

ARMY HISTORY

Winter 2010

PB 20-10-1 (No. 74) Washington, D.C.

IN THIS ISSUE

From Frontier Cavalryman to
the World Stage: The Career
of Army Judge Advocate
General George B. Davis

6

By Frederic L. Borch

The British Occupation of
Newport, Rhode Island,
1776–1779

30

By Charles P. Neimeyer

The "Cultural Turn" in U.S. Counterinsurgency Operations

By Martin G. Clemis

21

The Professional Bulletin of Army History



ARMYHISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

GEORGE W. CASEY, JR.
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:

JOYCE E. MORROW
Administrative Assistant to the
Secretary of the Army

Chief of Military History
Dr. Jeffrey J. Clarke

Managing Editor
Dr. Charles Hendricks

Book Review Editor
Bryan J. Hockensmith

Editor
Diane Sedore Arms

Layout and Design
Michael R. Gill

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

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

Those individuals and institutions that do not qualify for free copies may opt for paid subscriptions from the U.S. Government Printing Office. The cost of a subscription is \$20 per year. Order by title and enter List ID as ARHIS. To order online, go to <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>. To order by phone, call toll free 866-512-1800, or in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, 202-512-1800; by fax, 202-512-2104; or by e-mail, contactcenter@gpo.gov. Send mail orders to U.S. Government Printing Office, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197-9000.

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

The reproduction of images not obtained from federal sources is prohibited.

Cover Image: A civilian member of a human terrain team attached to the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team in central Iraq greets a resident of an area recently hit by insurgents, 15 September 2009./Department of Defense

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

The articles in this issue discuss American military experiences from the Revolutionary War to the present. Yet as distinct as are the periods on which these articles focus, each addresses issues that are highly pertinent to military decision making today.

Charles Neimeyer's account of the nearly three-year-long British occupation of Newport, which prior to the American Revolution had been a prominent seaport and Rhode Island's largest community, illustrates the counterproductive nature of a poorly conceived military occupation. The nearly six thousand soldiers and sailors the British garrisoned in and around Newport did little to assist the royal cause other than to provide a secondary anchorage for British naval vessels between crown-held New York and Halifax. The British troops ravaged their Rhode Island outpost, never solved their supply shortages, and ultimately withdrew without having been defeated in battle. Military deployments, now as then, must be judged by their contributions to policy goals.

Frederic Borch explores the military career of George B. Davis, who served as a cavalryman in the Civil War and on the western frontier before becoming an Army judge advocate and for ten years the Army's top legal authority. Davis was a man of great intellectual breadth, which he imparted to cadets, drew upon for assignments involving the documentation and remembrance of Civil War actions, and demonstrated in his authorship of legal texts. His most noteworthy contributions, though, were his legal opinions objecting to the use of the "water cure" and other extreme measures against Philippine guerrillas, despite their sometimes brutal methods.

Martin Clemis examines efforts of the U.S. military in the twenty-first century to enhance its knowledge of the cultures of the peoples in whose nations U.S. troops serve. Recognizing that developing greater cultural understanding will contribute to its counterinsurgency operations, the Army has modified its training and obtained the assistance of civilian anthropologists in its overseas engagements. The latter collaboration, Clemis reports, has engendered controversy in academic circles.

The need for a strategic overview of operations, for care in the application of appropriate force when dealing with uncooperative people, and for serious attempts to understand the cultures of populations antagonistic to U.S. military operations all remain lively concerns today.

Charles Hendricks
Managing Editor



THE CHIEF'S CORNER

DR. JEFF CLARKE

Historians, academic and institutional alike, have long disparaged histories that cover contemporary events. Such products, most believed, could never be based on the full documentary record available to later generations and were apt to be fatally flawed by current concerns, bias, and perspectives (“presentism”). Indeed, most historians have concluded that such tasks were better left to journalists, politicians, and participants, with the full weight of professional historical judgments coming much later. In the field of military history, exceptions might be made for accounts of small-scale tactical engagements, where the initial sources were rich; for oral histories, truly a form of autobiography; and for official command histories that are normally highly factual in nature with original documents and statistical tables appended. But the overall approach of the larger historical community has been to discourage professional historians from addressing current events and to be extremely skeptical of those who do.

That said, no historian would deny the value of carefully crafted narratives by journalists, from Edgar Snow’s *Red Star over China*, chronicling his experiences with Mao’s Red Army in the 1930s, to Rick Atkinson’s more recent telling of his adventures with a younger General David Petraeus in the early months of the war in Iraq. And what historian worth his salt would not wish that there had been a Snow or an Atkinson walking with Rome’s legions, with William’s Normans, or with Washington’s Continentals? Such firsthand accounts impart both a sense of the times and a feel for how things actually happened—even if the perspective is somewhat narrow. To actually be present on the field of action, to watch the progression of events just as they occur, and to observe the true interaction of historical factors in real time is more than most historians could possibly wish for. Yet such experiences are the daily fare of the institutional historian, and they provide insights, however imperfect or even myopic, that later academic historians can never truly know.

Institutional historians, including Army historians, indeed occupy the catbird’s seat of history and, like the proverbial fly on the wall, have the opportunity to view

the unfolding of events as they occur and the real-time reaction of those playing history’s major and minor roles. So close are these historians to key decisions, processes, and actions on a continuous basis that they often have difficulty fully appreciating their unique vantage point. Such proximity to history-making events also puts their professional values and abilities to the test, especially regarding balance and objectivity. The ability to watch the play of history and yet to stay above it, always analyzing impartially and objectively, is the true measure of the historical professional.

Institutional historians are also in an excellent position to make other critical observations. Often only they can fully appreciate the frequently wide divergence between what they have actually witnessed and the initial interpretations of those same incidents by participants, journalists, and other outside commentators, many of whom are influenced by their own personal or political agendas. Often only they can set matters right by quickly challenging the myths that inevitably surround controversial current affairs. At the very least, they can ensure that adequate source material, hard copy or electronic, audio or visual, is preserved and provisionally archived for the future. But to accomplish this crucial task, they must rapidly identify the most significant decisions and actions associated with key contemporary events, preserve their essence, and begin to make some of the basic historical interpretations regarding their significance. From the treatment of Guantanamo detainees to the actions among the rocky outposts along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, what better way to guarantee the vigorous collection of evidence than through the commissioning of early historical products. Surely nothing focuses the energy of historians more regarding the vital collection effort than the knowledge that they will be expected to prepare professional historical accounts relatively quickly for all interested to read and evaluate.

Already the histories published or initiated by the U.S. Army Center of Military History and the U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute on current engagements, campaigns, and programs have generated significant amounts of focused source material that might not

Continued on page 53



Winter 2010



Features



21 **Commentary**

The "Cultural Turn" in
U.S. Counterinsurgency
Operations: Doctrine,
Application, and
Criticism

By Martin G. Clemis

46 **Book Reviews**

54 **Chief Historian's Footnote**

Articles

6

FROM
FRONTIER
CAVALRYMAN TO THE
WORLD STAGE:
THE CAREER OF
ARMY JUDGE
ADVOCATE GENERAL
GEORGE B. DAVIS

By Frederic L. Borch



30

THE BRITISH
OCCUPATION OF
NEWPORT, RHODE
ISLAND, 1776-1779

By Charles P. Neimeyer



NEWSNOTES

CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY ISSUES NEW PUBLICATIONS

The U.S. Army Center of Military History has published a collection of historical accounts of combat actions of small U.S. Army units in Iraq between 2004 and 2007, a history of the U.S. Army's Medical Department from the nation's entry into World War I in 1917 to its entrance into World War II in 1941, and a pamphlet on the construction of the Panama Canal in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Tip of the Spear: U.S. Army Small-Unit Action in Iraq, 2004–2007, edited by Jon T. Hoffman, presents descriptions of eight small but intense military engagements in Iraq written by four historians at the Center of Military History, the historian of the U.S. Army Transportation Corps, and two officer coauthors who served in Iraq with the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, one of the units whose story is told. Mark J. Reardon, a retired armor officer who is now a civilian historian, contributed three of the chapters. The volume relates episodes of U.S. soldiers' combat with Sunni insurgents

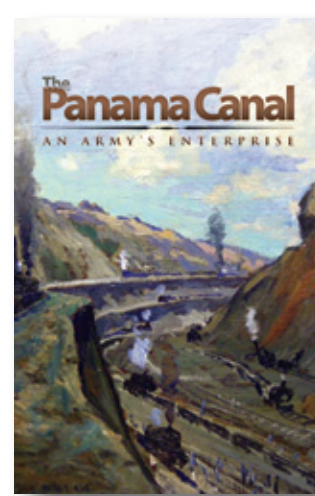
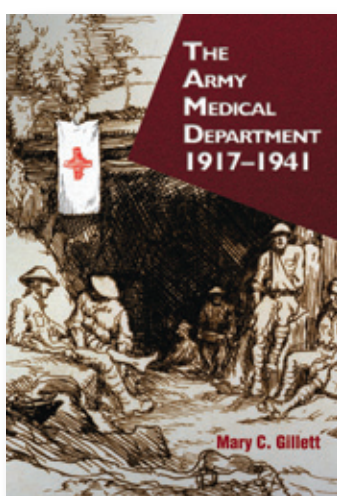
and Shi'ite militiamen in the suburbs of Baghdad, at Fallujah in the west, and at Najaf and three other locations south of Baghdad. Half of the encounters described took place in 2004, with the remainder equally representing actions occurring in 2006 and 2007. A twelve-page introduction summarizes the course of the war from April 2003 to January 2007. This 201-page book has been issued in paperback as CMH Pub 70–113–1. Hoffman is chief of the Center's Contemporary Studies Branch.

The Army Medical Department, 1917–1941, is the fourth and final volume by Mary C. Gillett on the history of medical services in the Army. The book examines how the U.S. Army redesigned its approach to evacuation during World War I; struggled to limit the damage to health and effectiveness caused by poison gas, an unfamiliar and deadly weapon; began its research into the unique problems of aviators; and desperately tried but failed to control the 1918 influenza pandemic, leaving behind a mystery concerning this episode that still endures. The book reveals that military budget cuts, resulting from the popular conviction

that there would never be another war as horrible as the First World War, initially retarded the efforts of Medical Department leaders to organize for another major conflict. The outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939, however, permitted President Franklin D. Roosevelt to prepare the nation and its military for the possibility of the United States joining the new conflagration, and this enabled the Medical Department ultimately to organize its resources for this war in advance more effectively than it had for earlier struggles. The Center has issued this book in a cloth cover as CMH Pub 30–10 and in paperback as CMH Pub 30–10–1. Gillett was a historian with the Army Medical Department and the Center of Military History from 1972 until her retirement in 1996.

The Panama Canal: An Army's Enterprise is a 106-page pamphlet that describes the critical role of U.S. Army officers in planning and organizing the construction of the Panama Canal, one of the engineering marvels of the twentieth century, and in protecting from malaria and other diseases the workforce that accomplished that mission. After addressing the construction

Continued on page 20

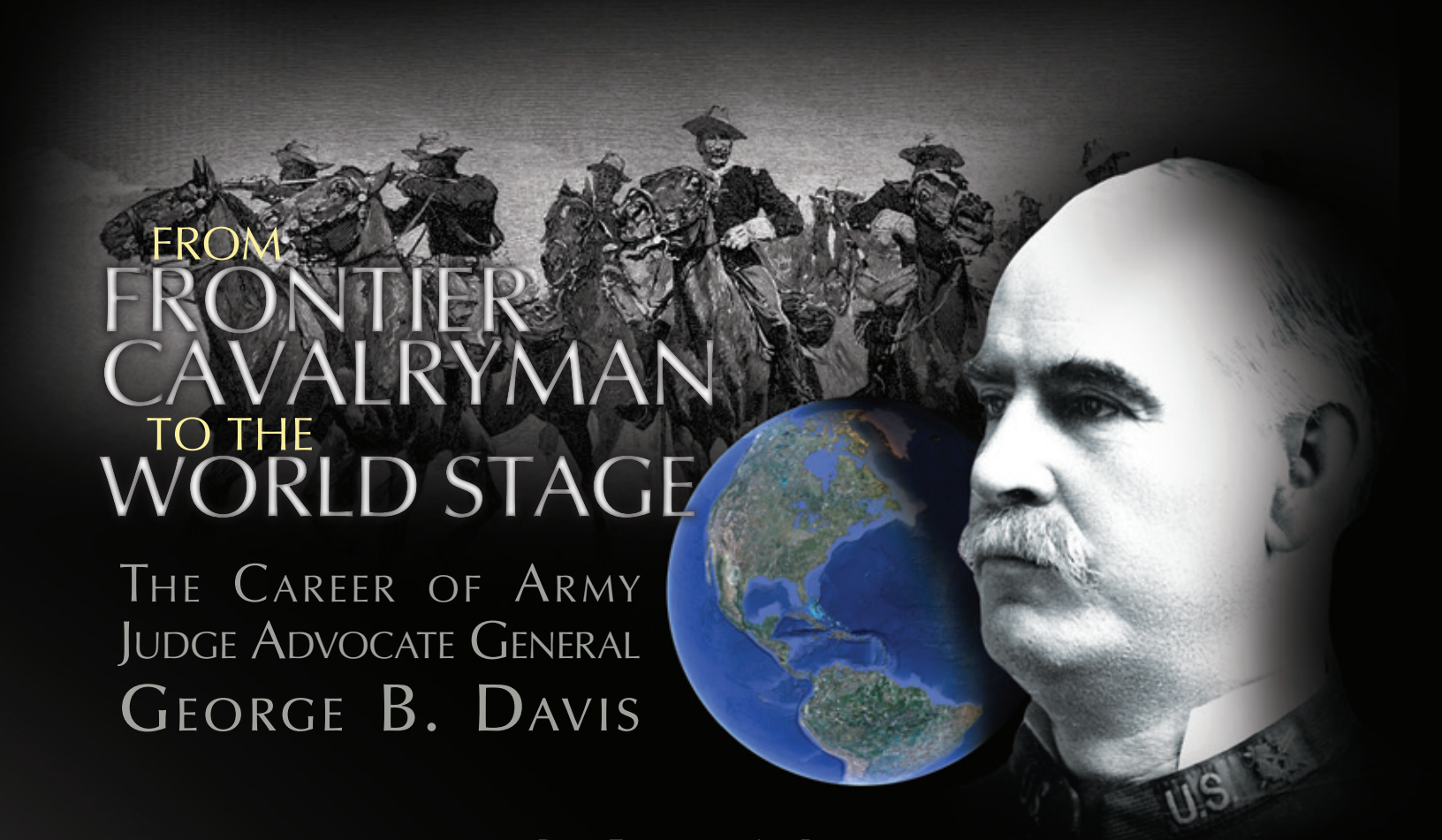


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Retired Col. Frederic L. Borch is the regimental historian and archivist of the Judge Advocate General's Corps. He served twenty-five years as an Army judge advocate before retiring from the Army in 2005. He holds a doctorate of jurisprudence from the University of North Carolina and master's degrees in American history from the University of Virginia and in national security studies from the U.S. Naval War College. He is the author of *Judge Advocates in Combat: Army Lawyers in Military Operations from Vietnam to Haiti* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2001).



