28 Feb 1944, sub: Inspection Trip to W.Va. Maneuver Area, 24-26 Feb inclusive; Rpt, Hamilton to Director HQ, 21 Dec 1943, sub: Rpt on Training and Equipment of WVMA; Rpt, Chapman to Director, 26 Oct 1943, sub: Rpt. All in Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area, Box 72, Entry 29, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

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in Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area, Box 72, Entry 29, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

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54. Rpt, Morrison to CG, 11 Jan 1944, sub: Rpt on 343d Medical Grp.

55. Ltr, Gillem to McNair, 13 Jan 1944.

56. Rpt, Dreibelbies to Director HQ, 6 Aug 1943, sub: Rpt of Bn Comdr-End of 1st Six day training Period.

57. Rpt, Houghton to CO, 13 Aug 1943, sub: Recommendations after second 6-day Training Period.

58. Rpt, Lt Col Daniel B. Strickler to CO, Director's HQ XIII Corps, 16 Aug 1943, sub: Rpt on First Weeks Training, Folder W.Va. Maneuver Area, Box 72, Entry 29, Gen Rclds HQ AGF, RG 337, NACP.

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68. Keith E. Bonn, *When the Odds Were Even: The Vosges Mountains Campaign, October 1944-January 1945*, (Novato, Calif., Presidio: 1994), pp. 72-73, 216-19.

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NMUSA FEATURE



NMUSA VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The National Museum of the United States Army (NMUSA) has taken another step forward by opening applications for their Volunteer Program. NMUSA is now accepting applications for volunteers who will work alongside the official staff to provide visitor support when the museum is open and operating.

Zelpha N. Anderson, chief of the Visitor Services Division, says she is looking for individuals who are passionate about the U.S. Army and sharing the stories of the men and women who have worn the Army uniform throughout our nation's history. There will be a variety of volunteer opportunities, such as visitor services, special events, tours, education, outdoor activities, and administration. Through the application process, interested volunteers will have the opportunity to share their skills, interests, and abilities to help match them to a volunteer position.

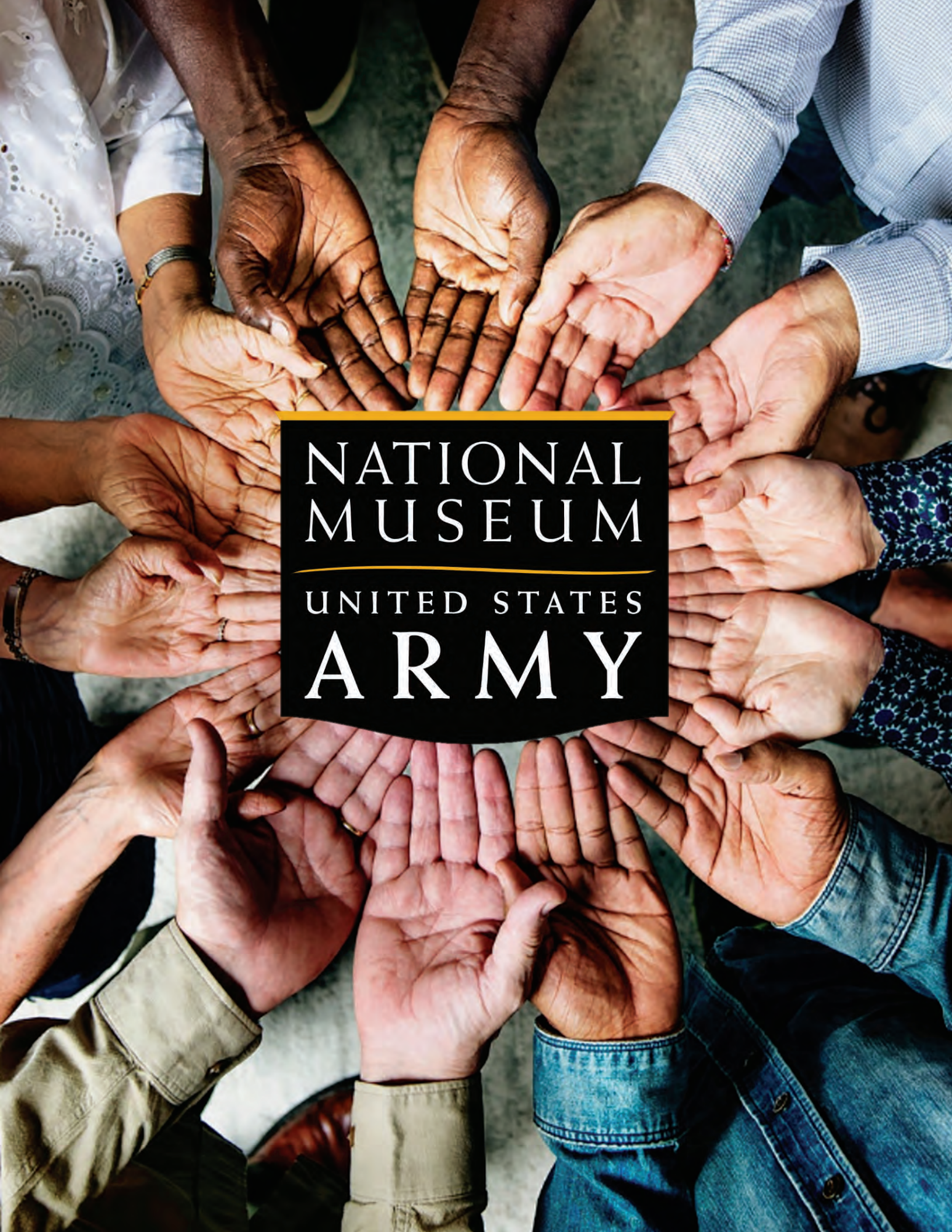
The museum anticipates approximately 750,000 visitors annually and will be open every day of the year except 25 December. "The museum will be a premier travel destination and will offer an assortment of programs and events in addition to tours of the historic galleries," explained Anderson, "and we will need a robust volunteer force to ensure an outstanding visitor experience."

Anderson says her goal is to gather a group of 300 volunteers who are trained and ready for the NMUSA's opening in 2020. The volunteer application is available now; interviews will begin late this summer and training will begin in the fall. "I am so excited to begin this phase of the project because of the enthusiasm we're seeing from those who are interested in volunteering," remarked Anderson. "Veterans, history lovers, Army family members, local residents . . . they are all stepping forward with passion and offering to share their talents and time with us at the museum."

The museum staff also has a goal of developing a volunteer corps that will reflect the diversity of its visitors and of the Army, and encourages all to apply. "You don't need a specific degree or work experience to be a volunteer," emphasized Anderson. "What we need is you!"

To learn more about volunteering at NMUSA, or to apply, visit armyhistory.org/museum-volunteers.





NATIONAL
MUSEUM

UNITED STATES

ARMY

U.S. ARMY ART SPOTLIGHT

YANK

MAGAZINE CARTOONS

BY SARAH G. FORGEY

One of the most underexhibited bodies of work in the Army Museum Enterprise's art collection is a group of over 1,000 World War II illustrations produced by more than one hundred artists for *Yank*, *The Army Weekly*. Published between June 1942 and December 1945, enlisted personnel entirely produced the content for *Yank* and intended it for an audience of other enlistees. The artwork includes sketches by eyewitness soldier-artists, hand-drawn maps, and cartoons.

The cartoons included in *Yank* were the highlight of the magazine for many readers. The cartoons cover themes that were intrinsic to the daily lives of soldiers, such as the slowness of mail delivery, terrible food, inconsistent orders, and the relationship between officers and enlisted troops. Many of these themes are timeless and relatable to soldiers of every era. For this reason, several *Yank* cartoons will be exhibited in *The Art of Soldiering*, the opening art exhibition at the National Museum of the United States Army.

Works by two significant *Yank* cartoonists, Sgt. Bil A. Keane and Sgt. George Baker, will be included in the exhibition. Sergeant Keane is best known as the cartoonist of the popular comic strip *The Family Circus*, which was inspired by his own domestic life. He began his career in the late 1930s with a self-published satirical magazine titled *The Saturday Evening Toast*. During World War II, he served as a cartoonist on the staff of *Yank* and also drew a comic strip for *Stars and Stripes*. After the war, he produced long-running local content for the

Philadelphia Bulletin and launched *The Family Circus* in 1960.¹ Sergeant Baker is best known as the creator of "The Sad Sack," a character he created in the first issue of *Yank*. Before the war, Baker was an animator for Walt Disney Productions and worked on the films *Pinocchio*, *Fantasia*, *Dumbo*, and *Bambi*. He was drafted in June 1941 and assigned to the Signal Corps to create animated content. After winning a cartoon contest, *Yank* hired Baker. His character "The Sad Sack" became one of the most popular of World War II, representing the experiences and frustrations of soldiers in the Army.²

Sergeants Keane and Baker produced the cartoons shown on these pages for *Yank* during World War II. See them as part of the inaugural art exhibition, *The Art of Soldiering*, when the National Museum of the United States Army opens in 2020.

NOTES

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2. William M. Freeman, "George Baker, Creator of Sad Sack Cartoon, Is Dead," *New York Times*, 9 May 1975, <https://www.nytimes.com/1975/05/09/archives/george-baker-creator-of-sad-sack-cartoon-is-dead-out-front-alone.html>, accessed 12 Jul 2019.