Soldiers of the 35th U.S. Volunteer Infantry demonstrate the water cure, c. 1900.



FROM FRONTIER CAVALRYMAN TO THE WORLD STAGE

THE CAREER OF ARMY
JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL
GEORGE B. DAVIS

BY FREDERIC L. BORCH

George Breckenridge Davis (1847–1914) was a remarkable man by any measure. An experienced soldier, he fought in more than twenty-five battles and engagements in the Civil War before obtaining a commission at West Point and serving as a cavalryman on the frontier in the 1870s and early 1880s. An intellectual and scholar, he taught history, geology, chemistry, mineralogy, Spanish, and French—and law—at West Point before earning his bachelor and master of laws degrees. Davis also authored a highly regarded treatise on international law and an authoritative text on military law. He finished his remarkable career in uniform as the Army’s top lawyer, serving as the judge advocate general of the Army from 1901 to 1911. During this period, Davis not only provided legal advice and counsel to the Army’s top military and civilian leaders but also played a major role in efforts to create a national military park system. His work as an official delegate to the international peace conference in The

Hague in 1907 also influenced the evolution of the law of armed conflict. When Davis retired as a major general in 1911, he left a legacy of service that few could equal.

EARLY LIFE AND ARMY CAREER

Davis was born in Ware, Massachusetts, on 14 February 1847 but spent most of his youth in nearby Springfield. The son of a railway mechanic, he had by the age of sixteen completed all but one term of the English and classical course at Springfield High School. He was working as a clerk when he enlisted as a private in a new battalion of the 1st Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Cavalry, on 8 September 1863. According to his enlistment papers, he was 5 foot 10 inches tall (above average for the time) and had “dark” eyes, “dark” hair, and a “light” complexion. These papers also show that Davis lied about his age when he signed up. Since the minimum age for enlistment with parental consent was eighteen and Davis was only sixteen,

he claimed two extra years. This explains why both the December 1863 company muster-in roll, documenting its muster into federal service, and the June 1865 company muster-out roll show Davis to be eighteen years old.¹

Despite his youth, Davis was a well-regarded cavalry trooper, becoming his company’s quartermaster sergeant by December 1863 and gaining the same position in the regiment by November 1864. Davis experienced a fair amount of combat while his unit was part of the Army of the Potomac. He participated in some twenty-five engagements in Virginia, including the Battle of the Wilderness, where his unit engaged Confederate cavalry on 5 May 1864 and suffered forty-one casualties.²

After the surrender of Lee’s forces at Appomattox in April 1865, Davis and his fellow Massachusetts cavalrymen busied themselves arresting deserters and stragglers in the area around Petersburg, Virginia, before moving to Washington, D.C., where they participated in the Grand Review on

23 May. On 17 June 1865, while still on duty in the nation's capital, Davis was honorably discharged from the ranks to accept a commission as a second lieutenant in Company F of his regiment. But the war was over, and his career as a volunteer officer was ephemeral; Davis was mustered out a little more than a week later, on 26 June. He and his unit then returned to Massachusetts.³

From July 1865 until March 1867, Davis "was engaged in business" and, at least some of the time, worked in Springfield, Massachusetts, as a mechanical draftsman for the Connecticut River Railroad. He evidently missed life in uniform, for on 18 May 1866 he wrote to President Andrew Johnson requesting an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy. Davis explained that he had wanted to attend West Point before he had enlisted and that while he had been with the 1st Massachusetts Volunteer Cavalry "the desire only strengthened."⁴ A year later, Davis was a cadet at West Point.

Davis began his studies at the U.S. Military Academy on 1 July 1867. "His long service in the Civil War, coupled with his quiet dignity and genial disposition" made him a popular cadet with his classmates, one member of



Davis as a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy, 1871

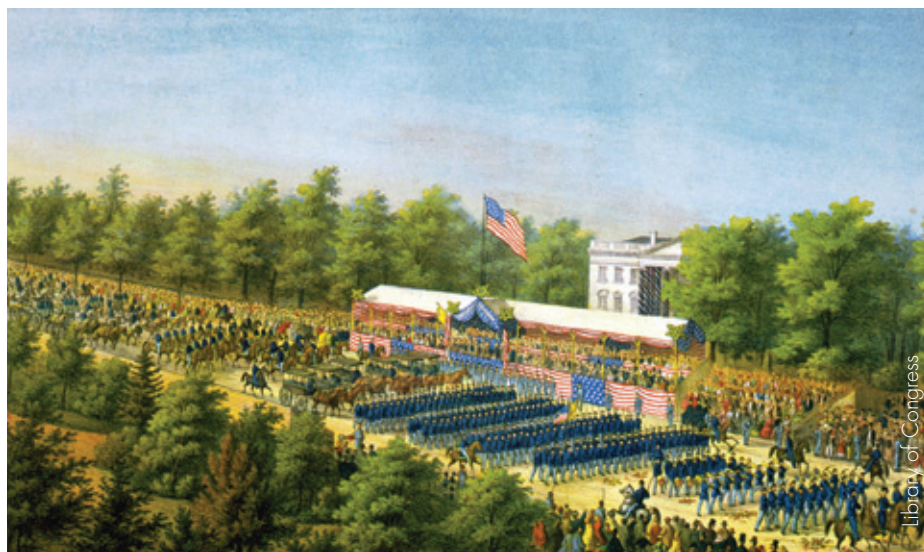
the class later recalled.⁵ He was also smart and applied himself to his studies. Davis' cadet record shows he did well academically, for he ranked tenth in his graduating class of forty-one; eighteen other cadets admitted with him in 1867 failed to graduate.⁶

Despite assigning him some demerits for offenses like "having his coat unbuttoned in the barracks hall," "send-

ing the incorrect list to the laundry," and "smoking on the path near the cadet store," his superiors recognized Davis' talents and abilities as a leader. He served as a corporal and sergeant in the Corps of Cadets before receiving the high honor of first captain his last year at West Point.⁷

When Davis graduated on 12 June 1871, his prior military service in the Civil War made most logical his appointment as a second lieutenant of cavalry and his assignment to the 5th Cavalry. Before reporting for duty with his regiment at Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming Territory, in September 1871, however, Davis returned to West Springfield, Massachusetts. There, on 6 July 1871 he married Ellen Isabella Prince. He was twenty-four years old; Ellen, known familiarly as Ella, was twenty-one.⁸

Life as a soldier on the frontier was tough. It was hot and dusty, and there were few comforts or pleasures. As Davis' classmate George F. Chase put it, "in those days on the frontier, our army was destined to constant occupation with only short rests between arduous campaigns." Soldiers often went for weeks without tents or bedding and frequently lacked sufficient food. After 2½ months at Fort D. A. Russell, young Davis rode with his regiment to



Troops from the Army of the Potomac march in the Grand Review in Washington, D.C., 23 May 1865, lithograph by E. Sachse and Company

Camp Bowie in southeastern Arizona Territory, from where in August 1872 he was “assigned to field service” for three months at Calabasas, a remote station on the Mexican frontier. The heat was certainly appalling: 110 degrees in the shade. While at Calabasas, he contracted malaria, from which he suffered greatly. But since there were insufficient officers to do the required work, Davis stayed on duty at the station. He saw combat against Apache warriors near Camp Bowie in July and August 1873.⁹

After this field assignment, Davis was transferred at the end of August 1873 to the faculty at West Point where, as an assistant professor in the Spanish Department, his chief duty was to teach that language. Apparently he did not have sufficient work, as he requested and was assigned duties in other departments. In 1876 he taught French, and the following year he instructed cadets in chemistry, geology, and mineralogy.¹⁰

His qualities as an instructor were superlative, and he was highly respected by both cadets and his fellow faculty members. As Professor Samuel E. Tillman remembered,

When Davis returned to the Academy as Instructor . . . in 1873, two years after graduation, he was then twenty-six years old and had had three years’ experience in the Civil War; thus, besides competent knowledge, he had a maturity and experience far beyond that of most other instructors of like post-graduate service. This fuller development, in part explains his ready versatility, and was impressive to his pupils, and accordingly increased their respect for him and for the Academy. He was



thereby the better instructor from the very beginning of his teaching experience. This maturity and experience, of course increased with increased knowledge and with time.¹¹

On 9 May 1877, after almost six years in grade—and nearly four years teaching at West Point—Davis was promoted to first lieutenant. In August 1878, after his assignment at the academy ended, he left New York to return to the 5th Cavalry and frontier duty in the Department of the Platte. During the next five years, which Davis spent at Fort D. A. Russell and at Fort Niobrara, Nebraska, he served as an assistant quartermaster, assistant commissary of subsistence, and an ordnance and signal officer. He also participated in the pursuit in Nebraska and Wyoming in September and October 1878 of three hundred Northern Cheyennes who had fled Indian Territory, in further military operations against the

Northern Cheyennes in January and February 1879, and in the campaign against Ute warriors in Colorado from September to December 1879.¹²

On at least one occasion, Davis saw hard fighting. He was part of a column of cavalry led by Maj. Thomas T. Thornburgh that White River Utes attacked at Milk Creek, Colorado, on 29 September 1879, killing Thornburgh and ten others. Two officers, a surgeon, and forty-three soldiers were wounded before a siege of the contingent ended a week later. It was a close call; the enemy had encircled Thornburgh’s 120-soldier force, and only the arrival on 2 October, after a 23-hour forced march, of 40 soldiers from Company D, 9th Cavalry, led by Capt. Francis S. Dodge, and on 5 October of nine companies under Col. Wesley Merritt, commander of the 5th Infantry, prevented a worse disaster.¹³

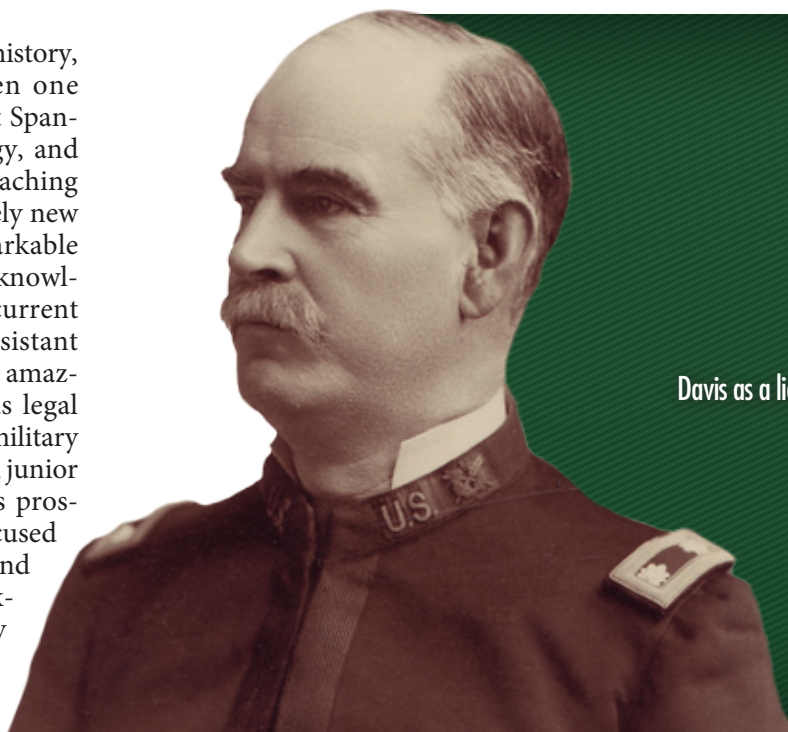
In August 1883, Davis, still a lieutenant, returned to West Point to be

White River Utes attacked at Milk Creek, Colorado, on 29 September 1879, killing Thornburgh and ten others. Two officers, a surgeon, and forty-three soldiers were wounded

principal assistant professor of history, geography, and ethics. When one remembers that he had taught Spanish, French, chemistry, geology, and mineralogy during his first teaching tour, his ability to tackle entirely new subjects shows both his remarkable intelligence and his breadth of knowledge. Consequently, the concurrent assignment of Davis as an assistant professor of law is all the more amazing. Whether he had previous legal experience is not shown in his military records, but, during this period, junior line officers routinely acted as prosecutors or counsel for the accused at regimental courts-martial, and thus Davis surely had some exposure to military law. In any event, Davis delved eagerly into the subject, and in 1887 he authored a 469-page text on international law geared to undergraduate and law students.¹⁴ It was in the area of law that Davis was to make his greatest contribution to the Army as an officer.

Davis' book met with wide acclaim. James B. Angell, who was the president of the University of Michigan, a former minister to China, and a respected author on American diplomacy, lauded it as a "careful study . . . a skillful and orderly presentation of the main principles of the science, and the humane spirit of these writers who bring the highest ethical considerations to the discussion of its great questions." Another university president declared that he found "the work admirable as a college textbook. It is clear in both method and style, [and] free from all partisan or even national prejudices." A reviewer in the *Nation* lauded the book as "well and carefully written" and a work that "will meet the requirements of the legal student and the thoughtful general reader," while the *Boston Globe* declared that "Professor Davis has performed good service towards public education in undertaking such a needed, and in producing such a learned and well arranged, book."¹⁵

As Davis immersed himself in law, he realized that he wanted to serve the Army as a full-time judge advocate.



Davis as a lieutenant colonel, c. 1900

Consequently, on 2 February 1885, Davis requested that he be appointed as a judge advocate "in the event of a vacancy occurring in the Bureau of Military Justice." His application was strongly endorsed by Col. Wesley Merritt, commander of Davis' regiment and then superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy, who had known Davis since 1876. Merritt wrote, "I know of no one who is as well fitted by habits of study, attainments in literature and law or experience, as he is, for a position in the Bureau of Military Justice." Lt. Gen. Philip Sheridan, the Army's commanding general, concurred in the recommendation.¹⁶

As Davis had no formal legal training and was not a licensed attorney, he sought to demonstrate his qualifications by gathering letters of recommendation from those who knew of his abilities. The letters show the high regard in which Davis was held by both his superiors and other prominent individuals with whom he came in contact.

Lt. Col. Henry C. Hasbrouck, an artillery officer who was then the commandant of cadets at the U.S. Military Academy, wrote to Davis that he was "particularly fit" for an appointment as judge advocate because of "your knowledge of military and civil law,

and of the customs of service acquired during your service in the Civil War, and many years since in garrison and the field." Hasbrouck hoped that Davis would receive the appointment "for the good of the service."¹⁷

Similarly, Rev. William M. Postlethwaite, who since January 1882 had served as chaplain and professor of history, geography, and ethics at West Point, wrote that Davis had "superior natural abilities" that made him "most competent" to be appointed as a major in the Judge Advocate General's Department. Postlethwaite also wrote that "from his [Davis'] long and varied experience in courts-martial . . . and from his thorough knowledge (as a teacher) of the principles and practice of the Law, I am confident no mistake could be made in his appointment to this position which his friends ask for him."¹⁸

Davis also received recommendations from individuals holding prominent positions in civilian life. For example, Ohio Governor George Hoadly, an attorney, wrote on Davis' behalf to President Grover Cleveland's secretary of war, William C. Endicott. Hoadly was on the Board of Visitors at West Point, which Davis had been detailed to assist, and had seen Davis and the academy's professor of law,

Maj. Herbert Curtis, examine their law students. Hoadly wrote,

I was delighted with what I heard and saw of their work and I was very much charmed with Lieut. Davis himself. He is a gentleman, a scholar, a Democrat, and while I do not know anything about the situation and therefore shall not be surprised or disappointed if some other gentlemen be preferred, it will be personally a gratification to me if I hear that Lieut. Davis be made Judge Advocate General [*sic*] with the rank of Major.¹⁹

In August 1888, Davis was promoted to captain and sent to Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, for duty. Davis still retained interest in the cavalry, and, while he was serving in Indian Territory, an article he wrote on “The Operations of the Cavalry in the Gettysburg Campaign” appeared in the new *Journal of the United States Cavalry Association*. But this tour was short-lived because in December 1888 Davis was appointed a major in the eight-officer Judge Advocate General’s Department. He was then transferred to the Office of the Secretary of War in Washington, D.C., and in May 1889 he was appointed as the president and sole military member of the three-member board that Congress had placed in charge of the continued pub-

lication of the *The War of the Rebellion*, a compilation of official records of the Civil War begun in 1880 and completed in 1901. Davis took advantage of his time in Washington to earn his bachelor and master of laws degrees at Columbian (now George Washington University) law school.²⁰

became the most junior of the three officers with the title of deputy judge advocate general. Later that month he left Washington and his work on the *The War of the Rebellion* to return to West Point, having been appointed as professor of law and head of the Law Department by the Army’s new judge advocate general, Brig. Gen. G. Norman Lieber. During this assignment at the U.S. Military Academy, which lasted until 1901, Davis had a marked impact on the teaching of law. He established the core curriculum in law for all cadets, which meant that in their final year, cadets took elementary and constitutional law in the first semester and international and military law in the second. This law curriculum, with only a few minor changes, remained in place for almost a century. After the death of Postlethwaite in January 1896, Davis’ department assumed responsibility for instructing cadets in history as well as law.²¹ Additionally, Davis found time to write two more books for use in teaching cadets. The Government Printing Office issued in 1896 his 113-page *Introduction to the Study of Constitutional and Military Law of the United States* and a private publisher in New York released two years later his bulky, 754-page *Treatise on the Military Laws of the United States: Together with the Practice and Procedure of Courts-Martial and Other Military Tribunals*.

successfully administered martial law, organized and conducted civil affairs, and facilitated the establishment of civil governments in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.” At the same time, Capt. Arthur L. Wagner, who was teaching at the Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, included a revised version of Davis’ article on cavalry operations at Gettysburg in the compilation of studies on the use of cavalry in the Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War that Wagner edited for officers’ professional development.²²

Following the Spanish-American War, while still assigned to West Point as professor of law, Davis served as the recorder in a high profile court of inquiry appointed by President William McKinley. The court grew out of claims by Maj. Gen. Nelson A. Miles, then the Army’s commanding general, that chemically treated or “embalmed” beef, as well as defective canned beef, had been supplied to U.S. troops in the Spanish-American War.

While it has long been forgotten, the “canned beef” controversy of 1898 and 1899 was part of a larger Army logistical fiasco that drew substantial media attention during and after the Spanish-American War. Troops landing in Cuba after “a disorderly voyage” had to contend with “unsuitable food, uniforms designed to meet the needs of service in North Dakota in winter,

the “canned beef” controversy of 1898 and 1899 was part of a larger Army logistical fiasco that drew substantial media attention

and a lack of adequate maps.” While there also were complaints that volunteer units had obsolete Springfield rifles and black powder cartridges, the media firestorm of the day focused on the allegation by Dr. William H. Daly, a volunteer surgeon on Miles’ staff, that “the fresh beef furnished by the contractors had been treated chemically” and that War Department

In August 1895, Davis was promoted to lieutenant colonel and

Davis’ treatises on criminal and constitutional law were a welcome addition to the library of professional soldiers throughout the Army. As one of his successors as professor of law at the U.S. Military Academy observed, Davis’ work as an educator paid long-term dividends, as “West Point graduates, relying in large part on the law instruction they received as cadets,

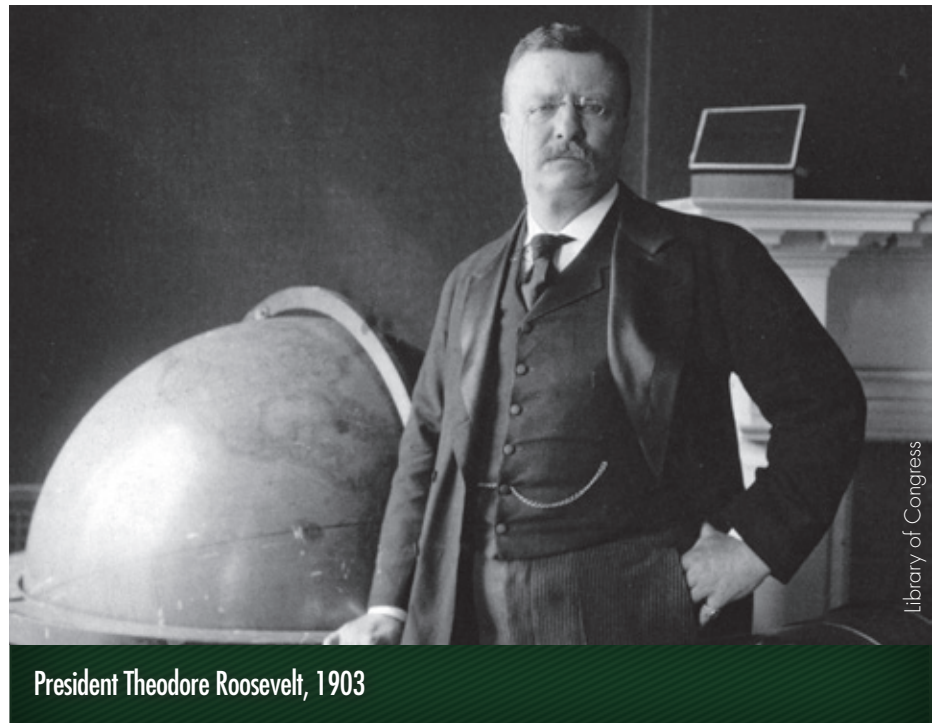
officials (and therefore the McKinley administration) had been criminally negligent in allowing this “embalmed” meat to be canned, shipped, and fed to U.S. soldiers in Cuba. Miles aggressively seconded these charges.²³

Given Miles’ position as the top soldier in the Army, these were serious allegations, with potentially harmful political ramifications. After a detailed investigation by a presidential commission headed by Civil War Maj. Gen. Grenville Dodge failed to quiet the controversy, McKinley in February 1899 appointed an official court of inquiry headed by Maj. Gen. James F. Wade to address the charges. The court’s report, which McKinley released to the public on 8 May 1899, rejected Miles’ allegations and instead concluded that the canned beef supplied to soldiers in the field was pure and that complaints about the meat had more to do with the preparation than the quality of the beef.²⁴

Miles, who had presidential ambitions, was discredited, as were any who had allied themselves with him against McKinley and the War Department. But Davis, whose participation in the court of inquiry was both professional and evenhanded, received the administration’s gratitude.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL DAVIS

Davis was promoted to colonel on 22 May 1901. Two days later President McKinley gave him a recess commission as judge advocate general of the Army with the rank of brigadier general. His appointment to this position followed those of Cols. Thomas F. Barr and John W. Clous, both of whom had previously agreed to retire as brigadier generals after holding the post only a day or two. Their quick departures cleared the way for Davis to become judge advocate general without the need to oversee men who had served longer than he had in the department. When the Senate reconvened in December 1901, President Theodore Roosevelt nominated Davis for a four-year term as the Army’s top lawyer, and the Senate confirmed him the following April. Davis would be nominated for successive four-year



President Theodore Roosevelt, 1903

terms in 1905 and 1909 by Presidents Roosevelt and William H. Taft, and he again subsequently won Senate confirmation.²⁵

Davis spent the next ten years as the Army’s top lawyer. While he provided hundreds if not thousands of legal opinions to the Army’s civilian and military leadership, his legal acumen had the most lasting impact in four areas. First, Davis reviewed a number of high profile criminal cases arising out of the Philippine Insurrection and took a public stand against those U.S. officials who defended the use of torture during military operations. Second, Davis limited the opportunities of African Americans in the Army through his legal opinions on the lawfulness of enlisting black men in the coast artillery and in the state militias. Third, Davis’ work with Congress was critical to the creation of a military national park system that preserved Civil War battlefields for future generations. Finally, Davis’ work as an official delegate to the second international peace conference in The Hague had an influence on the development of the law of armed conflict.

When Davis took his oath of office as the judge advocate general on 24 May 1901, the Army was entering a new period in its history. Victory in

the recent war with Spain had suddenly meant the end of a small frontier constabulary and new military responsibilities in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The recent acquisition of Hawaii also meant new tasks for the Army. As a result, at the turn of the century, almost three-quarters of the Army was serving overseas. Most were in the Philippines; in December 1900, there were 69,420 regulars and volunteers in that archipelago, and they were embroiled in fighting an increasingly violent insurgency.²⁶

The fighting with Spain had ended in August 1898, although a formal peace treaty would not be signed in Paris until December. But a new conflict in the Philippines broke out in February 1899 when some of the more than seven million Filipinos, having joined in defeating the Spanish, now objected to the “benevolent assimilation” proposed by the Americans.

Filipino rebels led by Emilio Aguinaldo believed that they had been promised independence by the United States and conducted a vicious guerrilla war against the U.S. Army. Although the Americans secured most urban areas in 1899, the insurgents continued to ambush U.S. patrols venturing into the mountainous terrain or jungles, both on Luzon and

on the other islands in the chain. It was not until early 1901, when U.S. troops under the leadership of Brig. Gen. Frederick Funston captured Aguinaldo in his camp at Palanan, that large-scale resistance subsided, and even then guerrilla attacks continued for more than a year.

When in July 1902 President Roosevelt announced that the Philippine Insurrection was over, forty-one months of war had involved some 125,000 U.S. troops, of whom some 4,200 had died, 1,000 of them killed in combat, and some 2,900 had been wounded. An estimated 20,000 Filipino insurgents had also been killed.²⁷ The Army's legal machinery had played a significant role in quelling the insurrection, for military commissions were used to try Filipino insurgents for violations of the law of armed conflict. After the defeat of most of the regularly organized and outfitted insurgent units in 1899, many of the Filipinos who continued to fight for independence lacked traditional military discipline or uniforms. Deemed guerrillas, these irregular forces, in the view of the United States, violated the laws of war when they would ambush, attack, or otherwise harm U.S. soldiers. In consequence, insurgents who were not killed could be prosecuted at a military commission for violating the law of war. For example, in the summer of 1900 a commission convened at Batangas, Luzon, tried Albino Villareal, a native of the Philippines, on the charge of "being a guerrilla" in that "not being a member of any



recognized military organization," he engaged "in unlawful warfare against the forces of the United States, and did lie in wait and fire upon a body of United States troops on the march." Although he faced death as a punishment, the court sentenced him to twenty years' confinement "at hard labor." Maj. Gen. Arthur MacArthur subsequently approved the findings and sentence.²⁸

Others accused were not so fortunate. A commission convened at Dagupan, Luzon, tried Vicente Prado, also a native Filipino, for leading a band of some two hundred outlaws that at his orders "did willfully, feloniously and with malice aforethought kill and murder" four Filipinos and two Americans, one of whom was thought to be a Regular Army soldier.

He also was charged with waging "guerrilla warfare, in violation of the laws of war" for dispatching "sporadic expeditions of un-uniformed armed outlaws" and particularly for ordering part of his band to "attack and burn San Jacinto, P.I.," an attack in which 103 houses were consumed by fire. Found guilty of the charges, he was sentenced to "be hanged by the neck till [*sic*] dead."²⁹

Although the U.S. military ultimately triumphed against the insurgents, the struggle had a dark side; soldiers hit back hard at the guerrillas and their allies—too hard in some cases. By the end of the first year of fighting, soldiers writing home talked about using extreme violence, including torture, against the Filipino insurgents.