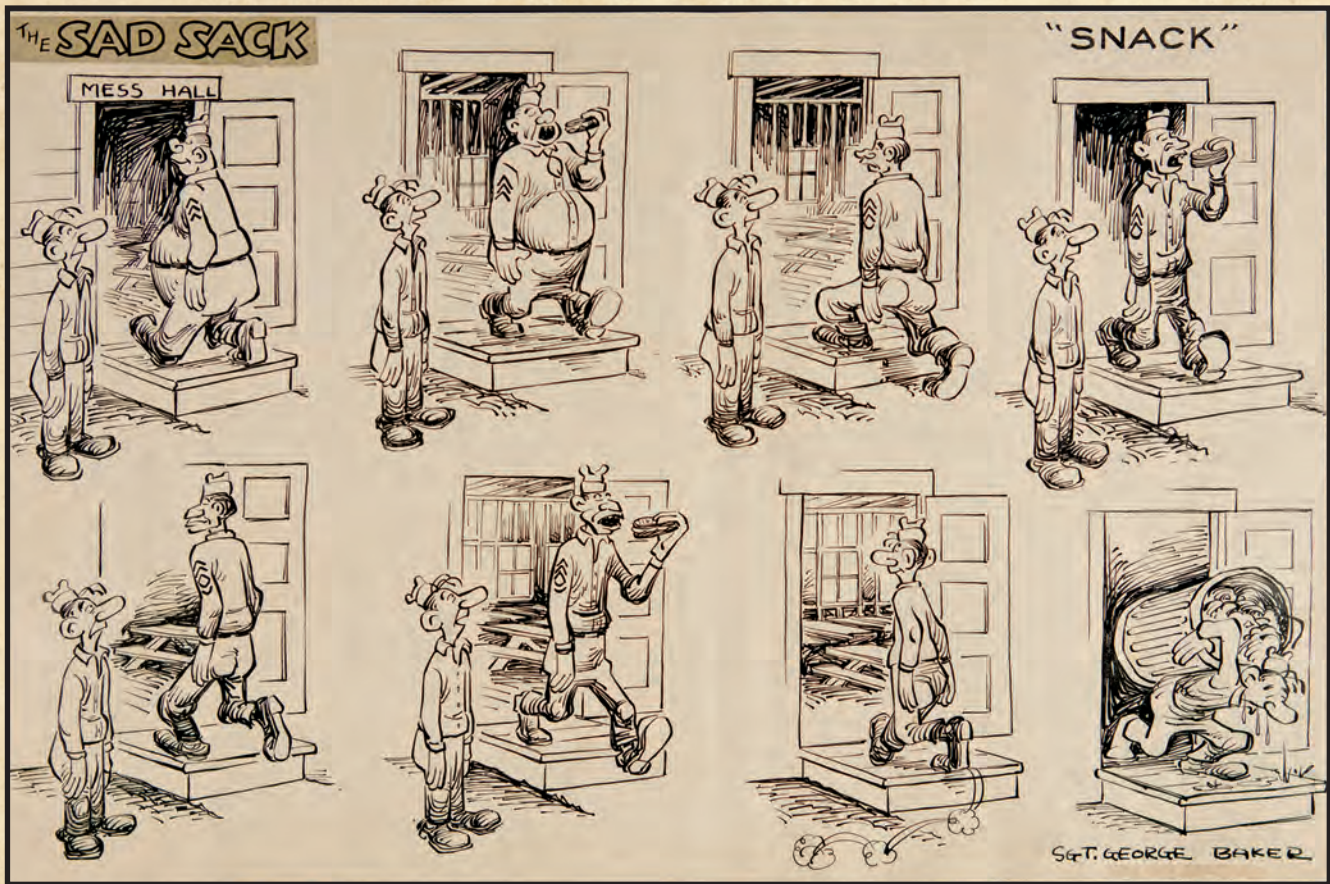




Sgt. Bil Keane, *Hot Dogs Again*, ink on paper, c. 1945



Sgt. Bil Keane, *Rank Latrine*, ink on paper, c. 1942



Sgt. George Baker, *Snack*, ink on paper, c. 1943



Sgt. George Baker, *Planning*, ink on paper, 1944



Sgt. Bil Keane, *I Like Bully Beef, My Meals Taste Good, and Everything I Eat Agrees With Me*, ink on paper, c. 1943



COMMENTARY



PERSHING'S "OPEN WARFARE" DOCTRINE IN THE LIGHT OF AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY

By Gene Fax

In May 1917, John J. Pershing became the first American general since the Civil War to lead a field army of more than a few thousand men. For most of the intervening time, the U.S. Army had had three main missions: protecting the coasts, quelling labor unrest, and chasing—but rarely fighting—Indians.¹ Pershing himself operated against Indians in the west, the Spanish in Cuba, Moros in the Philippines, and Pancho Villa in Mexico. None of these prepared him or the Army for the all-consuming war then going on in France. Pershing and the Army were largely unfamiliar with modern weapons, tactics, and logistics.

Yet Pershing knew how he wanted his new Army to fight. The trench-bound stalemate of the Western Front was not for him. "It was my opinion," he wrote in his memoirs, "that victory could not be won by the costly process of attrition, but it must be won by

driving the enemy out into the open and engaging him in a war of movement."² Americans, he believed, were inherently superior to the soldiers of other nations in their initiative and their aptitude for marksmanship.³ In his statement of training principles he declared, "The rifle and the bayonet are the principal weapons of the infantry soldier. He will be trained to a high degree of skill as a marksman both on the target range and in field firing. An aggressive spirit must be developed until the soldier feels himself, as a bayonet fighter, invincible in battle."⁴

Pershing himself had observed the Russo-Japanese War, the first major conflict to use modern weapons. In his reports he described the results when Japanese infantry—paragons of aggressiveness—attacked strong entrenchments defended by machine guns and artillery. At the Siege of Port Arthur, Manchuria, almost all



(Left) 42d Division patrol near Hassavant Farm, France, 14 September 1918
 (Above) View near the jump-off line of the 77th Division, 26 September 1918

of the infantry assaults failed with heavy losses; by the time the city surrendered, the Japanese had lost 65,000 men killed and wounded out of a maximum strength of 80,000. Replacements kept the Japanese army at full strength most of the time.⁵ Yet virtually every training program and order Pershing's American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) would publish contained some variant of this exhortation: "The general principles governing combat remain unchanged in their essence . . . [T]he fundamental ideas enunciated in our drill regulations, small arms firing manual, field service regulations and other service manuals remain the guide for both officers and soldiers."⁶ The regulations and manuals to which he referred derived ultimately from the combat doctrine developed by Maj. Gen. Emory Upton during and after the Civil War and took no notice of four years' worth of events in France. The Infantry Drill Regulations (IDR) of 1917 relegated machine guns to emergency use only. Artillery's sole mission was to support infantry attacks. The artillery's own service regulations, occupying three volumes, said of its combat role only this: "The reason for the existence of Field Artillery is its ability to assist the other arms, especially the Infantry, upon the field of battle."⁷ That was it. The IDR ignored tanks and aircraft. To Pershing these were distractions from the rifle-and-bayonet assaults that capitalized on the unique character of the American soldier: individual initiative, aggressiveness, resourcefulness, and high morale.

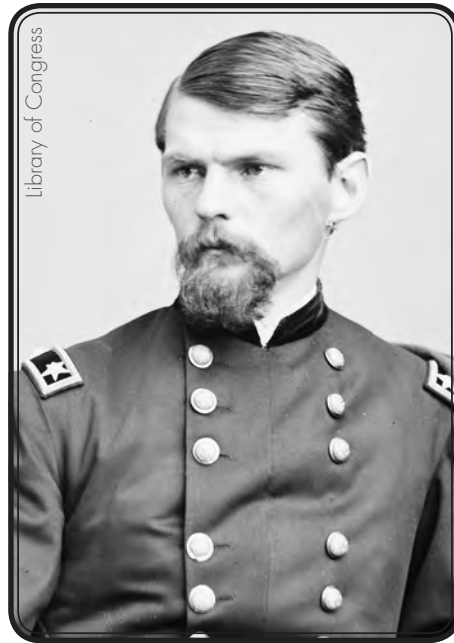
Actually, the history of American arms demonstrated just the opposite—that the infantry charge with rifle and bayonet was usually ineffective and always costly. When the Americans won, it was generally by other means. In the Revolutionary War, the colonial militias were useless in pitched battle and the Continental Army, trained by professionals like Baron von Steuben, was never able to meet the British Regulars on equal terms. They lacked the discipline to maneuver in combat and the expertise in volley fire that characterized the warfare of the period.⁸ General John Burgoyne lost at Saratoga mainly because American militia, fighting as guerrillas, wore down his army while it was on the march. He surrendered when he failed to break Maj. Gen. Horatio L. Gates' defensive line and lost all hope of resupply for his badly depleted forces.⁹ Gates then wasted an army by facing General Charles Cornwallis in a stand-up fight at the Battle of Camden, South Carolina, in 1780. A British contingent, slightly more than half the size of the Colonial force, routed the Americans, militia and regulars alike. At General George Washington's urging, Congress sent Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene to replace Gates, who, with other leaders such as Brig. Gen. Francis Marion, had conducted a successful partisan campaign against local British detachments. The final victory at Yorktown was a traditional siege operation, directed largely by America's French allies.¹⁰



General Pershing

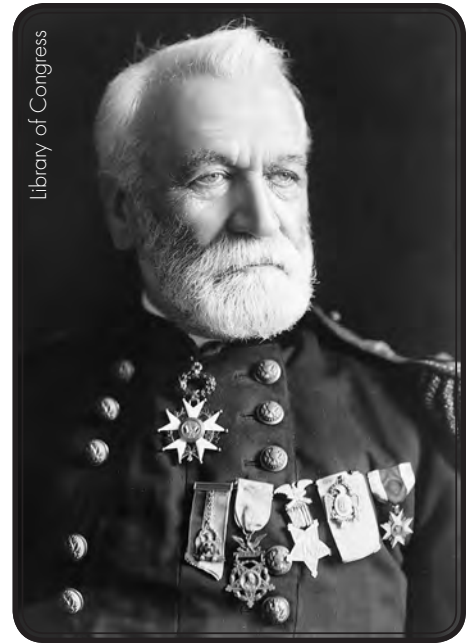
In the Mexican War, Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott captured Veracruz, Mexico, by siege and Mexico City by maneuver, avoiding fighting as much as possible. His subordinate Maj. Gen. Zachary Taylor believed in the bayonet as a primary weapon and disdained artillery. Taylor commanded 5,000 volunteers, most of them frontiersmen, plus a small force of regular artillery and dragoons. Ignoring orders to establish a defensive line, he advanced his little army to an exposed position deep inside Mexico. When General Antonio López de Santa Anna, commanding an army four times as large, moved to cut him off, Taylor retreated fifteen miles to a better position near Buena Vista, Mexico, to await the Mexican attack. Santa Anna maneuvered his troops brilliantly, at one point putting several American regiments to flight. But Taylor's artillery came up at just the right moment. Serving as a rallying point for the infantry and pouring fire into the Mexican ranks, the guns turned the tide. Santa Anna retreated with between 1,500 and 2,000 casualties; the Americans suffered fewer than half that.¹¹

For Pershing's generation, the Civil War was the wellspring of Army doctrine. Pershing, who graduated West Point in 1886, was steeped in that war's history. The two superintendents while he was there—Major Generals Oliver Otis Howard and Wesley Merritt—had been well-known Civil War commanders. He remembered being impressed by visitors such as Generals Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and Philip H. Sheridan.¹²