In a letter published in May 1900 in the *Omaha World-Herald*, a soldier in the 32d U.S. Volunteer Infantry described how his unit had uncovered a hidden weapons cache by using the "water cure" on insurgents captured in the field. According to the soldier, we "lay them on their backs, a man standing on each hand and each foot, then put a round stick in the mouth and pour a pail of water in the mouth and nose, and if they don't give up pour in another pail. They swell up like toads. I'll tell you it is a terrible torture." Just how widespread the practice was will never be known, but it "was often, if not always, justified as a means of intelligence gathering."³⁰

The Army's legal machinery also played a significant role in these war crimes because soldiers were court-martialed for torturing Filipino insur-

we "lay them on their backs, a man standing on each hand and each foot, then put a round stick in the mouth and pour a pail of water in the mouth and nose, and if they don't give up pour in another pail. They swell up like toads.

gents. Although most court-martial records were ordinarily not examined by the judge advocate general, Davis reviewed several of these cases in 1901 and 1902. In examining these courts-martial and offering his legal advice, Davis made a lasting contribution by insisting that military necessity could not trump the rule of law.³¹

The court-martial of Capt. Edwin Glenn is instructive of the problems faced by troops in the Philippines. On 27 November 1900, Glenn's unit had entered the town of Igaras on Panay Island and seized its mayor, Tobeniano Ealdama. Glenn, aided by a contract surgeon, then supervised the water torture of Ealdama. According to testimony before a Senate committee by a former sergeant who had been present, the Filipino's throat had been "held so he could not prevent swallowing the water, so that he had to allow the water to run into his stomach." The water was then forced out by stepping on his stomach. The torture resulted in Ealdama confessing to being an insurgent leader, and

he subsequently led U.S. soldiers into the jungle to search for guerrillas, the sergeant related. Finding an insurgent outpost, the Americans burned it.³²

Secretary of War Elihu Root ordered that Glenn be court-martialed in San Francisco for administering the water cure, but the trial was later moved to the Philippines. The proceedings, held in May 1902, lasted a week. Glenn was found guilty and sentenced to a one-month suspension from command and a \$50 fine. When Davis reviewed the record of trial, however, he was outraged. Glenn's sentence, wrote the judge advocate general, "was inadequate to the offense established by testimony of the witnesses and the admission of the accused." General Orders 100, which governed the conduct of U.S. troops in the field—and had been in place since the Civil War—was clear: "Military necessity does not admit of cruelty, that is, the infliction of suffering for the sake of suffering or for revenge, nor of maiming or wounding, except in fight, nor of torture to extort a confession." Observing that the court

sympathized with the defendant, however, Davis saw no benefit to rejecting the sentence, and he recommended its confirmation.³³

Davis proposed the disapproval, however, of the court-martial verdict received by 1st Lt. Edwin Hickman of the 1st Cavalry on charges of immersing two Filipinos at Tayabas, Luzon, in November 1901 to obtain information. The court had determined that Hickman was guilty of the actions charged but attached no criminality to them and acquitted him. Davis objected that

No modern state, which is a party to international law, can sanction, either expressly or by a silence which imports consent, a resort to torture with a view to obtain confessions, as an incident to its military operations. If it does, where is the line to be drawn? If the 'water cure' is ineffective, what shall be the next step? Shall the victim be suspended, head down, over the smoke of a smouldering fire; shall he be tightly bound and dropped from a distance

Soldiers of the 30th U.S. Volunteer Infantry prepare to hang three men convicted of killing fellow Filipinos in internecine fighting in Tayabas Province, c. 1900.



National Archives

of several feet; shall he be beaten with rods; shall his shins be rubbed with a broomstick until they bleed?³⁴

Davis' indignant protests could not be ignored. Although President Theodore Roosevelt had previously written to a friend that U.S. soldiers, faced with a "very treacherous" enemy, had used a "mild torture, the water cure" and that "nobody was seriously damaged," he disapproved the findings and acquittal in the Hickman case in January 1903. Indeed, the president had already declared in a speech at Arlington National Cemetery eight months earlier that the use of torture was deplorable. "Determined and unswerving effort must be made," insisted Roosevelt, "to find out every instance of barbarity on the part of our troops, to punish those guilty of it, and to take . . . measures . . . to minimize or prevent the occurrence of all such acts in the future."³⁵

The highest profile court-martial for abuse in the Philippines was that of Army Brig. Gen. Jacob H. Smith, who had been placed in command of U.S. troops on the island of Samar in October 1901. The charges filed against Smith alleged that, after some U.S. soldiers had been killed and mutilated on the island, Smith had instructed his subordinates that "I want no prisoners" and "I wish you to kill and burn. The more you kill and burn, the better you will please me." Smith was also charged with saying to Marine Corps Maj. Littleton W. T. Waller, "The interior of Samar must be made a howling wilderness."³⁶

Smith's court-martial determined that his subordinates did not execute his orders and, concluding that Smith "did not mean everything that his unexplained language implied," it sentenced him only to an admonishment. In his review of the court-martial, Davis observed that Smith's instructions do not appear to have been justified and that "their effect was to incite revengeful feelings in the minds of those who received them and to induce them to commit acts of cruelty." After receiving Davis' analysis of the case, President Roosevelt not only approved the court-martial's mild

sentence but also directed that Smith be retired from the Army. Davis' principled stand against torture and abuse continues to inspire Army lawyers wrestling with similar issues today.³⁷

The second area where Davis' legal work had a definite impact on the Army involved the status of African Americans in uniform. After more than 180,000 black soldiers served with distinction in the Union Army during the Civil War, Congress in 1866 created specific cavalry and infantry regiments for black enlisted personnel. During the remainder of the nineteenth century, more than 12,000 African-American soldiers served in four regiments on the frontier, where



they participated in extensive military operations against Native Americans in the Plains and Southwest. These "buffalo soldiers" later served in Cuba in the Spanish-American War, where they fought bravely at San Juan Hill, and in the Philippines, where soldiers of two infantry regiments earned high praise in fighting against Filipino insurgents.³⁸

In 1904 Brig. Gen. Thomas H. Barry, commander of the Department of the Gulf, proposed that "colored men" be enlisted to serve as artillerymen at southern seacoast posts, observing

that the white enlisted men currently assigned there found that service "undesirable by reason of prolonged and excessive heat, isolation, mosquitoes, and bad water," rarely reenlisted, and were difficult to replace. The Army's chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Adna R. Chaffee, referred the suggestion to Davis, who provided a legal opinion on the question.³⁹

In Davis' view, the issue was more properly framed as whether existing law permitted African Americans to join coast artillery units or whether the consent of Congress was required. In an eight-page memorandum, Davis concluded that when Congress reorganized the Regular Army in 1866 and created all-black cavalry and infantry regiments, this was "an expression of the will of Congress" that African-American men were restricted to these units. It followed, concluded Davis, that since the Constitution vests in Congress "the power 'to raise and support Armies,'" the Army could not permit "a material change in the composition of the companies of coast artillery" without prior congressional authorization. Because such authority did not exist, black men could enlist only in the four all-black regiments.⁴⁰

Two years later, Davis again was called on to interpret the laws regulating the service of people of color. Several southern states had "mustered out" all African-American units so that their state militias were now all white. The issue before Davis was whether this was legal and whether such state action required the withholding of federal funding for the militia. Davis concluded that as Congress had not expressly stated that African Americans must be permitted to join a state's militia, the War Department lacked the power to direct otherwise or to withhold federal funding in response to possible "discrimination."⁴¹

Measured by today's standards, Davis' 1904 and 1906 legal opinions are disappointing. Unwilling to challenge the institutional racism that afflicted not only the Army but much of American society, Davis instead provided conservative legal advice that

supported the status quo. Of course, the Army's racially segregated units, and extremely limited opportunities for African Americans in uniform generally, reflected nothing more or less than the views of most whites in America during this period. Davis was probably comfortable with the Army's institutional racism, and his legal analysis indicates that comfort.⁴²

Although Davis' efforts to preserve historic battlefields and other sites as national military parks or memorials were not directly related to his position as the judge advocate general, his contributions in this area had made a lasting impact on the Army and the nation. After Congress created national parks and national military parks to protect the battlefields at Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Shiloh, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg in the 1890s, it encountered increased public interest in preserving other battlefields. Between 1901 and 1904, Congress considered more than thirty legislative proposals to create an additional twenty-three historic military reservations in nine states and the District of Columbia.⁴³

The Subcommittee on Parks of the House Committee on Military Affairs, chaired by Congressman Richard Wayne Parker of New Jersey, held hearings in April 1902 on the preservation of Civil War battlefields. Davis appeared as a key witness, and his testimony on the issue made a lasting contribution. Having served for six years as chairman of the commission supervising the publication of the documentary series *The War of the Rebellion*, Davis had visited the battlefields in question and consequently was considered an expert. He now proposed that Congress refrain from purchasing large tracts of land as had been done at Chickamauga and Gettysburg. Davis expressed the view, as National Park Service historian Ronald F. Lee summarized his testimony, "that small tracts and markers should be sufficient in almost every pending case."⁴⁴

Davis based his approach on what he had experienced when working to preserve the Antietam battlefield in the early 1890s as chairman of the war records commission. He explained

that if Congress wanted to preserve a field "in the condition in which it was when the battle was fought, it should undertake to perpetuate an agricultural community." At Antietam Davis had recommended that "narrow lanes" of land "should be obtained along the lines of battle, and that fences should be erected on either side, so as to preserve the farming lands intact." This was done, and, as a result, a minimum amount of money had been spent to purchase land. Yet, in Lee's view, the historical markers were "well located and accessible."⁴⁵

was his representation of the United States as a delegate plenipotentiary to the Hague Conference of 1907. This meeting, which President Roosevelt had called for in 1904, was attended by forty-four countries. Like the first Hague Conference of 1899, its chief goal was to negotiate international agreements that would codify the customary rules and laws of warfare on land and sea. One important focus of the 1907 meeting was arms limitation. Although this aim was largely unsatisfied, the 1907 conference did produce a number of important



The Binnenhof in The Hague, site of the 1907 international peace conference

According to Lee, Davis' proposal was enthusiastically received by Congress and came to be known as the "Antietam Plan." Thus, in 1927, when Congress authorized funding to preserve the battle sites at Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania Courthouse, Chancellorsville, and the Wilderness, the legislation cited the Antietam system as the model to be followed in preserving these areas.⁴⁶ At a time when almost all of the Civil War battlefield areas considered for preservation were agricultural, Davis' "Antietam Plan" made perfect sense.⁴⁷

Davis' fourth and final major contribution as judge advocate general

conventions regulating the conduct of hostilities.⁴⁸

Elihu Root, who had become secretary of state, selected Davis as military delegate to this conference. Root had at least three reasons to pick Davis for the job. First, the Army's chief of ordnance, Brig. Gen. William R. Crozier, who had been the military delegate to the 1899 conference, recommended Davis to Root. Second, Davis had attended the 1906 conference held in Geneva, Switzerland, that adopted a new convention on the amelioration of the condition of the sick and wounded in armies in the field, and he was familiar with both

the major issues and the other players. Finally, Davis not only was the Army's top lawyer, but his "renown as a scholar," as a leading historian of the conference explained, gave him added credibility. "His textbook on international law was used in many colleges, and historians respected his work as editor of the *Official Records of the War of Rebellion*."⁴⁹

After arriving in the Netherlands in May 1907, Davis submitted a proposal that would amend the 1899 Hague Conference's declaration forbidding bullets that could expand upon impact, which the United States had not accepted, to instead forbid the use of any bullet that would do more harm than necessary to place a man out of combat. The conference, however, did not act on this recommendation.⁵⁰

declarations "should not be regarded with favor."⁵²

Despite this conclusion and despite the fear of American delegates that the conference might produce an agreement that could conflict with the power of Congress to declare war, the United States did not object to the principles enunciated by the Russians and the French. The Second Hague Peace Conference proceeded to adopt the requirement that hostilities could not lawfully "commence without previous and explicit warning, in the form either of a reasoned declaration of war or of an ultimatum with conditional declaration of war." These requirements subsequently became part of Article 1, Hague Convention III. Following the recommendations of Secretary Root, the Senate ratified this

retirement, Davis remained a lecturer on international law and military law at National University Law School in Washington, D.C. He held this position until his death on 16 December 1914. He was then sixty-seven years old, and "his death was a surprise to his friends," as they thought he "had been in fine health."⁵⁵ A subsequent autopsy, however, indicated "chronic arterio-sclerosis" as the cause of death.⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

Having worn an Army uniform almost continuously from 1863 until 1911, Davis left a legacy of service that few officers of any branch could equal. While he died some ninety-five years ago, Davis has not been forgotten; a recent *New Yorker* article lauded him for his principled stand against tor-

"hostilities could not lawfully commence without previous and explicit warning, in the form either of a reasoned declaration of war or of an ultimatum with conditional declaration of war."

The Russian and French delegations, meanwhile, insisted that there should be a "prohibition" on "beginning war without formalities." The Russians especially were sensitive about the recent Japanese surprise attack on Port Arthur, which Czar Nicholas II had denounced as treachery, and the French delegation was in agreement with this Russian view.⁵¹ Davis and the other American delegates were worried by this proposal, which they interpreted as a thinly disguised attempt to embarrass the Japanese. More importantly, Davis was convinced from his own study of the subject that a surprise attack was not a violation of customary international law. Davis understood that the public might find attractive a requirement for a formal declaration prior to the opening of hostilities, but he concluded that prior

convention and ten others approved in The Hague but did not ratify the remaining three, two of which the U.S. conference delegates had not signed.⁵³

After returning from The Hague in October 1907, Davis continued with his duties as judge advocate general. He also found time to complete a third edition of his *Elements of International Law*, which was published in 1908. This edition discussed the outcome of the 1907 Hague peace conference and included the texts of the first thirteen conventions approved there.⁵⁴

On 14 February 1911, having reached the compulsory retirement age, Davis retired with a promotion to major general. On the occasion of his departure from active duty, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson lauded Davis for "the fidelity and ability" with which he had served. After his military re-

ture.⁵⁷ Uniformed lawyers in the Army today likewise remember Davis for his insistence that U.S. military operations must, at all times, comply with the law of armed conflict.



NOTES

The author thanks Roger D. Cunningham for his helpful advice in preparing this article.

1. Ltr, George B. Davis to Andrew Johnson, 18 May 1866, doc. 47, roll 241, National Archives microfilm M688, U.S. Military Academy (USMA) Cadet Application Papers; Muster Rolls, Massachusetts Volunteer Units, 1861–1865, Office of the Adjutant General, Massachusetts, reel 60 (1st Cavalry), Massachu-

setts National Guard Museum and Archives, Worcester, Mass.

2. Annotated Statement of Volunteer Record during the Rebellion, updated 12 Aug 1879, folder 1, file 3184 ACP 1873, entry 297, Appointment, Commission, and Personnel Branch files, box 315, Record Group (RG) 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives (hereinafter cited as Davis personnel file); George F. Chase, "George Breckenridge Davis," *Forty-Sixth Annual Reunion of the Association of the Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, June 11th, 1915* (Saginaw, Mich.: Seemann & Peters, 1915), p. 129; Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (Des Moines: Dyer Publishing Co., 1908), pp. 1237–38; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1880–1901), ser. 1, vol. 36, pt. 1, pp. 129, 853.