General Upton

The Army War College, founded in 1901, pioneered the intensive study of Civil War battles, including tours of the major eastern battlefields. The emphasis was on battles of maneuver—First and Second Bull Run, the Peninsula Campaign, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House in Virginia, Antietam in Maryland, and Gettysburg in Pennsylvania. But the most strategically important campaigns—Vicksburg, Mississippi, which cut the Confederacy in two; and Petersburg, Virginia, which ground the rebel army down until it ran out of men—were classic trench warfare operations and received little attention.¹³ There were exceptions—First and Second Bull Run and Chattanooga, Tennessee, come to mind—but usually, even in that war of movement, the bayonet charge was a deadly mistake. Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's assaults on General Robert E. Lee at Antietam, Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside's fourteen separate charges at Fredericksburg, General Braxton Bragg's repeated attacks on Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans' line at Stones River, Tennessee, all failed to achieve a tactical victory. Most infantry assaults, such as those in Grant's Overland Campaign, produced only mutual carnage, not a breakthrough. As crafty a tactician as Lee was, he suffered defeat on the three occasions he launched a frontal assault: Malvern Hill in the Peninsula Campaign, Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, and the attempt to retake Fort Harrison outside Richmond, Virginia.¹⁴



General Howard, c. 1905

The charge with rifle and bayonet did not need the trenches of Petersburg to be rendered obsolete. It succumbed to the superiority of defensive weapons. The old smoothbore muskets had been effective only to one hundred yards, so infantry could get within bayonet-charging distance before they risked being hit by gunfire. The development of the minie ball and the consequent adoption of the rifled musket as the standard infantry weapon in the 1840s and '50s tripled that range. It cut down many attackers long before they could get close enough to use their bayonets. Frontal attacks became too costly to pursue—although it took some time to realize this—and the bayonet itself became obsolete as a weapon. In Grant's campaign in the summer of 1864, Union doctors recorded only thirty-seven bayonet wounds. In the entire Civil War, they noted only 922 bayonet wounds among the many hundreds of thousands of casualties treated.¹⁵ Perhaps in advocating the infantry assault with fixed bayonets, Pershing had in mind Grant's capture of Missionary Ridge outside Chattanooga or the counterattack of the 20th Infantry Regiment, Maine Volunteers, at Little Round Top in Gettysburg. No doubt he recalled the charge up San Juan Hill, Cuba, in which he participated—although embedded journalist Richard Harding Davis reported that no troops used bayonets there.¹⁶ But those seem thin precedents for a two-million-man Army fighting a mechanized war.



General Merritt

World War I did indeed bear out the historic role of the American infantryman with his rifle and bayonet, but not in the way Pershing intended. On 6 June 1918, four battalions of the 4th Brigade, U.S. Marines, part of the U.S. 2d Division, advanced through a wheat field toward Belleau Wood in northeastern France, bayonets fixed and rifles at port arms, but without an artillery barrage. German machine guns scythed them down. The Marines took the wood a

bit more than three weeks later after it had been thoroughly shelled.¹⁷ In mid-July at nearby Soissons, the same division virtually repeated its performance, complete with wheat field. This time, utter surprise and the weak German positions allowed it to advance, but with inordinate casualties; by the end of its first two engagements almost half the division had been killed or wounded, gone missing, or been taken prisoner.¹⁸ Pershing's staff concluded nevertheless, "The rifle again proved to be the chief weapon of the infantry soldier."¹⁹

In fact, Pershing's "open warfare" was merely a vague principle—almost a slogan—devoid of tactical content. The general asserted but never explained how an infantry charge would gouge the German machine gunners and artillerists out of their trenches and emplacements and hurl them into the green fields beyond.²⁰ Nor did he explain why the Americans would have greater success than the French had in 1914, when the same tactics earned them nothing but 300,000 to 400,000 casualties. By early 1918, the French, British, and German armies had developed combined-arms tactics that would shatter the static battlefield. But Pershing was not interested in learning from them. None of the many training manuals and schedules put out by his headquarters contained the examples, problems, map exercises, and maneuver plans that his officers needed to turn "open warfare" into a reality. None of



Richard Harding Davis, c. 1901

them even had the phrase in their titles. Maj. Gen. Hunter Liggett, then commanding I Army Corps, complained in a letter to General Headquarters on 1 April 1918 that none of the literature he had received explained how his division commanders should prepare their soldiers for open warfare. In March 1918, when the Germans stormed over the old Somme battlefield, destroying one British army and gravely damaging another, Pershing ascribed their success to "the intelligent initiative of junior officers and superiority of fire," and added, "Americans have inherent qualities in both these respects far superior to those of the Germans."²¹ He ignored the true reasons for the German victory: infiltration by small, specialized units armed with a variety of infantry weapons, including grenades, light machine guns, and flamethrowers; combined-arms tactics with infantry, artillery, and aircraft providing mutual support; and intensive training in the new techniques months before the assault. Rifle fire and the bayonet were negligible contributors.

What is remarkable is that the soldiers of the AEF *did* possess individual initiative, aggressiveness, resourcefulness, and high morale—even the Germans acknowledged that. One of their intelligence officers reported after Belleau Wood, "The individual soldiers are very good. They are healthy, vigorous and physically well developed . . . The troops are fresh and full of straightforward confidence. A remark of one of the prisoners is indicative of their spirit:



1st Division Infantry on Montrefagne, north of Exermont, France, 11 October 1918



General Liggett, c. 1910

‘We kill or get killed.’²² What they did not have was either an effective combat doctrine or the training to exercise it if they had it. Instead, the Americans taught themselves modern offensive methods while they were

fighting: advancing in small formations, using cover and fire-and-maneuver tactics, employing machine guns to support the advance, and digging in in anticipation of enemy artillery fire. They never did master the skills needed to work effectively with tanks and aircraft, which were too technical to learn on the battlefield. General Liggett, replacing Pershing as commander of First Army, reorganized the artillery so that light and heavy guns could quickly assist the infantry wherever support was needed.²³ The AEF taught itself in nine weeks the methods it had taken their allies four years to develop. Even so, it was the British and French who dominated the battlefield in the last months before the Armistice.

In the end, Pershing had to accept the reality of the battlefield, at least temporarily. On 29 August 1918, his headquarters issued combat instructions declaring that the conquest of the enemy’s main line of resistance, estimated to be three to four kilometers deep, called for “trench warfare methods . . . the operation must be planned in great detail and carried out according to a fixed schedule.”²⁴ His orders for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, to

begin on 26 September, specified a set-piece battle: rigid divisional boundaries, artillery preparation followed by a creeping barrage, all divisions to attack straight ahead, and prescribed phase lines for the advance. But he still put his faith in the vigor and initiative of the American infantryman. He set the first day’s objective at a line as much as twenty kilometers beyond the jump-off position—a one-day penetration that none of his allies had ever achieved.²⁵ That line was not reached until 15 October.

Pershing maintained to the end of his life that the American rifleman, aided but not superseded by tanks, air, and artillery, was the primary weapon of war. In his memoirs, published in 1931, he wrote,

[T]he principles of warfare as I learned them at West Point [i.e., as derived from the Civil War] remain unchanged . . . The American soldier, taught how to shoot, how to take advantage of the terrain, and how to rely upon hasty entrenchment, shall retain the ability to drive the enemy from his trenches and, by the same tactics, defeat him in the open.²⁶



An American 75-mm. gun firing toward Montsec from a position near Beaumont, 12 September 1918



American soldiers advancing to attack at Cantigny

In fact, it was the rapid improvement in American skills, especially in the use of combined arms, along with the deterioration of the German Army, which allowed the AEF to claim its share of the victory. But the war-winning breakthrough that Pershing promised his infantry doctrine would deliver never came.

Gene Fax originally trained as a mechanical engineer and spent the first eight years of his career conducting research and tactical studies under contract to the U.S. Navy. He is chairman and cofounder of The Cadmus Group, Inc., which does program development, evaluation, and policy research in environmental protection, energy efficiency, sustainable development, climate change, and homeland security. He is the author of *With Their Bare Hands: General Pershing, the 79th Division, and the Battle for Montfaucon* (Oxford, 2017), the product of seventeen years of archival research in Washington, Baltimore, Paris, West Point, and Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Gene is a member of the Society for Military History, the Western Front Association, the National World War I Museum and Memorial, and the Army Historical Foundation. More on Gene and his writings can be found at genefaxauthor.com.

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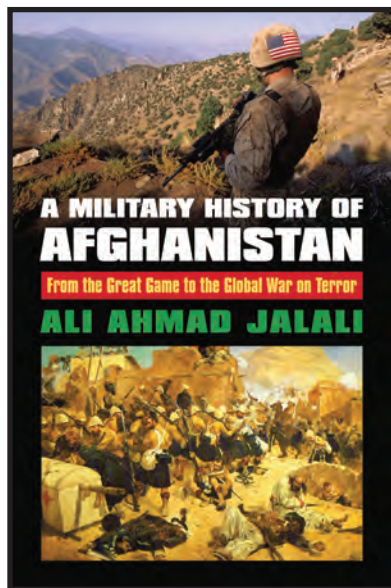
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BOOK REVIEWS



***A Military History of Afghanistan:
From the Great Game to the Global
War on Terror***

By Ali Ahmad Jalali
University Press of Kansas, 2017
Pp. xvi, 617. \$34.95

Review by Reagan Fancher

Since the devastating terror attacks of 11 September 2001, the nation of Afghanistan has been thrust onto the global stage as the central front in the “War on Terror” declared by President George W. Bush after that infamous day. Seventeen years later, the country remains a battlefield, as U.S. troops and their NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and Afghan allies continue to persevere in what seems to be an unending war with Islamist insurgents including the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and increasingly, the Islamic State. Author Ali Ahmad Jalali brings his unique insight into the country’s tumultuous history in his thoroughly researched book, *A Military History of Afghanistan: From the Great Game to the Global War on Terror*.

As a veteran mujahideen or “holy warrior” of the Afghan resistance against Soviet Union occupation forces in the

1980s, Jalali is uniquely qualified for the task of writing a detailed history of his country’s military experience throughout the centuries. Jalali’s choice of title for his magisterial work could not be more suitable, as the course of Afghanistan’s rich history has been largely decided by military affairs and their outcomes. Indeed, the author almost sells himself short in the book’s subtitle, as the story of Afghanistan’s military history begins well before the “Great Game” waged by Britain and Russia throughout the nineteenth century.

Jalali begins his work with a brief but detailed description of Afghanistan’s early history and the impact of geography on the country’s development. The combination of high, snowcapped mountains in the country’s north, center, and southeast, and open, arid deserts in the south-central and southwest regions has long determined the routes by which invading armies arrived. The Arab-Islamic conquest of the region, which began in 642, for example, was carried out via “two axes” from the north and south, converging in the Sistan-Herat plain in the west, as the Hindu Kush mountains to the east prevented such a convergence of forces (p. 30).

Strategic successes such as those enjoyed by the Arab invaders reinforce Jalali’s argument that, contrary to popular perception, Afghanistan is not unconquerable, so long as outsiders possess a degree of patience and piety comparable to that of the Afghans. One of the book’s most interesting points is the author’s coverage of the Afghan Durrani Empire. The modern state of Afghanistan emerged in 1747 under the bold, decisive leadership of Ahmad Shah Durrani, who united the ethnic Pashtun majority and extended the nation’s borders across the Indus River. Ahmad Shah’s military successes against the Islamic Moguls and Hindu Marathas altered the development of South Asia. Jalali brilliantly calls attention to the regional, if not global, ramifications of the Afghan Empire’s advance. At the 1761 Battle of Panipat, Ahmad Shah inflicted a decisive defeat on the Marathas by employing a

patient defensive strategy combined with light, agile forces against the aggressive, slower-moving, and heavy troops of his opponents. Jalali points out that this outstanding victory drove the Marathas out of northern India, destroyed their domestic political unity, alarmed Britain, and paved the way for the subsequent conquest of India (p. 75).

Moving into the twentieth century, Jalali provides a highly informative description of Afghanistan’s relations with Britain and the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the First World War. Anti-British sentiment had been brewing since the Ottoman Caliph’s declaration of jihad, and in 1919 tensions boiled over, triggered by a border dispute resulting in the Third Anglo-Afghan War. Many Afghans perceived this brief but bloody affair as a successful act of defiance and it resulted in the young King Amanullah emerging as a celebrated national hero.

One of the book’s greatest strength’s lies in Jalali’s meticulous dissection of mujahideen and Soviet tactical operations during the Soviet-Afghan War (1979–1989). He points out that while the mujahideen insurgents essentially operated as light infantry, they nevertheless excelled at the employment of heavy weaponry, including heavy machine guns, recoilless rifles, mortars, and rockets, against Soviet troops. This gave them more “staying power” in the field once a guerrilla ambush was underway (p. 392).

Soviet military operations often were spearheaded, or at least supported by, airborne assault troops and special forces including elite KGB (Committee for State Security) and GRU (Intelligence Directorate) commandos, as well as armored sweeps and insertion of elite units supported by attack helicopters or fighter-bombers. Jalali states that before the mid-1980s, Soviet operations “were conducted in a conventional way along the main roads and valleys and other axes by heavy columns of motorized rifle formations” which he says “produced no desirable results” (p. 395).

Jalali makes a key point when referring to Mikhail Gorbachev's Politburo speech on 13 November 1986. It was in this speech that the Soviet General Secretary finally acknowledged the Soviet Union's failure to defeat the mujahideen—an important point as it took almost until the end of the year for a Soviet leader to do so. It is little wonder, then, that the war's bloodiest chapter occurred in the late 1980s with Gorbachev at the helm, stubbornly insisting on two more years of murderous futility (p. 421).

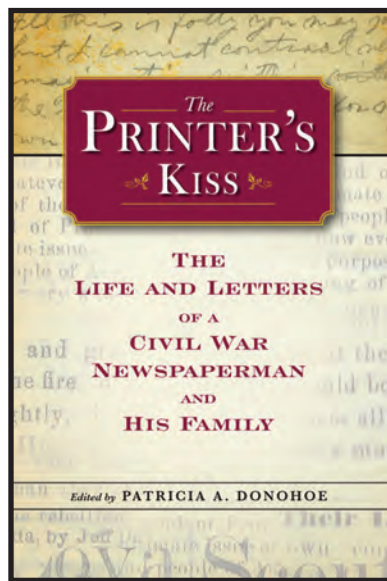
Incidentally, the book's greatest weaknesses also relate to the topic of the Soviet-Afghan War, particularly when the author refers to the role of Arab jihadists in the conflict. Jalali cites the memoir of Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) officer Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf when describing Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and ISI aid to Afghan Islamist insurgents. He then alleges that the United States "even helped create an international network of militant Islamists to fight with the Mujahedin in Afghanistan" (pp. 382–83). I find Jalali's claim curious, because it is repeatedly and thoroughly refuted in Brigadier Yousaf's memoir, *Afghanistan—The Bear Trap: The Defeat of a Superpower* (South Yorkshire, 1992). Furthermore, Yousaf points to the complete financial independence of wealthy Arab nongovernmental organizations and the importance of this aid for the Afghan Islamists in the field.

When discussing the 1989 Battle of Jalalabad between the mujahideen and Communist regime forces, Jalali mentions "another group" which briefly captured the Jalalabad airfield (p. 430). Jalali does not mention that this group included Saudi jihadist Osama bin Laden and his all-Arab guerrilla unit who fought their way onto the airport's apron before being driven back, as described by former CIA officer and historian Michael Scheuer in his excellent biography, *Osama bin Laden* (New York, 2011). This incident deserves attention, providing a key example of al-Qaeda's early capabilities in insurgency combat.

Overall, Jalali's effective use of primary and secondary sources from a diverse range of participants in Afghanistan's military history makes for a fascinating and important read. Utilizing Afghan, Indian, Pakistani, British, Soviet, and American accounts, the book comes closer than any other thus far in painting a complete picture of the turbulent history of this fascinating nation. It will prove a useful and

important resource to both historians and military professionals in understanding Afghanistan and its increasing importance in world affairs.

Reagan Fancher earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in history at the University of Louisiana at Monroe and is working toward his Ph.D. in history at the University of North Texas. His main area of interest is military affairs relating to the Arabian Peninsula, South Asia, and the Islamist mujahideen insurgency in the Soviet-Afghan War. He has also studied military affairs relating to the Soviet Union and the Red Army in the Second World War.



The Printer's Kiss: The Life and Letters of a Civil War Newspaperman and His Family

Edited by Patricia A. Donohoe
Kent State University Press, 2014
Pp. xxvii, 300. \$39.95

Review by David B. Parker

On 27 November 1863, Will Tomlinson, a peripatetic newspaperman in Ohio known for his prowar Democratic politics, his temper, and his drinking, got into an argument with a Copperhead (an antiwar Democrat). The argument turned violent and ended with Tomlinson shot, an injury from which he would die two days later. His widow, Eliza Wiley Tomlinson, lived until 1885. When she died, their two children, daughter Belle and son Byers, divided up the 300 or so letters that their parents

had written to each other. Fast forward to 1970, when Patricia Donohoe, an English teacher, Presbyterian minister, and Byers' great-granddaughter, came across Byers' half of the letters in a cracker tin where her grandmother had kept them. Unbeknown to Donohoe, Belle's descendants had sold her share of the family letters, and they began showing up on eBay. Donohoe was able to buy almost all of them. Thus was born the collection that forms the basis for *The Printer's Kiss: The Life and Letters of a Civil War Newspaperman and His Family*.

The title of the book—Donohoe tells us that "a printer's kiss" is the name given to the first satisfactory impression to come off a printing press—is enigmatic, and it has several meanings here. English-born Will Tomlinson moved to Ripley, Ohio (via Canada and New York), just across the river from Kentucky, in the early 1840s. There he established a Democratic antislavery newspaper, *Freedom's Casket* (slogan: "Principles—not prejudice"), and married Eliza Wylie. A few weeks after the wedding, Tomlinson took his bride to Picketon, Ohio, where he had already started a second newspaper. (The *Casket* lasted fewer than ten issues.) This set the stage for their marriage. Over the next twenty years, Tomlinson moved from town to town, starting a total of ten newspapers. Sometimes Eliza and the children went with him, and sometimes they stayed in Ripley, where Eliza had family.

Of the almost 300 letters that Donohoe had in her possession, 124 ended up in the book, and all but twenty of them are from 1861 and after. As the Civil War approached, Tomlinson was in Cincinnati, where he worked for the *Daily Gazette*, a Republican paper. In a letter to Eliza in December 1860, as the southern states began to secede, the antislavery newspaperman blamed the abolitionists, who "have finally done their work, and instead of the Union strong, great and respected, we are to become a divided, quarrelling, and unhappy people" (p. 53). Elsewhere he called abolitionists "a miserable faction of false philanthropists and banded political renegades and public plunderers" (p. 57). This is one of the valuable lessons in the book: politics and racial attitudes were not as absolute and unambiguous as we like to think.

In April 1861, Tomlinson joined the Fifth Ohio Infantry as quartermaster. Back in Ripley, Eliza worried about his safety but

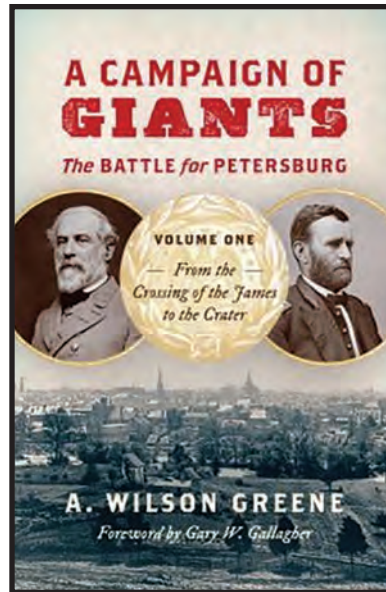
urged him on. “Do not be rash in risking your person,” she wrote. “Dodge the bullets, and hustle them back with fatal aim” (p. 131). Her letters told of the children and other family and friends, and of her efforts to keep everything going on her own. His letters spoke of the boredom of camp life and the difficult task he faced provisioning his men.

In late summer, Tomlinson was elected captain of a company that was ordered to root out enemy guerrillas in western Virginia. In early November, they rounded up and murdered three rebel bushwhackers. Drinking was perhaps a factor; certainly poor judgment was. As a result, Tomlinson was discharged and lost his chance to command a company of African American soldiers, something he had hoped to do.

His service ended, Tomlinson returned to Cincinnati, where he wrote in the *Gazette* with increasing virulence against Copperheads (especially Ohio Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham). He also contributed a half dozen “letters” to the *Ripley Bee* on various war-related topics. In his letters to Eliza, Tomlinson shared his despondence over the Union’s lack of military success. Eliza wrote of her growing concern of a Confederate invasion, especially with escaped prisoner John Hunt Morgan on the loose in Kentucky. In late summer 1863, she apparently accused Tomlinson of whoring, gambling, and general “debauchery.” That letter is no longer extant, but a few pages of his response are included in the book. He denied all except the debauchery: “I take it that means drinking. I do drink. I drink a great deal” (p. 229). With the exception of a letter dated 17 November 1863, that was his last to Eliza.