3. Adjutant General's Office, Massachusetts, *Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War*, 9 vols. (Norwood, Mass.: Norwood Press, 1931–35), 6: 131, 192; Dyer, *Compendium*, p. 1238.

4. Individual Service Rpt, Maj George B. Davis, fiscal year ending 30 Jun 1895, first quote, Davis personnel file; Ltr, Davis to Johnson, 18 May 1866, second quote.

5. Chase, "George Davis," p. 129.

6. George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy*, 9 vols., 3d ed. (Boston, 1891–1950), 3: 170, 184; *Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy, 2000* (West Point, N.Y.: Association of Graduates, 1999), p. 4-49.

7. Register of Cadet Delinquencies, George B. Davis (31 May 1871), p. 113, quotes, USMA Library; Chase, "George Davis," p. 130.

8. Copy, Certificate of Marriage, George B. Davis and Ellen Isabella Prince, Town of West Springfield, Mass., 11 Aug 1915, file WC-796,983, Widow's Pension for Ella P. Davis, RG 15, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Archives (NA). The Davises' daughter Mary would marry artilleryman William R. Smith, an 1892 USMA graduate who ultimately became superintendent of his alma mater, and it was in the superintendent's quarters at West Point that Ella would die in 1931. A second daughter married Charles M. Wesson, a 1900 USMA graduate. He would serve as chief of ordnance with the rank of major general from 1938 to 1942. George's and Ella's grandson William

R. Smith Jr. (1908–1977) graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1932 and served for twenty-seven years as an officer in the Corps of Engineers. See Ltr, Maj Gen William R. Smith to the Veterans Administration, 31 Dec 1931, in file WC-796,983; Chase, "George Davis," p. 137; Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 8: 126, 9: 77; *Register of Graduates, 2000*, pp. 3-43, 4-68, 4-77, 4-159.

9. Chase, "George Davis," p. 130, quotes; Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 3: 171.

10. Chase, "George Davis," pp. 130–32; Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 3: 171.

11. Tillman is quoted in Chase, "George Davis," pp. 133–34.

12. Chase, "George Davis," pp. 130–31; Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 283–84.

13. Chase, "George Davis," p. 131; Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, pp. 336–37. Dodge received the Medal of Honor for his heroism in this fight. See Committee on Veterans' Affairs, U.S. Senate, *Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863–1978* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 280.

14. Chase, "George Davis," pp. 131–32; George B. Davis, *Outlines of International Law, with an Account of Its Origin and Sources and of Its Historical Development* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1887).

15. Sheet of Critical Notices, Outlines of International Law, enclosed with Ltr, Davis to Brig Gen R. C. Drum, 3 Jan 1888, Davis personnel file. The review in the *Nation* appeared on 9 June 1887.

16. Ltr, Davis to the Adjutant General, U.S. Army, 2 Feb 1885, first quote, with 1st End, Merritt to Sheridan, 2 Feb 1885, and 2d End, Sheridan to the Sec of War, 13 Feb 1885, Davis personnel file.

17. Ltr, Hasbrouck to Davis, 2 Jan 1886, in Davis personnel file.

18. Ltr, Postlethwaite to President Grover Cleveland, 4 Jan 1886, in Davis personnel file.

19. Ltr, Hoadly to Endicott, 2 Jan 1886, in Davis personnel file. Curtis, who was named a judge advocate in June 1865, had served as a lieutenant and captain in the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry while Davis was in the unit. See *Official Army Register for January 1886* (Washington, D.C.: Adjutant General's Office, 1886), pp. 10, 238. While Hoadly had been a Republican during the Civil War, he became disillusioned with the party, and in 1884 he was elected governor of Ohio as a Democrat.

20. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 3: 191; George B. Davis, "The Operations of the Cav-

alry in the Gettysburg Campaign," *Journal of the United States Cavalry Association* 1 (November 1888): 325–48; *Official Army Register for January, 1889* (Washington, D.C.: Adjutant General's Office, 1889), p. 11; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, General Index, pp. x, xiii; Chase, "George Davis," p. 131.

21. Patrick Finnegan, "The Study of Law as a Foundation of Leadership and Command: The History of Law Instruction the United States Military Academy at West Point," *Military Law Review* 181 (Fall 2004): 117–18; *Official Army Register for 1897* (Washington, D.C.: Adjutant General's Office, 1896), pp. 251, 336.

22. Finnegan, "Study of Law," pp. 119, quote, 131; *Cavalry Studies from Two Great Wars*, ed. Arthur L. Wagner (Kansas City, Mo.: Hudson Kimberly Publishing Company, 1896), pp. 5, 227–67.

23. Edward Ranson, "Investigation of the War Department, 1898–99," *Historian* 34 (November 1971): 78–99, quotes, pp. 79, 93; Graham A. Cosmas, *An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971), pp. 287–94.

24. Ranson, "Investigation of the War Department," p. 94.

25. *Official Army Register for 1902* (Washington, D.C.: Adjutant General's Office, 1902), pp. 14, 349; Recess commission of George B. Davis, 24 May 1901, folder 3, Davis personnel file; *The Army Lawyer: A History of the Judge Advocate General's Corps, 1775–1975* (Washington, D.C.: Judge Advocate General's Corps, U.S. Army, 1975), p. 92; *Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States*, 33: 13, 462; 36: 51, 183, 205, 227; 40: 73–74, 78–79.

26. Edward M. Coffman, *The Regulars: The American Army, 1898–1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 27–28.

27. Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1994), pp. 313, 653.

28. GO 95, HQ, Division of the Philippines, 15 Oct 1900, Vol. 420-I, entry 44, RG 94, NA.

29. GO 108, HQ, Division of the Philippines, 2 Nov 1900, pp. 1–5, quotes, pp. 1–4, Vol. 420-I, entry 44, RG 94, NA.

30. Paul A. Kramer, "The Water Cure: Debating Torture and Counterinsurgency—A Century Ago," *New Yorker* 84 (25 February 2008): 38; Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North

Carolina Press, 2006), p. 140.

31. Reports on cases reviewed by Davis are printed in *Trials or Courts-Martial in the Philippine Islands in Consequence of Certain Instructions. Letter from the Secretary of War*, 57th Cong., 2d sess., 1903, S. Doc. 213. The reports on three of them are reprinted in Leon Friedman, ed., *The Law of War: A Documentary History*, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1972), 1: 799–829. Under the Articles of War as they then existed, the judge advocate general was required to review all general courts-martial of officers in which the punishment was death or dismissal. Review was also mandatory for all courts-martial involving an accused general officer. In these cases, Davis and his staff were required to review the records of trial for factual and legal sufficiency and to make a recommendation to the secretary of war regarding any action to be taken on the cases. Davis apparently reviewed the additional cases because of Secretary of War Elihu Root's interest in the proceedings. In any event, under Article 113, all general court-martial records were required to be sent to the judge advocate general for safekeeping, and this also afforded Davis the opportunity to review courts-martial proceedings arising out of the fighting in the Philippines. For information on required legal review of courts-martial under the Articles of War, see William Winthrop, *Military Law and Precedents*, 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), p. 992.

32. Kramer, "Water Cure," pp. 39–41, quote, p. 41; Ltr, Davis to Sec of War, 18 Jul 1902, in Friedman, *Law of War*, 1: 817–18.

33. Kramer, "Water Cure," pp. 41–42; Ltr, Davis to Sec of War, 18 Jul 1902, in Friedman, *Law of War*, 1: 818–19, quotes.

34. Ltr, Davis to Sec of War, 17 Sep 1902, printed in *Courts-Martial in the Philippine Islands*, pp. 34–35, 42–43, quote, p. 42.

35. Kramer, "Water Cure," p. 43, quotes; Order of President Roosevelt, 16 Jan 1903, in *Courts-Martial in the Philippine Islands*, p. 34.

36. Ltr, Davis to the Sec of War, 19 Jun 1902, in Friedman, *Law of War*, 1: 800–801, quotes, p. 801.

37. *Ibid.*, 1: 799–800, 812–13, quotes, pp. 813, 812.

38. Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces*, 13 vols. (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1977), 3: 189–206.

39. Rpt, Dept of the Gulf, 1 Aug 1904, in *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1904*, 14 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing

Office, 1904), 3: 27, quotes; Roger D. Cunningham, "Black Artillerymen from the Civil War through World War I," *Army History*, no. 58 (Spring 2003), pp. 11–12.

40. MacGregor and Nalty, *Blacks in the Armed Forces*, 3: 207–15, quoted words, pp. 214, 215.

41. Ltr, Davis to Secretary of War, 10 Mar 1906, in MacGregor and Nalty, *Blacks in the Armed Forces*, 3: 329–33, quoted words, pp. 329, 333.

42. Davis also supported President Theodore Roosevelt's power to "discharge without honor" all 167 enlisted soldiers in Companies B, C, and D, 25th Infantry, all of them black, after none would confess or implicate any of their comrades in the shooting in Brownsville, Texas, on 13 August 1906 of two white men, one of whom died. Roosevelt imposed this unprecedented mass discharge without any court-martial or other legal proceedings. See John D. Weaver, *The Brownsville Raid* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), esp. pp. 15–16, 133–34, quote, p. 133.

43. Ronald F. Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1973), pp. 13–16, 22–38. This book is posted at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/history_military/nmpidea6.htm.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 42; *National Military Park Commission*, 58th Cong., 2d sess., 1904, H. Rpt. 2325, pp. 4, 8–25.

45. *National Military Park Commission*, pp. 8–9, first three quotes, p. 9; Lee, *National Military Park Idea*, p. 42, fourth quote.

46. Lee, *National Military Park Idea*, pp. 38–42. The national military park system remained under the control of the War Department until 1933, when responsibility was transferred to the Department of the Interior.

47. Admittedly, the explosion of suburban growth at the end of the twentieth century put some of these battlefields in jeopardy.

48. Calvin DeArmond Davis, *The United States and the Second Hague Peace Conference: American Diplomacy and International Organization, 1899–1914* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1975).

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 128–32, quotes, p. 128; George B. Davis, *The Second Peace Conference (Paragraph 2 of the Programme), The Rules of War on Land: Working Memoranda* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907).

50. Calvin Davis, *Second Hague Peace Conference*, p. 207; George B. Davis, *The Elements of International Law with an Account of Its Origin, Sources, and Historical Development* (New

York: Harper & Brothers, 1908), pp. 547–50.

51. Calvin Davis, *Second Hague Peace Conference*, pp. 207–09, quotes, p. 209.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 209, quoting Ltr, Davis to Asst Sec of State Robert Bacon, 1 Jul 1907.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 209–11, 299–301. The eleven conventions ratified by the Senate are printed in *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 36: 2199–2443. All fourteen conventions are printed in Friedman, *Law of War*, 1: 270–397. Conventions III, IV, and V are also printed in Department of the Army Pamphlet 27–1, *Treaties Governing Land Warfare*, December 1956, pp. 2–23, quote p. 2. Most historians believe that the Japanese were attempting to comply with this legal requirement for a formal declaration of war on 7 December 1941. The Japanese Embassy in Washington, D.C., however, did not decipher message traffic from Tokyo in time to warn the United States that hostilities were about to begin. The resulting surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was consequently a violation of the 1907 Hague Convention III.

54. George Davis, *Elements of International Law*, pp. 257–62, 552–622. The book summarized the fourteenth convention on p. 622.

55. Chase, "George Davis," pp. 136–37, first quote, p. 136; "General G.B. Davis Dies Suddenly," *Washington Herald*, 17 December 1914, second quote. National University merged with George Washington University in 1954 after an independent existence of eighty-five years, during which it produced many distinguished graduates in law. See Elmer Louis Kayser, *Bricks without Straw: The Evolution of George Washington University* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970), p. 290.

56. Ltr, Maj Deane C. Howard, Attending Surgeon, to Adjutant General, 16 Dec 1914, sub: Death of General George B. Davis, Davis personnel file.

57. Kramer, "Water Cure."

NEWSNOTES

Continued from page 5



The new National Infantry Museum

effort, the pamphlet describes more briefly the Army's defense of the canal for most of the century and the Army's role in the transfer of the canal to Panamanian sovereignty and operation. The pamphlet was written by Jon T. Hoffman; Michael J. Brodhead, a historian with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Carol Byerly, a medical historian who is writing about the Army's encounter with tuberculosis for the historical staff of the Office of the Surgeon General; and Glenn F. Williams, a historian with the Center of Military History. The Center issued this pamphlet as CMH Pub 70-115-1.

Army publication account holders may obtain these items from the Directorate of Logistics-Washington, Media Distribution Division, ATTN: JDHQSVPAS, 1655 Woodson Road, St. Louis, MO 63114-6128. Account holders may also place their orders at <http://www.apd.army.mil>. Individuals may also order the materials from the U.S. Government Printing Office via its Web site at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>. *Tip of the Spear: U.S. Army Small-Unit Action in Iraq, 2004-2007*, may be purchased for \$22, and the prices of *The Army Medical Department, 1917-1941*, and *The Panama Canal: An Army's*

Enterprise should be announced in November or December 2009.

NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM OPENS NEW FACILITY

The National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia, opened a large, new museum facility on 19 June. The opening ceremony, held after an infantry school graduation, featured retired General Colin Powell as the keynote speaker. The event was attended by some six thousand guests. The museum is now open daily, and there is no admission charge.

Six of the museum's ultimate eight galleries have opened. These depict the role of infantrymen in four periods of the nation's history from 1898 to the present, pay homage to the family members of infantrymen, and describe the history of Fort Benning and its relationship with the Columbus community. A 100-yard-long gently inclining ramp exhibiting cast figures of infantrymen and three vehicles in which infantrymen deployed to battle—a World War II glider, a Huey helicopter, and a Bradley fighting vehicle—signifies the infantry's role in taking the last hundred yards of any engagement. The Grand Hall

includes a glass-enclosed space containing plaques dedicated to each of the infantry recipients of the Medal of Honor. The museum also includes a Ranger Hall of Honor and an IMAX theater.