The Printer’s Kiss is a solid addition to Kent State University Press’s Civil War in the North series. While the letters actually tell us little about the Civil War, they remind us that the war involved not just soldiers, but also families, and those families were built on the personalities and frailties of those who composed them. The Tomlinsons certainly had their dispositions and weaknesses. Patricia Donohoe did a wonderful job editing and annotating her great-great-grandparents’ letters, providing context where needed and filling the holes in the stories that the letters tell. Those interested in the human side of the Civil War will enjoy and learn much from this book.

Dr. David B. Parker is professor of history and assistant department chair at Kennesaw State University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. He is the author of *Alias Bill Arp: Charles Henry Smith and the South’s “Goodly Heritage”* (Athens, Ga.: 1991), on the Confederacy’s most famous humorist, and the editor, with John D. Fowler, of *Breaking the Heartland: The Civil War in Georgia* (Macon, Ga.: 2011). He has also written on Civil War textbooks and religion in Civil War Florida.



A Campaign of Giants: The Battle for Petersburg—Volume One: From the Crossing of the James to the Crater

By A. Wilson Greene
University of North Carolina Press, 2018
Pp. xiv, 712. \$45

Review by Charles R. Bowery Jr.

In the preface to his magisterial new book on the opening battles of the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign, A. Wilson Greene offers the modest disclaimer that “I am under no illusion that my work is definitive” on the topic of the Civil War’s longest and most complex campaign. If any project could claim such status, Greene’s projected three-volume series would be it. Eagerly anticipated by both Civil War scholars and enthusiasts, volume one of *A Campaign of Giants* covers the campaign’s first phase, from the disengagement of the Union and Confederate armies at the Battle of Cold Harbor, through the crossing of the James River, and the first three of the eight sepa-

rate clashes that make up this sprawling military drama.

Greene has long been acknowledged as the preeminent historian of this campaign, building on his years of experience in the Petersburg area. He is the former president of the Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier. In 2000, he authored the best account to date of the final battles of the campaign and in 2006 he wrote a survey of the wartime experiences of Petersburg and its population.¹

In contrast to other, more extensively chronicled Civil War campaigns, Richmond-Petersburg has received comparatively slight attention from scholars over the years, perhaps because of the sense of inevitability that lies over it. This point of view ignores the very real contingencies at work in the war’s last year, as Generals Ulysses S. Grant, George Gordon Meade, Benjamin F. Butler, Robert E. Lee, and P. G. T. Beauregard met in the Confederacy’s seventh-largest city and its logistical hub for all Southern operations in the Eastern Theater. The campaign still has much to tell us about the war. A few new works have joined the small number of standards over the past decade, but the campaign’s length and complexity make it difficult to write about in a way that is authoritative, yet readable and approachable. Greene does this, and the result is an exceptional work of military history.

In chronicling the first phase of the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign, Greene addresses several of its more controversial moments. One is Grant’s failure to capture Petersburg on 15 June 1864, after successfully deceiving Lee on his true intent for seventy-two hours and possessing an overwhelming numerical advantage over Beauregard’s forces defending the city. Greene provides an evenhanded analysis, with a minute-by-minute recounting of the actions of both sides as Union forces crossed the James. He demonstrates that a constellation of failures, from soldiers and junior officers to senior commanders, combined with battlefield friction and a skilled Confederate reaction, led to perhaps the greatest missed opportunity of the war. Greene also offers a judicious analysis of the actions of federal forces during the first series of clashes along Petersburg’s eastern approaches, putting to rest persistent legends about Union forces refusing to attack. He mines contemporaneous

primary sources on both sides, rather than relying on postwar memoirs, to convey the overwhelming fatigue, stress, fear, and combat loss that combined to stretch the Union armies to the breaking point.

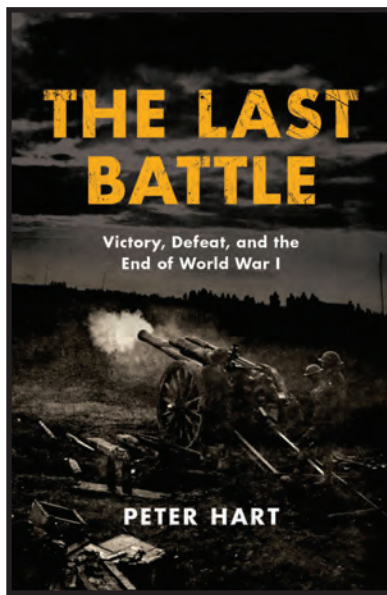
After a straightforward account of the moves and countermoves of both sides during June and July and a survey of life in and around the city of Petersburg. Greene then concludes the volume with a detailed, compelling account of the Battle of the Crater, and offers a fresh, informative analysis of the most well-known incident of the campaign. Even here, the author puts a renowned tactical event into its proper operational context, with sufficient treatment of Grant's operations on the north side of the James River at Deep Bottom. Greene addresses the undeniable racial components of the fighting at the Crater, and ably assesses the political, physical, and moral impacts of the battle on both sides.

Scholars and enthusiasts of the Eastern Theater of the Civil War now have the first installment of this long-awaited project. The three volumes of *A Campaign of Giants* will be the last word on the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign for a long time to come.

Charles R. Bowery Jr., a retired Army colonel, is the executive director of the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He is a former military history instructor at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, and a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth. He served as an Apache helicopter pilot in Iraq, and commanded an attack helicopter battalion in Afghanistan. He is the coeditor of *The Army War College Guide to the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign* (Lawrence, Kans., 2014).

NOTE

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The Last Battle: Victory, Defeat, and the End of World War I

By Peter Hart
Oxford University Press, 2018
Pp. x, 453. \$34.95

Review by Peter L. Belmonte

In the opening paragraph of *The Last Battle: Victory, Defeat, and the End of World War I*, Peter Hart, oral historian at Britain's Imperial War Museum (IWM), asks readers to put themselves in the place of soldiers in the final days of World War I, preparing for yet another bloody assault. Hart reasons:

The temptation to shirk must have been enormous. Yet, for the most part, men dug deep within themselves to summon up the resolve to fight on and 'finish the job.' For many it would prove to be the greatest sacrifice (p. vi).

To "finish the job," Allied commanders "had to take risks that would have seemed reprehensible a few months before . . ." (p. x). Hart thus examines the final four months of the war, reflecting "the essence of what happened in battle—and why" (p. x). To do this, Hart marshals a variety of firsthand accounts of the fighting, including some unpublished transcripts from oral history recordings held in the IWM. The author admittedly, and understandably, writes from an Anglocentric point of view. Accordingly, most of the eyewitness accounts are from British and Dominion forces, but there

are ample American descriptions and some German narratives sprinkled in as well.

Hart begins by surveying the dire straits in which all combatants found themselves in 1918. Each army had lost unimaginable numbers of men in the bloody struggles to this point, and it was recognized that the infusion of millions of American troops, the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), would turn the tide in the Allies' favor. The series of German offensives from March through July 1918 resulted in territorial gains at a high cost to the Germans. But Allied leader Marshal Ferdinand Foch rightly saw this as an opportunity to counterattack and drive the depleted German forces back. The Second Battle of the Marne in July was the beginning of the end for the Germans. Following this, Foch met with the other Allied leaders to put forth his thoughts about the current situation and his ideas for the way ahead. These ideas culminated in his proposal for a series of offensives, launched in a four-day sequence, designed to push the Germans back without giving them time to organize any more defensive lines.

In addition to eyewitness accounts, Hart includes his analysis of the evolution of British tactics during the final months of the war. He sees the Battle of Amiens in early August 1918 as a turning point in that regard, as it marked a definite change in tactics and operational scope. The author calls Amiens an "All Arms Battle" (p. 42), what Americans would call a successful use of combined arms. Furthermore, he contends that British Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig learned the valuable lesson that "persevering with any offensive beyond a few days would result in diminishing returns" (p. 44). Maybe so, but the Allies still made plenty of attempts to break through to "open warfare" well after August. These attempts were driven by Marshal Foch, and they comprise the final few months of combat during the war.

The bulk of the book consists of chronological accounts of each of the Allied offensives starting with the AEF's Meuse-Argonne Offensive on 26 September. The subsequent battles, each launched on consecutive days, include the Battle of Canal du Nord, the Fifth Battle of Ypres, the Battle of Courtrai, and the Battle of St. Quentin Canal. Hart devotes a chapter to each of these actions with subsequent chapters devoted to describing the progress of each battle and the development of the overall strategic picture.

The eyewitness accounts range from General Haig's diary entries to transcripts of oral history interviews of soldiers and officers conducted decades later. These work together to give us insight into the thoughts of men engaged in the war at a variety of levels. They show us the difficulties of command when diplomacy and politics are mixed with strategic military planning, and they show us the horror of war at the personal level. As an example of the latter, consider this description of what an American rear-echelon soldier discovered when he examined the ground after a battle:

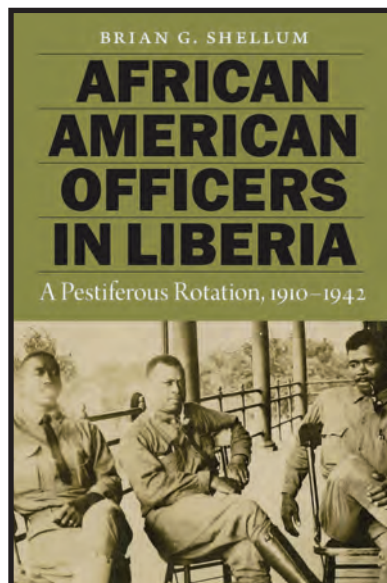
In some places the men had been killed by bullets; but in others they were blown to pieces by shells; an arm here with the hand gone, and a leg there with the genitals hanging to it, or a solitary head which seemed to accuse civilization with its silence! In one place I found a stomach lost in the grass, while wound around the limbs of a nearby tree were the intestines. The whole ridge had a stench so horrible and so repulsive that all the ghastly sites [sic] seemed indescribably worse! (Pvt. Arthur Yenson, 7th Engineer Train, 5th Division, p. 339)

The author's description of the political and military maneuvering that led to the Armistice provides a helpful summary of this complicated process. Of the Germans in particular, Hart writes: "All this political wrangling leaves an unpleasant taste in the mouth when one considers that men were being maimed and dying in large numbers with every day that passed" (p. 263). Hart adopts a pragmatic view of the problems that the Allies had to contend with, and his tone is much less harshly critical of Allied leaders than that of some other historians. American readers will appreciate Hart's evenhanded and thoughtful analysis of the problems faced by the AEF. The author reveals what most students of the AEF already know: the same problems for which the Americans came under heavy criticism also bedeviled the British and French at the same time. Shortcomings in tactics, leadership, supply, and transportation were not unique to the AEF, as Hart's fine commentary on these issues shows. Despite these shortcomings, the Allies persevered and triumphed. In no small part this was due to Marshal Foch, of whom the author writes: "[Foch] was the true architect of victory. Foch provided the drive and the intellectual coherence that bound together

what might have been a series of disparate offensives into one coherent whole" (p. 328).