COMBAT STUDIES INSTITUTE PRESS ISSUES STUDY OF RECENT ISRAELI MILITARY ACTIONS

The Combat Studies Institute (CSI) Press of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has issued an examination of the Israeli attacks on Hezbollah in southern Lebanon in 2006 and on Hamas in Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009. *Back to Basics: A Study of the Second Lebanon War and Operation CAST LEAD*, edited by Lt. Col. Scott C. Farquhar, contains a narrative of the two operations from an Israeli vantage point by Matt Matthews, a comparison of the tactics and skills of Israel's two Arab antagonists in these wars by Penny Mellies, Lt. Col. Abe F. Marrero's account of what Israel learned from its 2006 Lebanon operation and the tactics Israel employed in Gaza, and Lt. Col. Michael D. Snyder's evaluation of the media campaigns that accompanied the two wars. Colonel Farquhar is a team chief and Matthews is a historian at the Combat Studies Institute, Mellies and Colonel Snyder are with the Training and Doctrine Command's Intelligence Support Activity, and Colonel Marrero is with the Command and General Staff School Center for Army Tactics.

Digital copies of this publication may be downloaded from <http://cgsc.leavenworth.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/csi.asp>.



COMMENTARY

THE “CULTURAL TURN” IN U.S. COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

Doctrine, Application, and Criticism

By MARTIN G. CLEMIS

Since 2004, the U.S. military has taken a decidedly “cultural turn” in drafting and implementing counterinsurgency operations. Drawing inspiration from American experiences both in Iraq and Afghanistan, military and civilian experts have called for an infusion of cultural knowledge and training—especially linguistic, ethnographic, and anthropological—

into counterinsurgency doctrine and operations. This, they argue, will not only help the military to understand and combat insurgencies in ethnically and culturally distinct regions throughout the globe, but it will reduce the cultural friction that inevitably occurs between counterinsurgent forces and the indigenous population within an area of operations. Examples of the cultural turn in U.S. counterinsurgency policy include the culture-centric operational guidelines contained in the

U.S. Army’s and Marine Corps’ new counterinsurgency field manual; a newfound imperative for language and culture training and education; and the creation of the Human Terrain System (HTS), a Defense Department program that integrates and applies sociocultural knowledge on the battlefield. These efforts, however, have sparked debate. Exposing a schism that exists not just between but within the military and academic worlds, the development and implementation of a culture-centric



A civilian and two military members of the human terrain team attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, speak with Afghan youth in eastern Afghanistan, 30 May 2007.



Maj. Robert Holbert and Sgt. Britt Damon of the human terrain team attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, listen to locals near Nani, Afghanistan, 2 June 2007.

approach to counterinsurgency has divided rather than united soldiers and scholars on the dominion and use of ethnic and anthropological research.

By fall 2003, as the insurgency in Iraq began heating up, military commanders, policy makers, and the public were becoming increasingly aware that the escalating violence in Iraq had a cultural dimension. In September, coalition commander Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez told the *New York Times* that a lack of language skills and regional expertise among U.S. troops and commanders led to numerous mistakes that helped fuel the insurgency.¹ Media reports echoed this argument. Accidental civilian deaths at checkpoints and during protests, damage to mosques and other sacred sites, rough handling of patriarchal family heads in front of their families, aggressive cordon-and-sweep operations, intrusion into Iraqi homes and the disruption of family life during house raids, body searches of Iraqi women, and the use of female soldiers and dogs during operations

outraged the population and sparked arguments that the U.S. military was intentionally violating cultural and societal norms to humiliate the Iraqis.² In October, Congressman Ike Skelton of Missouri, the ranking minority member of the House Armed Services Committee, penned a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld arguing that had U.S. policy makers better understood Iraqi culture, many of the problems encountered by Coalition forces both during major combat operations and the occupation could have been avoided.³ This, according to some, was particularly true of the decision to exclude former Ba'ath Party members and other Sunnis from participating in the new Iraqi government. "The tribal insurgency," said one source, "is a direct result of our misunderstanding the Iraqi culture."⁴ The following July, retired Army Maj. Gen. Robert H. Scales told the House Armed Services Committee that ongoing operations in Iraq represented the "cultural" phase of the war, where the need for sociocultural knowledge of

the battleground and the ability to use this information to achieve military objectives had taken priority over the employment of technology and conventional military methods.⁵

By October 2004, Scales' appeal for culture-centric warfare had taken root within the Defense Department. U.S. Army Field Manual–Interim 3–07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, October 2004, contained more than two dozen articles linking culture to counterinsurgency, including an appendix that provided a definition of culture under the heading "order of battle factors."⁶ Two years later, the official counterinsurgency field manual for the Army and the Marine Corps, Field Manual (FM) 3–24, refined and expanded the characteristics and conceptions of culture, nearly doubling the number of articles on sociocultural factors that can impact counterinsurgency operations. Culture-centric operational guidelines are dispersed throughout the manual under a number of headings and sub-headings on topics such as the development of host-nation security forces,

large- and small-unit leadership, selecting and training interpreters, aspects of insurgency and counterinsurgency, and predeployment planning and intelligence preparation of the battlefield. The manual also contains an appendix on social network analysis and other social-scientific analytical tools applicable to counterinsurgency operations.⁷

FM 3-24 defines culture as “a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another.” It also refers to culture as an “operational code” that conditions the range of actions and ideas of individuals and groups. The manual observes that the ability to comprehend sociocultural elements that contextualize the actions and ideas of individuals and groups within an area of operations can provide military personnel a cognitive or “human” map of the insurgency/counterinsurgency environment. These sociocultural elements include social structure; relationships and

tensions among groups; resonating ideologies and cultural narratives; values, interests, and motivations of the population; and how power and authority are distributed. Once the factors that shape attitudes and behaviors within an area of operations have been identified, counterinsurgents can devise ways to draw upon culture in achieving their objectives.⁸

Actions and ideas—and how to influence them—lie at the heart of counterinsurgency doctrine, the manual argues. Counterinsurgency is a human, rather than technological, endeavor that relies more on cognitive skills such as language and cultural understanding than it does on military technology. The population—not weapon systems, geography, or political and military institutions—is the “center of gravity” in insurgent conflicts. Therefore, knowledge of the motivations, strengths, and weaknesses of insurgents and others involved in an area of operations is critical. Understanding the culture and society

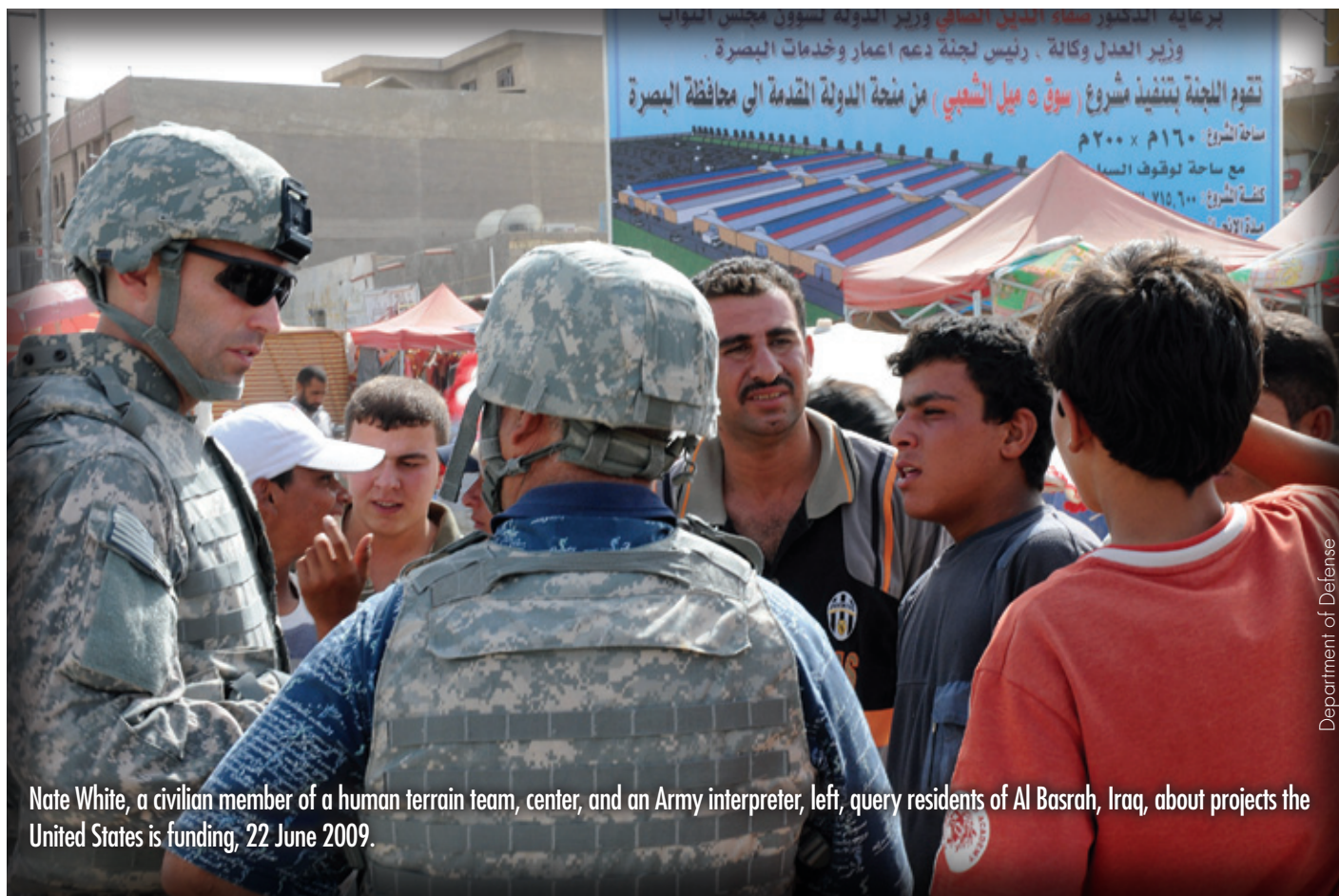
in which a counterinsurgency effort is conducted, particularly the cognitive frameworks—the identities, values, attitudes, beliefs, and interests—that motivate groups and individuals and shape their behavior, can help counterinsurgency practitioners to identify sociocultural levers (differences in the interests, values, and belief systems of insurgents and the population) and to develop appropriate strategies for driving a wedge between the two.⁹

Besides doctrinal modifications, contributions to professional journals and changes in the content of military training and professional military education have in recent years also reflected the cultural turn in counterinsurgency operations. Since 2004, policy makers, active and retired military personnel, and academics have engaged in an ongoing dialogue concerning the relationship between culture and counterinsurgency. A corpus of published and unpublished literature, including professional journals, monographs,



Department of Defense

Major Holbert takes notes as he talks and drinks tea with school administrators in Nani, Afghanistan, 2 June 2007.



Nate White, a civilian member of a human terrain team, center, and an Army interpreter, left, query residents of Al Basrah, Iraq, about projects the United States is funding, 22 June 2009.

and theses written for professional military education programs, has been the principal medium for this discussion. All-service journals, such as *Joint Force Quarterly*, as well as service-specific periodicals produced by the U.S. Army War College (*Parameters*), the U.S. Naval Institute (*Proceedings*), and the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (*Military Review*), have primarily approached the topic from an operational standpoint.¹⁰ Other professional periodicals, such as the *Marine Corps Gazette* and *Infantry* magazine, meanwhile, have explored culture and counterinsurgency predominantly—although not exclusively—from the tactical level.¹¹ Monographs produced by the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, and the Marine Corps University have also contributed, as have a number of master's theses, research projects, and essays written under the auspices of the Army War College, the Army

Command and General Staff College, and the Marine Corps War College.¹²

The scholarship emanating from the cultural turn in counterinsurgency has exhibited a healthy level of diversity. Written by an impressive mix of civilian and military authors, including anthropologists, congressmen, noncommissioned officers, and career officers, these works contain a broad range of topics pertinent to the convergence of culture and counterinsurgency. They address language and culture training and education; human intelligence methodologies such as social network analysis and ethnographic intelligence; French and Dutch military perspectives on culture and counterinsurgency; tribal engagement; fundamental cultural differences between the West and the Arab world; the relationship between social structure and the employment of improvised explosive devices; and observations on the application of culture to counterinsurgency specifically in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹³

They also reflect varying degrees of sophistication in argument, from the need for more “cultural awareness” among military personnel to more complex frameworks such as “cultural literacy,” “cultural competency,” and “operational culture.”¹⁴ Reports generated by elements of and contractors to the Defense Department, such as the Defense Science Board and the Institute for Defense Analysis, as well as studies generated by the House Armed Services Committee, have added to the ongoing discussion on culture and counterinsurgency.¹⁵

Military training and education have also been transformed in recent years. Calls for language and cultural training and education have come from every level of the military from noncommissioned officers to senior career officers. The Defense Department and Congress have also requested changes in military training and professional military education to meet the pressing demand for language and regional area expertise at both the tactical and



A civilian member of a human terrain team attached to the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team in central Iraq greets Iraqi villagers, 15 September 2009.

Department of Defense

operational levels.¹⁶ Initiatives undertaken to fulfill these needs include the establishment of two new institutional centers for language and cultural training and education. In May 2005, the Marine Corps established the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning.¹⁷ The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center opened its doors at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, in February 2006.¹⁸ Both centers were designed to conduct formal language and cultural training for officers and enlisted personnel via a combination of on-site and distance learning. The centers are also responsible for providing cultural “products” for use by tactical units, such as regional briefs, handbooks, and “culture smart cards.”¹⁹ These new culture centers have also been charged with collecting, analyzing, and cataloging sociocultural information for use by combatant commands. Other language and cultural training and education initiatives include revamped curricula at staff and war colleges and new and innovative training facilities like those at the Army National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, which provide predeployment cultural preparation via realistic, operationally relevant simulations that replicate real-life scenarios in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁰ More than an

intellectual exercise, the cultural turn in counterinsurgency has transcended the academic through empirical application in ongoing military operations.