Thirty-six photographs and several maps enhance the text, while supporting material includes a bibliography and thorough endnotes. The maps, with detail only down to the division level, are adequate and allow the reader to follow the battles. Hart has produced a thoughtful, well-written account of the final months of the war. It is highly recommended for those who would like to learn more about the war's final, bloody battles.

Maj. Peter L. Belmonte, USAF (Ret.), 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).



African American Officers in Liberia: A Pestiferous Rotation, 1910–1942

By Brian G. Shellum
Potomac Books, 2018
Pp. xxvii, 271. \$21.95

Review by Frank L. Kalesnik

The first colonists from the United States arrived in West Africa in 1820. Free people of color and/or former slaves, they and their descendents came to be known as Americo-

Liberians. Established in 1847, the Republic of Liberia modeled itself politically after the United States. Socially, it replicated the antebellum South, with the Americo-Liberians assuming the roles of their former white masters and treating the indigenous population as their inferiors. This led to frequent conflicts, often resulting in armed intervention by U.S. Navy warships. Formed in 1908, the Liberian Frontier Force suppressed rebellions internally, and protected the borders from encroachment by neighboring British and French colonies. From 1910 to 1942, officers recruited in the United States led the force, with the American military attaché exercising oversight. These men were African Americans, and they frequently led the Frontier Force in combat against indigenous Africans.

The subtitle of this book refers to the tropical ailments these officers encountered and often died from. Their ancestors might have been African, but they had entered a different world, and the experience often proved difficult, frustrating, and frequently fatal. The military attachés were all professional soldiers, and most of the officers contracted to lead the Frontier Force were veterans, often of combat in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection, or the First World War. The Liberian government preferred West Point graduates, though some soldiers were enlisted men originally who rose through the ranks.

The most famous of these is Benjamin O. Davis Sr. He served as an officer of Volunteers in the Spanish-American War, then enlisted in the Regular Army, and ultimately retired at the rank of brigadier general in 1948. Charles Young, a West Point graduate commissioned in 1889, rose to the rank of colonel. He served as military attaché twice, first from 1912 to 1915, then from 1920 until his death in 1922.

Brian G. Shellum, the author of *African American Officers in Liberia*, wrote two other books on Young, *Black Cadet in a White Bastion: Charles Young at West Point* (Lincoln, Neb.: 2006) and *Black Officer in a Buffalo Soldier Regiment: The Military Career of Charles Young* (Lincoln, Neb.: 2010). Making extensive use of primary source material from both the National Archives and the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio, Shellum describes the experiences of seventeen men from a variety of backgrounds. A useful appendix provides excellent descriptions of their careers.

The author examines a variety of topics from several angles. These include the relationship between the United States and Liberia, not just militarily, but diplomatically, economically, politically, and socially as well. The officers' involvement in the perpetual conflicts between Americo-Liberians and local tribes reveals the overlooked role African Americans played in the imposition of colonial rule on indigenous Africans. Their relationships with Liberian officials were also problematic. The Americans frequently perceived their counterparts as being incompetent and corrupt, whereas the Liberians they clashed with saw the Americans as being intrusive and overbearing. Liberia's financial woes caused problems for the Frontier Force, and their impact on foreign relations are a major theme in the book. In addition to shortages of weapons, ammunition, equipment, and food, there were occasional mutinies by infrequently paid troops.

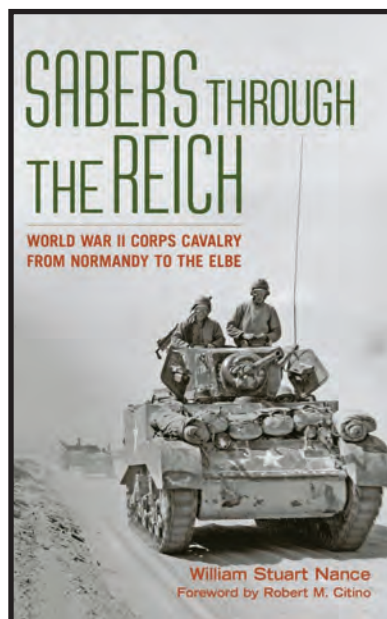
The situation from the American domestic perspective is also interesting. Policies changed with presidential administrations—from broad foreign and economic policy considerations to the details of assigning diplomatic and military personnel to Liberia. The personnel were almost exclusively black and often representative of the African American community's elite. Despite their impressive careers, segregation limited the opportunities available to these men. They could serve in African American regiments, as professors of military science at historically black academic institutions, or as military attachés in Liberia.

Firestone began using Liberia as a source of rubber in 1927. This boosted the national economy, and provided a vital raw material during the Second World War. This led to a direct and greatly increased military presence in Liberia. The construction of an airfield made Liberia an important logistics hub, and its value as an American outpost in postcolonial Africa continued during the Cold War. A military coup in 1980 ended 133 years of Americo-Liberian rule. Twenty-five years of turmoil, to include bloody civil wars, followed.

African American Officers in Liberia is an important book in several ways, and will appeal to readers from a variety of backgrounds. Military professionals will find some valuable insights into what currently are referred to as “advise and assist” and “foreign internal defense” missions. The challenges American soldiers

faced in Liberia a century ago will seem quite familiar to those serving in Africa today. Students and scholars with an interest in African history will also find this book useful, as will those who want to learn about a neglected aspect of American history. This is a highly readable, well-researched study. I look forward to reading the author's two books on Charles Young.

Dr. Frank L. Kalesnik earned his bachelor's degree in history at the Virginia Military Institute (1983), and his master's degree (1989) and Ph.D. (1992) in American history at Florida State University. He has taught at the Virginia Military Institute and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and was a command historian for both the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps. He also served twenty-two years as a Reserve officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. Kalesnik is currently the command historian for Marine Forces Special Operations Command, at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.



Sabers Through the Reich: World War II Corps Cavalry from Normandy to the Elbe

By William Stuart Nance
University Press of Kentucky, 2017
Pp. xi, 353. \$50

Review by Alan M. Anderson

Seventy-five years ago, after the successful D-Day landings in Normandy, the American Army began the advance that eventu-

ally would lead it, ten months later, to the banks of the Elbe River. Mechanized cavalry reconnaissance groups, consisting of two battalion-sized cavalry squadrons that typically were assigned to corps or armies at the operational level, led much of that advance. William Stuart Nance's book, *Sabers Through the Reich: World War II Corps Cavalry from Normandy to the Elbe*, focuses on the operational history of those cavalry groups. Nance's essential argument is that these mechanized cavalry groups “proved vital to the overall success of the army” (p. 8) during the campaigns through France and Germany to the Elbe.

Nance, a serving armor officer, begins by asserting, “Much of what we know about American operational art in the Second World War is incomplete or wrong” (p. 1). As historian Robert Citino points out in his foreword to the book, this is “a bold statement” (p. ix). Nance's emphasis is much more on addressing the “incomplete” portion of his declaration than on establishing errors in previous works. As Nance points out, nearly all of the research and writing to date has focused on the challenges the American cavalry branch faced as technological developments led to mechanization during the interwar years, or on the development of cavalry doctrine in the early 1940s. He expands beyond the previous works of such historians as Louis A. DiMarco, George F. Hofmann, and Matthew D. Morton, none of whom presented in their writings a complete or full operational analysis of the corps-level mechanized cavalry groups that participated throughout the campaigns in northwest Europe. Nance fills this void in the historiography and presents “a basic construct of what happened in Europe” (p. 8). He generally succeeds in showing that “despite a flawed doctrine and less than ideal organization, the end result was a successful cavalry force, thanks to the innovation, courage, and adaptability of the cavalymen and their leaders” (p. 35) in the European Theatre of Operations during World War II. He concludes:

The tasks that the cavalry conducted were essential to the overall success of the field armies and corps committed to this theater of operations. While not decisive by themselves, these missions enabled the army to conduct the critical moves to win the war. The supportive nature of these shaping operations meant that they rarely

received much attention, but they were still absolute prerequisites to success in the main effort (p. 266).

Beginning with the breakout in Normandy, and continuing with the race across France, the German resistance as the Allies reached Germany's borders in the fall of 1944, the setback during the winter of 1944–1945 in the Ardennes, and the final rush across Germany, Nance describes the operations of the American cavalry. His analysis is almost purely at the operational level. He rarely provides any detailed description of the actions of particular cavalry troops or individuals. In each chapter, he describes how the actions of the cavalry fulfilled one or more of their traditional tasks of reconnaissance, security operations, force mission economics, and liaison with larger units. Nance recognizes that the missions performed by the cavalry could have been accomplished by other units. However, the structure, equipment, and firepower of the cavalry units caused them to be the best-suited force available, especially if augmented by other elements, such as combat engineers, tank destroyers, or mobile artillery. According to Nance, the regiment-sized cavalry groups had “an impact on the battlefield [that] proved consistently larger than that of any other equivalently sized unit” (p. 268). Indeed, cavalry squadrons often assumed responsibility for fronts previously held by regiments—units four times their size.

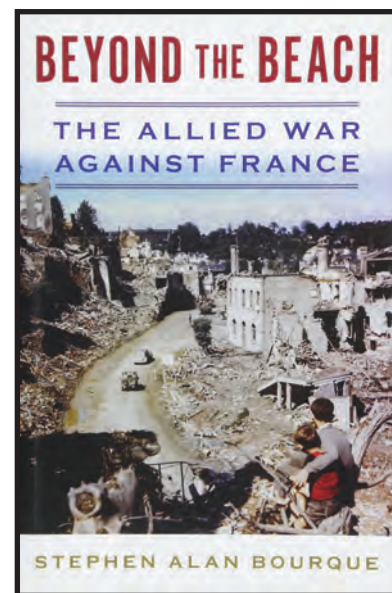
With few exceptions, Nance concludes that the cavalry's actions contributed to the success of the corps to which it was attached, even in instances of apparent failure. For example, at the beginning of the German offensive in the Ardennes, the scattered defenses of the two squadrons comprising the 14th Mechanized Cavalry Group failed to protect the junction between V and VIII Corps, leading to the destruction of the cavalry group and 106th Infantry Division as combat-capable units. Yet at the same time, the 102d Cavalry Group “prevented a bad situation from getting worse” and “proved that a successful security operation can set the stage for even more successes later in a battle” (p. 158).

Sabers Through the Reich adopts a mechanistic methodology in each chapter, which generally are devoted to

a single campaign or major operation. In each chapter, Nance moves army-by-army, and then corps-by-corps within each army, describing the operations of each cavalry group or squadron assigned to them. However, he is inconsistent in his approach. For example, Chapter 6, which covers the Battle of the Bulge, first discusses the operations of the cavalry units that were part of the First Army, followed by the Third, Ninth, and Seventh Armies. The next chapter, on the drive to the Rhine River, begins with the Third Army, and then considers the Ninth, First, and Seventh Armies' operations, in that order. Nance could have used a geographic (i.e., north to south) or a more unified approach to his analysis of each cavalry group or squadron, such as type of mission assigned. His book also would have benefited from more photographs (there are only three) and much better maps (often only marginally helpful). A fuller discussion of life and combat at the cavalry troop level also would have added to the book's readability and would have better illustrated the experiences of the individual troopers as they performed their missions.

These nits aside, *Sabers Through the Reich* is an important and welcome contribution to the history of the United States cavalry during World War II. The operations of the mechanized reconnaissance cavalry during World War II have long been neglected and ignored. Nance's book ably fills this void in the literature.

Dr. Alan M. Anderson received his Ph.D. from the Department of War Studies at King's College, London. He received his J.D. degree from Cornell University and a master's degree in military history from Norwich University. The U.S. Naval War College awarded him the 2009–2010 Edward S. Miller Research Fellowship in Naval History. He has presented research papers at various regional and national history conferences, including the Society for Military History annual meeting. He is a contributor to four books from ABC-CLIO publishers on various military history topics and has published book reviews in numerous journals, including the *Journal of Military History*.



Beyond the Beach: The Allied War Against France

By Stephen Alan Bourque
Naval Institute Press, 2018
Pp. xviii, 353. \$34.95

Review by Jeffrey T. McGovern

With *Beyond the Beach: The Allied War Against France*, Stephen Alan Bourque wants to expand the dominant narrative of the Allied air campaign flown against Nazi Germany's military-industrial complex. To realize this, he prompts the reader to rethink the historical narrative of Operation OVERLORD's air campaign by linking its impacts to that of the French citizenry rather than to the destruction of German military targets. In doing so, his aim is to give voice to the noncombatants who are often unrecognized in English-language publications about the liberation of Allied Europe.

In the Preface and in Chapter 1, Bourque argues that the consequences of war for friendly civilian populations, specifically for the French, is often an underrepresented story, if not completely omitted. To help the reader rethink OVERLORD's air campaign, Bourque argues that three perspectives need to be examined together: that of the Anglo-American leaders; the Allied Air Forces as represented in operational histories; and lastly from the French citizens who experienced the life-and-death effects of the air campaign. By critically examining these together, Bourque wants us to recognize that even within this “Good War's” liberation of Western Europe, the

war had unsightly consequences that do not fit neatly into the Allied powers' national narratives of World War II.

The next two chapters are designed to give the reader the operational picture, that is, Operation OVERLORD's aims, where was it fought, and how Allied political and military leadership decided on the conduct of the air campaign to ensure success. Regrettably in the second of these two, "Eisenhower's Command," it becomes apparent that Bourque is not a student of World War II air power history. From such small details as repeatedly referring to the U.S. Army Air Forces as the U.S. Army Air Force (without the "s"), to mixing up aircraft types and missions, to errors in orders of battle, he demonstrates a lack of intimate knowledge of World War II air power in the European and Mediterranean theaters. In the end, however, this does not greatly detract from his goal of having the reader rethink the narrative of Operation OVERLORD's air campaign. Bourque's desire is to bring the French citizenry's stories into the mainstream rather than to retell an air power story. While these errors might distract a more sophisticated student's faith in the author's military operational and tactical narrative, they do not take away from adding the French citizenry's perspective to the narrative.

Bookended between these introductory chapters and a concluding chapter, Bourque has included eight topical chapters, essentially target portfolios, that cover: "Airfields and Ports," "Industry," "Crossbow," "Fortitude," "The Rail Centers," "The Bridges," "The Landings," and "The Towns." Each chapter's information is somewhat formulaically laid out: the air campaign's operational goals and executions; descriptions of the local areas (albeit more touristic than relevant to the book's thesis); impacts on the local French populations (some chapters with more and some with less detail presented); and a limited analysis of the air campaign's success or failure to achieve its tactical goals. Taken separately, each chapter provides a unique combination of the operational and tactical perspective with the viewpoint of local citizens who were on the receiving end of aircraft weapons. This combined assessment is often missing from studies of air campaigns and from studies of noncombatants.

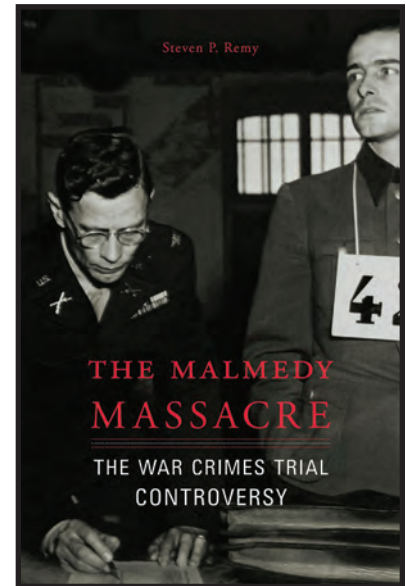
Unfortunately, *Beyond the Beach* largely ignores an already existing, though limited, body of literature that addresses the

author's goal. Even after mentioning such authors as Andrew Knapp, Claudia Baldoli, and Richard Overy, Bourque repeatedly emphasizes that the story of the citizens of the Allied countries that were occupied by Nazi Germany are left out of the histories of World War II. In his limited literature review, he cites mostly popular historians (such as Max Hastings and Stephen E. Ambrose) and overarching military operational histories (for example, the "blue" and "green" book series). In noting the lack of mention of Allied noncombatants in these mainstream histories, he is correct, but he is incorrect to assert that it was and is not a recognized, discussed, and written-about aspect of World War II in more specialized historical literature. From General Carl A. Spaatz's and Prime Minister Winston Churchill's discussions of the impact of bombing Allied citizens during the war to the authors listed above, Bourque adds to but does not, as implied in his Preface, "discover that more than seventy years ago, as part of the Northwest European Campaign against Nazi Germany, the armed forces of the United States and the British Commonwealth unintentionally waged an air war against France" (p. xii).

Again, *Beyond the Beach*'s broad intent of opening the aperture wider to include a more complex definition of collateral damage when it comes to examining historical air campaigns is laudable. Bourque's particular goal of opening our eyes to a more comprehensive understanding and remembrance of the wounded, killed, and/or displaced French allies in the implementation of Operation OVERLORD is equally commendable, but not groundbreaking. Ultimately, in presenting these perspectives, Bourque manages to entangle the simplified narrative of the liberation of France and the complex series of events that more closely reflects that liberation's reality. In the book's conclusion, Bourque presents new questions and leaves other questions unanswered, but perhaps in doing so, the reader will ponder further on the costs of total war.

Dr. Jeffrey T. McGovern is a historian for the United States Air Force and a contract historian for the staff ride programs of U.S. Army, Europe, and U.S. Air Forces, Europe. After eight years of service in the U.S. Army, he received his bachelors' and his master's degrees from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona. Currently,

his research focus is on the Troop Carrier Forces in the European and Mediterranean Theaters during World War II.



The Malmedy Massacre: The War Crimes Trial Controversy

By Steven P. Remy
Harvard University Press, 2017
Pp. x, 342. \$29.95

Review by Wilford H. Ross

By 1947, for many people, the dead men lying in the snow at Malmedy had been forgotten. It was easy to forget them; they were no longer able to plead for themselves. Their killers wrote petitions alleging absurd and easily disproved stories of horrible abuse at the hands of their interrogators, primarily German-Jewish refugees. Those petitions were spread by their lawyers through a network of sensation-seeking newspapers, gullible churchmen, conniving politicians, and the growing German veterans' lobby. For various reasons, these amazing stories were believed. And these stories, false though they are, have become for many the accepted truth of the Malmedy massacre trial. This is the sad and frustrating conclusion one gets from reading Steven P. Remy's important new book about one of the most tragic chapters in the Army's history.

On 17 December 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge, over one hundred American soldiers of the 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion surrendered to Waffen-SS troops of *Kampfgruppe* (Battlegroup)

Peiper. The German troops gathered them into a snow-covered field near Malmedy, Belgium, and suddenly opened fire on the prisoners of war. They killed eighty-four soldiers during this onslaught. This number included wounded soldiers who were then administered coups de grâce by the SS troopers. Several American soldiers escaped and told the tale.

This is, of course, a bare-bones account of what we know as the Malmedy massacre. Remy, an associate professor of history at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, examines the war crimes trial of the perpetrators of this massacre, and the amazing controversy that followed their convictions. The conclusion he reaches is that much of the history about the Malmedy massacre and the subsequent trial is wrong—sometimes horribly so.

After the war in Europe ended, the U.S. Army set about finding and arresting the SS troopers it believed, based on battlefield intelligence, participated in the atrocity at Malmedy. Eventually, seventy-four former Waffen-SS troopers, from privates to Lt. Col. Joachim Peiper, the battlegroup's charismatic commander, and *Sixth Panzer Army* commander General Sepp Dietrich, were prosecuted at Dachau for the massacre in 1946. All were convicted. Forty-three received the death penalty. The rest got sentences ranging from ten years to life in prison. However, none of the condemned men were executed and all were released from prison within ten years of conviction.

The Army faced difficult problems in trying the Malmedy killers. Although there were soldiers who survived the massacre, none of them could specifically identify any of the perpetrators. The SS troopers would have to convict themselves, or others. To do this, the Army interrogated them over many months using psychological methods, some of them experimental, to get the Germans to talk and eventually confess to what had happened at the deadly crossroads.

In preparation for interrogation of the prisoners, the Army created a small cadre of German-speaking Americans, trained them in interrogation techniques, and sent them to Europe. But almost all of them were recently naturalized German-Jewish refugees. After the trial and convictions, this fact became one of the major issues for complaints about the trial. There were allegations that the interrogators were so incensed by the Holocaust that they physi-

cally tortured the prisoners—breaking jaws and teeth, crushing testicles, and sticking lighted matches under fingernails. This was in addition to accusations of severe forms of psychological torture such as fake executions. None of this, in reality, was true. [All of it, in fact, could have been easily disproved.]