The Human Terrain System, a Defense Department program headquartered at TRADOC’s Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, was created to address military deficiencies in cultural knowledge and capabilities. Designed to address the dearth of sociocultural knowledge at the operational and tactical levels, the system provides commanders an organic capability to understand the social, cultural, ethnographic, economic, and political dynamics within an assigned geographic area and thus to operate more effectively in it. Conceptualized in 2004 and 2005, the program reflects a civil-military unity of effort that integrates the professional expertise of military personnel, linguists, area study specialists, and civilian social scientists into a single initiative.²¹

The Human Terrain System is constructed around a number of five- to nine-person human terrain teams. These teams are deployed at the brigade and regimental levels and embedded with in-theater tactical and operational units for the purpose of supporting field commanders by closing the perceived gaps in their

sociocultural understanding of an area of operations. Each team is composed of a blend of senior military specialists and civilian social scientists hired as independent contractors by the Defense Department. Civilian team members—predominantly anthropologists—serve as cultural and regional studies analysts. Military members function as team leaders, research managers, and terrain analysts. Forward-deployed human terrain teams are supported by a U.S.-based Research Reachback Center that provides analytical and research support, a subject-matter-expert network offering additional in-depth research on request, and a hardware and software data collection system called Map-HT Toolkit. The center also contains a program development team responsible for examining, assessing, and refining the program. In 2006 five human terrain teams participated in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. An additional five were deployed to Iraq the following year, and by 2008 roughly two dozen were conducting operations throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. In March 2009, the Obama administration announced plans to expand the program further.²²

Since its inception, the Human Terrain System and its use of anthropologists and other social scientists



Department of Defense

Human terrain team member Jared Davidson, center, and an Afghan interpreter, left, talk with a villager during a mounted U.S. Marine Corps patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 23 September 2009.

Dr. David Matsuda, a lecturer in anthropology and human development at California State University, East Bay, serving as a cultural analyst with a human terrain team attached to the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, in Baghdad, Iraq, December 2007



U.S. Army

has sparked bitter debate between advocates and critics of the program. Proponents argue that the system should save lives and make counterinsurgency “more humane” by reducing kinetic operations.²³ Agreeing with this view, one human terrain team member observed that there might be “one less trigger that has to be pulled” thanks to her work in the program.²⁴ Others contend that the Human Terrain System will reduce violence by precluding costly military mistakes. Culture-savvy troops, they believe, are less likely to misinterpret or overreact to events during operations.²⁵ Still others argue that the Human Terrain System enhances rapport between the military and the local population by acting “as a cultural broker to reduce miscommunication.”²⁶ Testimony from commanders and other military personnel working alongside team members corroborate these claims; most are in agreement that the program is an asset to ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁷

A number of academic critics, however, have dismissed the claims of proponents of the Human Terrain System that it will reduce violence, and some reject the program because they feel it subverts social science by placing

the people who share information with team members at risk.²⁸ A commission of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) convened in 2006 to study the engagement of anthropology by the security and intelligence communities of the United States agreed. In a report issued on 4 November 2007, the commission considered “the work of anthropologists conducted as part of Human Terrain System” and urged its parent association to “repudiate these practices for violating basic tenets of ethical anthropological research.” Human Terrain System methods, it argued, violate certain articles in the AAA code of ethics, particularly those that concern disclosure, informed consent, and, especially, the anthropologists’ obligation to “do no harm” to the people they study.²⁹

The executive board of the anthropological association agreed with the commission, expressing its disapproval of the Human Terrain System program five days before the commission’s report was formally issued. The board’s resolution observed “that the HTS program creates conditions which are likely to place anthropologists in positions in which their work will be in violation of the AAA Code of Ethics” and has the potential to irrepa-



Dr. Roberto J. González, an associate professor of anthropology at San José State University in California, is a prominent critic of anthropologists' work for the U.S. military.

Dr. Montgomery McFate, who argued in support of the military's collaboration with anthropologists like herself while with the Office of Naval Research and the U.S. Institute of Peace, is now a senior social scientist with the U.S. Army Human Terrain System.



rably harm anthropological fieldwork in general by linking it too closely with U.S. military and foreign policy.³⁰

Other critics have been more acerbic. Some, such as anthropologist Roberto J. González, believe the Human Terrain System “weaponizes” anthropology by employing it as “just another weapon to be used on the battlefield.”³¹ He has also characterized it as an espionage program and expressed fears that the data it collects may be used to create blacklists, to target insurgents and other individuals for assassination, and to extract social, political, or economic power.³² Others argue that the program’s activities make operations in Iraq more, not less, deadly by encouraging U.S. policy makers and the military to believe that victory can be achieved if they “fight smarter.” This, the critics argue, impedes the withdrawal of military forces and prolongs the conflict.³³ Still others oppose the program on the grounds that it contributes to “a brutal war of occupation” in Iraq.³⁴ González concludes that the Human Terrain System treats local people as pawns in a political game of “neocolonial control over resource rich regions.”³⁵

Military critics of the Human Terrain System, in contrast, oppose the program because it provides a “quick-fix” solution that inhibits the

development of long-term “organic” (i.e. military) programs necessary to institutionalize cultural training and education. The armed services, they argue, have their own resources for achieving “cultural competence.” These include the military services’ foreign area officers programs and civil affairs teams and an extensive military intelligence apparatus. Some also feel that the program exacerbates the already tenuous relationship between the military and academe.³⁶

If nothing else, the debate between the proponents and opponents of the Human Terrain System and its use of anthropologists in active military operations underscores the reality that there has indeed been a cultural turn in counterinsurgency operations in recent years. Whether or not this is good, or that it will provide tangible results or benefits in the future, remains to be seen. We must also wait to learn whether the military will maintain a long-term commitment to the trend. Will the Defense Department and the service branches work to institutionalize a culture-centric approach to war, or will they return to the more technological approach that dominated American military thinking for so long? Lastly, one needs to ponder whether or not the cultural turn in military operations now under

way best serves current and future national security needs. Will a strong emphasis on culture drain intellectual and material resources away from traditional military platforms and weaken American preparedness for conventional war? While some think that it will, others say no. The latter believe that the U.S. military can and will continue to achieve “full-spectrum operations” by balancing continued proficiency in conventional fighting with a more culture-centric irregular war capability.³⁷ Time will tell.



Martin G. Clemis is a doctoral student in history at Temple University in Pennsylvania, where he is working with Prof. Gregory J. W. Urwin. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Montclair State University and a master’s degree from Monmouth University, both in New Jersey. His article, “Crafting Non-Kinetic Warfare: The Academic-Military Nexus in U.S. Counterinsurgency Doctrine,” appeared in the March 2009 issue of *Small Wars and Insurgencies*.

NOTES

This article is an edited version of a paper delivered at the conference of Army historians held in Arlington, Virginia, in July 2009.

1. Richard Lloyd Parry, "US Forces Chief Admits Mistakes in Iraq," *Times* (London), 17 September 2003.

2. Patrick E. Tyler, "G.I.'s in a Desert Town Face Rising Iraqi Hostility," *New York Times*, 30 May 2003; Vivienne Walt, "Civilian Deaths Stoking Resentment in Iraq," *Boston Globe*, 4 August 2003; Ken Dilanian and Drew Brown, "U.S. Errors Creating New Enemies in Iraq," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 September 2003; David Filipov, "Anger and Faith Fuel Iraqi Resistance," *Boston Globe*, 9 October 2003; John Tierney, "Cultural Gaffes of GIs Lead to Isolation in Iraq," *International Herald Tribune*, 24 October 2003; Charles M. Sennott, "Iraqis See Little Bridging of Cultural Gap," *Boston Globe*, 28 October 2003.

3. Ltr, Congressman Ike Skelton to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, 23 Oct 2003, copy in author's files.

4. Amatzia Baram, "Victory in Iraq, One Tribe at a Time," *New York Times*, 28 October 2003; Montgomery McFate, "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 38 (3d Quarter, 2005), p. 44, quote.

5. Robert H. Scales, "Army Transformation: Implications for the Future," Statement before the House Armed Services Committee, 15 Jul 2004, copy in author's files.

6. U.S. Army Field Manual—Interim 3–07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 1 October 2004, available online at <http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fmi3-07-22.pdf>, quote p. D-1.

7. U.S. Army Field Manual 3–24 and U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3–33.5, *Counterinsurgency*, December 2006 (hereinafter cited as FM 3–24), posted at <http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf>.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–6–3–13, quotes, pp. 3–6, 3–7.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–6–3–13, quote, p. 3–13.

10. Ike Skelton and Jim Cooper, "You're Not from Around Here, Are You?" *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 36 (1st Quarter, 2005), pp. 12–16; John Jandora, "Center of Gravity and Asymmetric Conflict: Factoring in Culture," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 39 (4th Quarter, 2005), pp. 78–83; Michael R. Melillo, "Outfitting a Big War Military with Small War Capabilities," *Parameters* 36 (Autumn 2006): 22–35; Robert H. Scales, "Culture-Centric Warfare," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 130 (September 2004): 32–36; Lorenzo Puertas, "Corporal

Jones and the Moment of Truth," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 130 (November 2004): 42–44; Montgomery McFate, "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of Their Curious Relationship," *Military Review* 85 (March–April 2005): 24–38; Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review* 85 (November–December 2005): 2–15; Montgomery McFate and Andrea V. Jackson, "The Object beyond War: Counterinsurgency and the Four Tools of Political Competition," *Military Review* 86 (January–February 2006): 13–26; Barak A. Salmoni, "Advances in Predeployment Culture Training: The U.S. Marine Corps Approach," *Military Review* 86 (November–December 2006): 79–88.

11. Brian E. Humphreys, "Problems of Culture," *Marine Corps Gazette* 91 (July 2007): 46–49; Paula Holmes-Eber and Barak A. Salmoni, "Operational Culture for Marines," *Marine Corps Gazette* 92 (May 2008): 72–77; Benjamin C. Freakley, "Cultural Awareness and Combat Power," *Infantry* 94 (March–April 2005): 1–2; Walter Wojdakowski, "Cultural Awareness: Cross-Cultural Interaction Today," *Infantry* 96 (January–February 2007): 1; *idem*, "Cultural Awareness—Useful Today, Vital Tomorrow," *Infantry* 97 (May–June 2008): 1; William J. Ulibarri, "Cultural Awareness—Winning at the Tactical Level," *Infantry* 97 (May–June 2008): 2; Kirsten Sanders, "Cultural Awareness and the Armed Forces," *Infantry* 97 (May–June 2008): 27–28.

12. Allison Abbe, "Building Cultural Capability for Full Spectrum Operations," U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, January 2008, Study Report 2008–04, posted at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army/sr2008-04.pdf>; Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007), posted at <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub817.pdf>; Barak A. Salmoni and Paula Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Application* (Quantico, Va.: Marine Corps University Press, 2009). Although these works do not deal exclusively with counterinsurgency, the concepts linking culture to military operations are relevant to the issue. See also George W. Smith Jr., "Avoiding a Napoleonic Ulcer: Bridging the Gap of Cultural Intelligence (Or, Have We Focused on the Wrong Transformation?)," *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategy Essay Competition: Essays 2004* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2004), pp. 21–38, posted at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/>

http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/cjcs_essay_smith.pdf; Elizabeth E. Bledsoe, "The Use of Cultural Knowledge in Operational Planning" (M.M.A.S. thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2005), posted at <http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/p4013coll2&CISOPTR=328&filename=329.pdf>; Timothy R. Williams, Culture—We Need Some of That! Cultural Knowledge and Army Officer Professional Development, U.S. Army War College strategy research project, 2006, posted at <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA448821&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>; O. Kent Strader, Culture: The New Key Terrain, Integrating Cultural Competence into JIPB, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College monograph, 2006, posted at <http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/p4013coll3&CISOPTR=770&filename=771.pdf>.

13. On culture and language training, see Puertas, "Corporal Jones"; Maxie McFarland, "Military Cultural Education," *Military Review* 85 (March–April 2005): 62–69; James N. Mattis and Frank G. Hoffman, "Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Wars," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 131 (November 2005): 18–19; Mounir Elkhamri, "Dealing with the Iraqi Populace: An Arab-American Soldier's Perspective," *Military Review* 87 (January–February 2007): 110–13. On human intelligence methodologies, see Thomas X. Hammes, "Countering Evolved Insurgent Networks," *Military Review* 86 (July–August 2006): 18–26; Dan Zeytoonian et al., "Intelligent Design: COIN [Counterinsurgency] Operations and Intelligence Collection and Analysis," *Military Review* 86 (September–October 2006): 30–37; Fred Renzi, "Networks: Terra Incognita and the Case for Ethnographic Intelligence," *Military Review* 86 (September–October 2006): 16–22; Brian Reed, "A Social Network Approach to Understanding and Insurgency," *Parameters* 37 (Summer 2007): 19–30; Jack Marr et al., "Human Terrain Mapping: A Critical First Step to Winning the COIN Fight," *Military Review* 88 (March–April 2008): 18–24. On French and Dutch perspectives, see Henri Boré, "Cultural Awareness and Irregular Warfare: French Army Experience in Africa," *Military Review* 86 (July–August 2006): 108–11; Robert H. E. Gooren, "Soldiering in Unfamiliar Places: The Dutch Approach," *Military Review* 86 (March–April 2006): 54–60. On tribal engagement, see Morgan Mann, "The Power Equation: Using Tribal Politics in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* 87 (May–June 2007): 104–08; Martin Rodriguez, Andrew Farnsler, and Jon Bitt, "Constructive Engage-

ment, A Proven Method for Conducting Stability and Support Operations,” *Military Review* 88 (May-June 2008): 87–91; Thomas R. Searle, “Tribal Engagement in Anbar Province: The Critical Role of Special Operations Forces,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 50 (3d Quarter, 2008), pp. 62–66. On differences between the West and the Arab world, see Helen Altman Klein and Gilbert Kuperman, “Through an Arab Cultural Lens,” *Military Review* 88 (May-June 2008): 100–105; Ben Connable, “Marines Are from Mars, Iraqis Are from Venus,” May 2004, posted at <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/connable.pdf>. On social structure and improvised explosive devices, see Montgomery McFate, “Iraq: The Social Context of IED’s,” *Military Review* 85 (May-June 2005): 37–40. On the application of culture to counterinsurgency, see Michael Eisenstadt, “Iraq: Tribal Engagement Lessons Learned,” *Military Review* 87 (September-October 2007): 16–31; Patrick Donahue and Michael Fenzel, “Combating Modern Insurgency: Combined Task Force Devil in Afghanistan,” *Military Review* 88 (March-April 2008): 25–40.

14. McFate, “Anthropology and Counterinsurgency,” p. 24, first quote; McFarland, “Military Cultural Education,” p. 63, second and third quotes; Holmes-Eber and Salmoni, “Operational Culture for Marines”; Salmoni and Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter*.

15. Defense Science Board, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Understanding Human Dynamics* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, 2009), posted at http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2009-03-Human_Dynamics.pdf; Amy Alrich, Framing the Cultural Training Landscape, Phase I Findings, Institute for Defense Analysis, Document D–3709, December 2008, posted at <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA493558&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, *Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: DOD’s Challenge in Today’s Educational Environment*, November 2008, Committee Print 110–12, posted at <http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/Reports/LanguageCultureReportNov08.pdf>.