Remy does a very good job in describing the interrogators, their training, their techniques, and what the former German soldiers confessed. I found this process history fascinating, but I am a judge and former Army Judge Adjutant General (JAG) officer. Others might find it dry. It is important, though, in showing that the confessions of the Germans were voluntary, and not the product of excessive coercion.

That is not to say that the interrogations were perfect. Several of the techniques they used, though acceptable at the time, would not be tolerated now. There were incidents of physical intimidation used against the prisoners, but certainly not the tales of torture retailed by the prisoners and their lawyers after the trial.

There were also issues with the trial itself. Mass trials are always problematic. The seventy-four defendants had to wear placards with numbers on them to identify themselves to the court. The format of the trial was not conducive to the defense. The lead defense counsel, Col. Willis M. Everett Jr., a patrician Atlanta civil lawyer, felt he and his colleagues had been set up to fail. But, legally speaking, the trial was sufficient for its time, the evidence sufficient to support the verdicts, and the sentences were, in the main, just.

It is in describing the aftermath of the trial that Remy really hits his stride. As stated, the prisoners asserted an astounding number of petitions that alleged amazing acts of torture inflicted by Army interrogators. Yes, condemned prisoners do such things. What is amazing, and more than a little disappointing, was the gullibility of the American press, politicians, and religious figures. Less than two years after the massacre, all of these entities hopped on the bandwagon accusing the Army of running a show trial as bad as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union would have. The lead prosecutor, Lt. Col. Burton L. Ellis, became incensed that his people had to force the interested parties to listen to them. It was easier to attack the Army than to disprove the allegations. But, over the years, the strain of defending the

process and convictions just got to be too much. Sentence after sentence was reduced, prisoner after prisoner was released. Finally, in 1956, Joachim Peiper was released. And everyone involved, other than the families of the dead and the prosecution team, gave a sigh of relief that it was over.

So why is this book important? The author sets out how most of the basic texts involving the Battle of the Bulge, and Malmedy in particular, continue with the myths of torture. Even more telling is a simple search on the internet. There are video “documentaries” and Web sites that retell the torture allegations, or falsely state that all the condemned of Malmedy were hanged.

A war crime occurred at Malmedy. Thousands of American and German soldiers fought at the Bulge. Hundreds of Americans were taken prisoner. Yet only at this one crossroads was there a mass killing, and the soldiers who were convicted, including their commanders, were responsible for the dead soldiers lying in the snow. That is the ultimate fact, and it is one the Army has a responsibility to tell. It is time to use all the Army's historical resources to give an accurate version of all the events surrounding the massacre, and the trial. The soldiers who died at Malmedy deserve no less.

Wilford H. Ross is an administrative judge with the Department of Defense, Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals. He has held this position since 1993. A 1980 graduate of Creighton University School of Law in Omaha, Nebraska, he served five years in the Army JAG Corps in Germany and California. He has written articles on security clearance adjudications, the combat art of World War I, President Ronald W. Reagan, and the artist Rockwell Kent. These articles have been published by the American Bar Association, the *Los Angeles Daily News*, *On Point*, and other publications.



CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

JON T. HOFFMAN



FROM VIETNAM TO GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

In the last issue, I recapped the history of our Vietnam series. We took a significant step at the end of May when an external panel reviewed the draft manuscript for the volume covering the logistics effort from 1964 through 1967. The panel members were a mix of Army logisticians and historians with logistics or Vietnam expertise—and some fit in both camps. Retired Lt. Gen. Patricia E. McQuiston is a former deputy commander of Army Materiel Command. Retired Col. Paul L. Miles was an engineer in Vietnam and later a history professor at Princeton. Retired Col. Christopher R. Papparone served in several contingency operations, was a dean at the Army Logistics University, and currently teaches at the Eisenhower School of the National Defense University. Col. Robert A. Law is director of the Department of Logistics and Resource Operations at the Command and General Staff College. Dr. Edgar F. Raines was a longtime historian at the Center of Military History (CMH) and is the author of *The Rucksack War: U.S. Army Operational Logistics in Grenada, 1983* (CMH, 2010). They provided an independent assessment of the manuscript and valuable ideas about how to make it even better. It will take a few months for the authors to revise the work based on the panel's comments, but that volume is much closer to the finish line now.

Our second year of the graduate research assistant (GRA) program has matched the expectations set by the initial group in 2018. We again had five students from leading military history departments. Three worked in Histories Directorate and two with Field Programs Directorate.

Daniel P. Curzon, from Ohio State University, did his dissertation on the strategic competition between the United States, Great Britain, and Japan along the Pacific Rim between 1880 and 1920. That made him a natural fit to research and write part of the Russian intervention pamphlet that will be the next installment in our World War I campaign series. John J. Mortimer from the University of Southern Mississippi brought an eclectic background, having done a master's thesis on the role of the longbow in the Hundred Years' War, while his dissertation is focused on U.S.-Soviet relations in the Middle East during the Reagan presidency. The latter was good preparation for him to work with our author writing the monograph covering the Army in the Persian Gulf from 1991 to 2001. He also wrote an information paper for the

Central Command history office on Army deterrence operations in the 1990s and received an award from the State Department for locating records needed for a volume in their Foreign Relations of the United States series. Courtney M. Vojtko from Texas Tech University did her master's thesis on strategic bombing in World War II and had just completed her general exams before starting work here at CMH. She supported the author working on a volume of the "Tan Book" series covering the surge in Iraq. Among other tasks, she updated the order of battle and researched and wrote a paper on the reaction of Iraqi civilians to the Surge.

Joel M. Hebert of the University of North Carolina did his dissertation on British decolonization in the 1980s, which included a look at the Falklands War. We assigned him to handle a request from the Army Science Board to evaluate its records and write a history of that organization. We would never have been able to accomplish this with our organic resources, but Joel researched and wrote the account in less than a year. In addition, he performed yeoman service collecting information and updating the *Army Historical Directory*, which enabled us to publish it for the first time in digital format. Shane D. Makowicki of Texas A&M University did his dissertation on the impact of Union operations in North Carolina in 1862. That allowed him to step right into our Civil War-heavy staff-ride program, where he has excelled. He has participated in all phases, from research and preparation through leading rides on the ground. In the process, he received recognition from numerous senior leaders and units. Additionally, he researched and wrote half of the forthcoming World War I campaign pamphlet covering occupation and demobilization.

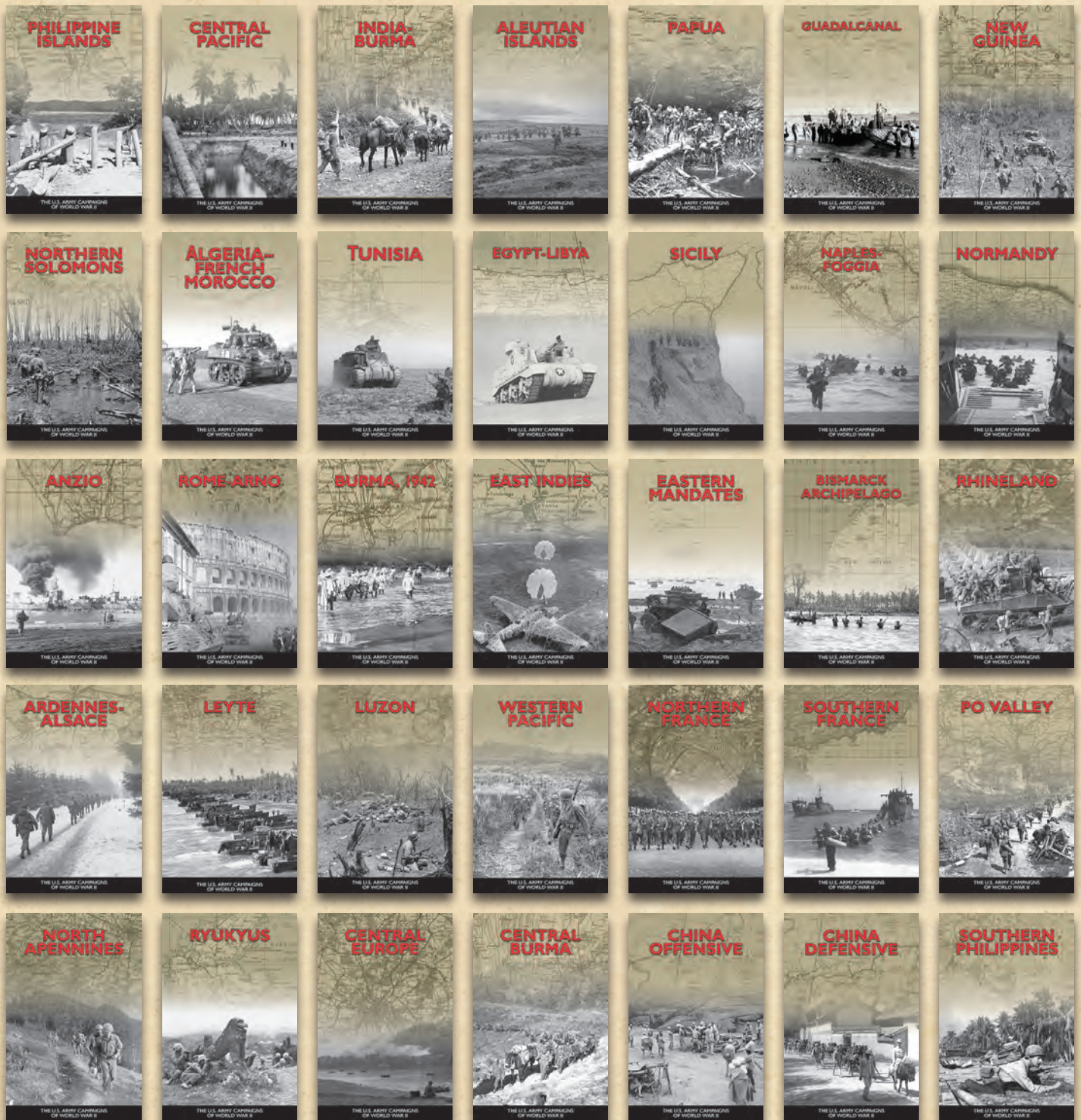
The GRA program continues to prove its worth as a valuable supplement to our full-time staff, as well as an outstanding development system for future civil service and contract historians. It is fast becoming one of the primary farm teams for the Center, the Army Historical Program, and other Department of Defense history offices.





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