16. Department of Defense, The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, January 2005, posted at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050330roadmap.pdf>; Alrich, Framing the Cultural Training Landscape; Defense Science Board, *Report on Understanding Human Dynamics*; Department of Defense,

Defense Quadrennial Review Report, February 2006, pp. 5, 14–15, 23, 31, 35, 56, 78–79, posted at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/dod/qdr-2006-report.pdf>.

17. Salmoni, “Advances in Predeployment Culture Training,” pp. 80–82.

18. Remi Hajjar, “The Army’s New TRADOC Culture Center,” *Military Review* 86 (November-December 2006): 89–92.

19. “Culture smart cards” are pocket-size brochures that contain vital sociocultural and ethnographic information on key operational regions such as Iraq and Afghanistan. These cards are intended to help soldiers and marines understand the culture of a country by providing information on its history, social structure, religious tenets and holidays, ethnic and cultural groups, cultural norms and customs, clothing, gestures, and helpful words and phrases, including important commands and questions, as well as a series of cultural dos and don’ts. The Iraq Culture Smart Card is posted at <http://cryptome.org/iraq-culture.htm>.

20. Mark Harris, “Fighting Insurgents in Baghdad, USA,” *Sunday Times* (London), 3 October 2008.

21. Jacob Kipp et al., “The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century,” *Military Review* 86 (September-October 2006): 8–15; Scales, “Culture-Centric Warfare”; Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson, “An Organizational Solution for DoD’s Cultural Knowledge Needs,” *Military Review* 85 (July-August 2005): 18–21.

22. Deployment information posted at <http://humanterrainsystem.army.mil/htstimeline.html>; Dan Ephron and Silvia Spring, “A Gun in One Hand, A Pen in the Other,” *Newsweek*, 21 April 2008; Farah Stockman and Bryan Bender, “Afghan Plan Adds 4,000 US Troops, Obama to Include Hundreds of Civilian Advisers,” *Boston Globe*, 27 March 2009.

23. Matthew B. Stannard, “Montgomery McFate’s Mission,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 April 2007; David Kilcullen, “Ethics, Politics, and Non-State Warfare,” *Anthropology Today* 23 (June 2007): 20, quote; Montgomery McFate, “Building Bridges or Burning Heretics?” *Anthropology Today* 23 (June 2007): 21.

24. Scott Peterson, “US Army’s Strategy in Afghanistan: Better Anthropology,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 September 2007.

25. McFate, “Building Bridges.”

26. Marcus B. Griffin, “Research to Reduce Bloodshed,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 30 November 2007.

27. David Rohde, “Army Enlists Anthropol-

ogy in War Zones,” *New York Times*, 5 October 2007.

28. Roberto J. González, “Human Terrain: Past, Present, and Future Operations,” *Anthropology Today* 24 (February 2008): 21; idem, *American Counterinsurgency: Human Science and the Human Terrain* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009), p. 3.

29. AAA Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, Final Report, 4 Nov 2007, p. 34, posted at http://www.aaanet.org/pdf/FINAL_Report_Complete.pdf. This was termed the commission’s final report before the commission’s mandate was extended for two additional years. A 2009 posting of the commission that can be found at <http://www.aaanet.org/cmtes/commissions/CEAUSSIC/terms> is the initial report.

30. American Anthropological Association Executive Board Statement on the Human Terrain System Project, 31 Oct 2007, posted at <http://www.aaanet.org/about/Policies/statements/Human-Terrain-System-Statement.cfm>.

31. Roberto J. González, “We Must Fight the Militarization of Anthropology,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2 February 2007, p. B20.

32. Roberto J. González, “Phoenix Reborn?” *Anthropology Today* 23 (December 2007): 21–22; idem, “Human Terrain,” p. 25; idem, *American Counterinsurgency*, p. 101.

33. David Vine, “Enabling the Kill Chain,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 30 November 2007, pp. B9–10.

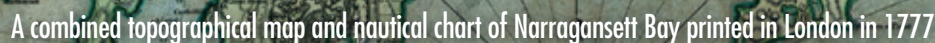
34. Pledge of Non-participation in Counterinsurgency, Network of Concerned Anthropologists Web site, posted at <http://concerned.anthropologists.googlepages.com/>.


35. González, *American Counterinsurgency*, pp. 109–10.

36. Ben Connable, “All Our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System Is Undermining Sustainable Military Cultural Competence,” *Military Review* 89 (March-April 2009): 57–64, quotes, pp. 57, 59.

37. Mattis and Hoffman, “Future Warfare”; Melillo, “Outfitting a Big War Military”; Abbe, “Building Cultural Capability,” quote.


Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer has been the director and chief of Marine Corps history at Marine Corps University in Quantico, Virginia, since 2006. A career Marine Corps officer who retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1996, he has served as a professor of history at the U.S. Naval Academy and a professor of national security affairs and later dean of academics at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. He is the author of *America Goes to War: A Social History of the Continental Army, 1775–1783* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), and *The Revolutionary War, American Soldiers' Lives Series* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2007). He earned his doctorate, with distinction, at Georgetown University.





THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF NEWPORT RHODE ISLAND 1776–1779

BY CHARLES P. NEIMEYER

 During the American War of Independence, a conflict that would last over eight years, the British Army eventually occupied for various periods of time five major colonial American coastal cities: Boston, Massachusetts, 1775–1776; New York, 1776–1783; Newport, Rhode Island, 1776–1779; Savannah, Georgia, 1778–1782; and Charleston, South Carolina, 1780–1782. However, of these five cities, Newport would arguably suffer the most damage during its occupation and would never recover its former place as one of America's leading maritime centers of economic production.

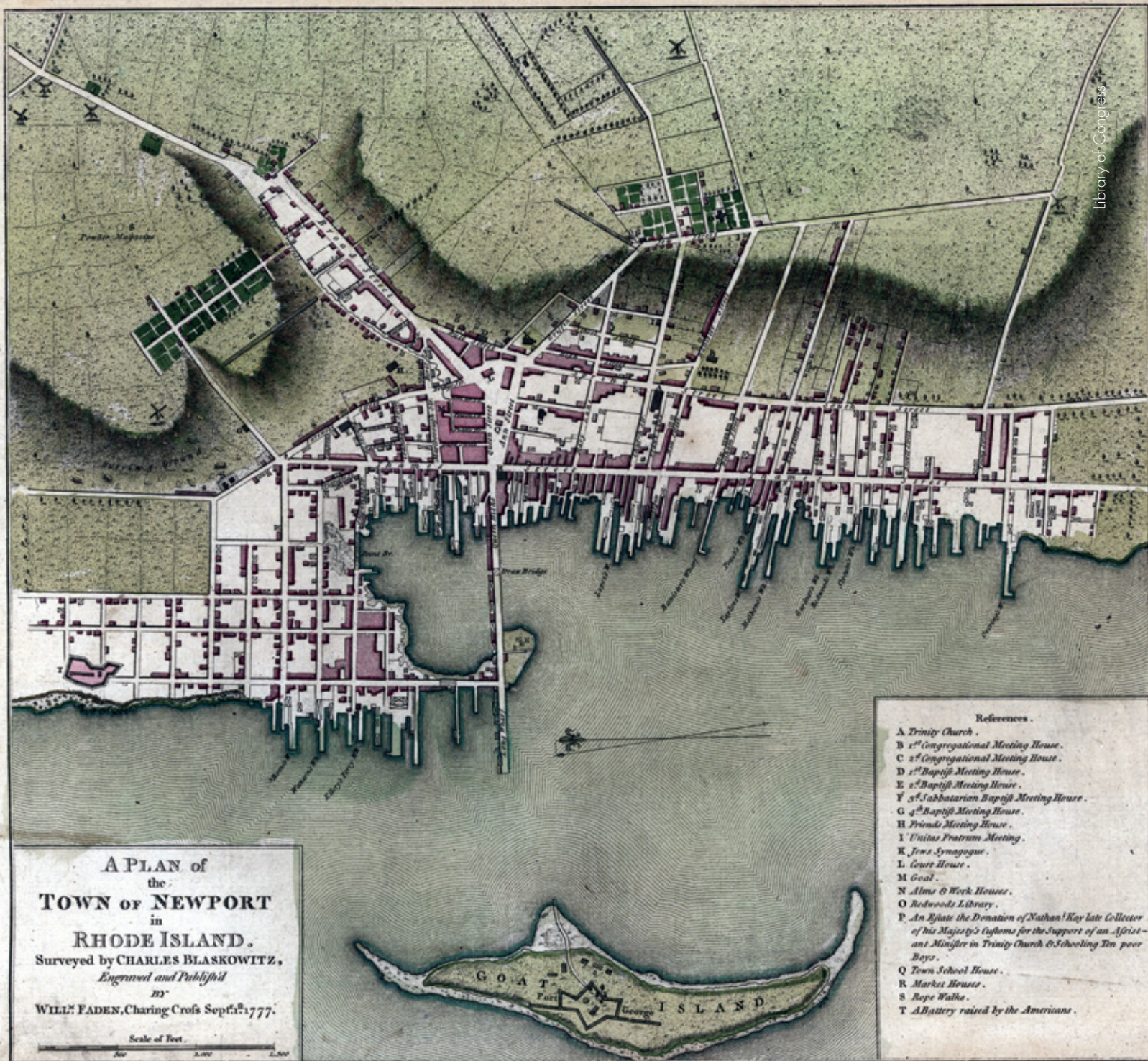
Founded in 1639 on Aquidneck Island, which is now officially called the island of Rhode Island, the city of Newport was renowned for its fine deepwater harbor and its close proximity to the Atlantic trade routes. In fact, Newport had grown so rapidly from its founding that it boasted a prewar population of approximately 9,200. The town was considered the fifth largest city in British North America and ranked immediately behind Boston in terms of the tonnage and productivity of its international seaport. By 1779, however, the picture for Newport had substantially changed. The town had lost nearly three-quarters of its total prewar population, and its port facilities and wharves lay in ruins. By the end of the war, Newport's

population had begun to rebound, reaching 5,500, but the city never fully recovered from the war's effects. Newport would largely remain in a state of economic and social decline for the next sixty years. Why was this so? What had happened to Newport that clearly did not take place in other occupied cities such as New York City and Charleston, South Carolina, whose status as economic centers of maritime production quickly recovered following the cessation of hostilities in 1783?¹

The answers to these questions lie in understanding the nature of the occupation of the town and Rhode Island's role in the American rebellion. In fact, the colony for years prior to the outbreak of war had a well-deserved reputation as a center for colonial opposition to the British crown and, more ominously, for smuggling. For example, in 1765 a large group of Newport townspeople violently attacked the houses of three prominent supporters of the widely unpopular Stamp Act, by which the British Parliament imposed a tax to raise revenue for the crown in America and forced the men to flee to a Royal Navy ship in the harbor. In 1772 a Royal Navy sloop, the *HMS Gaspee*, in the process of chasing what was believed to be an American coastal smuggler, accidentally ran aground not far from Providence, Rhode Island. While waiting for the tide, the *Gaspee* was attacked by local

militiamen. Lt. William Dudingston, the *Gaspee*'s captain, was shot by one of the attackers, removed from the ship, and given medical attention. (He later recovered.) The *Gaspee* was then ransacked and burned to the waterline. This was one of the most sensational events of the time, and when, in early 1773, the British admiralty convened a court of inquiry in Newport to identify the perpetrators, not a single local citizen could be found to testify as to what happened. Thus at the outset of hostilities, Rhode Island was clearly dominated by those who called themselves the Sons of Liberty. In fact, the antagonism between royal authority and the colony went so deep that many crown officials openly and derisively referred to it as Rogue Island. And by December 1776, following a highly successful campaign against the Americans in New York City, British thoughts turned once again toward doing something about the Rhode Island malcontents who had thus far largely avoided the harsh hand of war.²

For the city of Newport, 8 December 1776 turned out to be an ominous day. Just off the harbor entrance a massive British seaborne invasion force of over eighty sail, led by Lt. Gen. Henry Clinton, had arrived from New York. Many of the residents made immediate preparations to leave the island. Continental Marine Lt. John



Trevett, a native of Newport and temporarily assigned to command the marines on the Continental Sloop *Providence*, noted in his diary on the morning of the British invasion: "This day my Father and Mother and a kinswoman and a young son of my Brothers went off for East Greenwich, they had but a few hours notice, they took with them some beds, and bedding, and a few trunks with clothing, and left their home with all the remainder

of the furniture behind, with their wood, provisions, and everything necessary for the Winter . . . but to end this affair, all that he left behind, was lost partly by the British, but mostly by our own people." While Lieutenant Trevett did not absolve the British invaders of all culpability for any damage done to the town on this first day of occupation, he does seem to imply that much of the looting of homes was done by locals. Thus one of the first orders of

business for the commander of the invasion force was the establishment of a "Corps of Safe Guards" whose job was to provide the town and surrounding countryside with a military police force to prevent any spontaneous looting that might otherwise be attempted by the soldiery or the citizens themselves. The "Safe Guards" consisted of one subaltern and fifteen men from each British and Hessian brigade. A British captain would command

this corps, including the men from the Hessian regiments.³

The commander of what the British referred to as the “first debarkation” at Newport was British Maj. Gen. Richard Prescott. After General Clinton returned to England in January 1777 and his initial successor, Lt. Gen. Hugh, Earl Percy, followed him there in June of the same year, command of the Newport garrison troops fell to Prescott. However, on this first day of the invasion, he was in charge of the light infantry and grenadiers, elite organizations that consisted of specially selected soldiers from the regular line battalions, and the British 3d Brigade that consisted of four regular infantry formations, the 10th, 37th, 38th, and 52d Regiments of Foot. A second “debarkation,” commanded by Brig. Gen. Friedrich Wilhelm von Lossberg, landed soon afterward. This force consisted of four regiments of the greatly feared Hessians: the Regiment du Corps, Regiment Prinz Carl, Regiment von Dittfurth, and Regiment von Wutgenau. Americans called all German soldiers in America Hessians, since the principalities of Hesse-Hanau and Hesse-Kassel had been among the first to offer the services of their troops in exchange for payment by the British. In fact, quite a number of German states supplied the British with troops for hire before the war was over. But all of the German regiments that landed in Newport in December 1776 came from Hesse-Kassel. From their first introduction during the New York campaign in the summer of 1776, the Hessians obtained a well-deserved battlefield reputation for military efficiency and ferocity.⁴

A “third debarkation” was ordered ashore immediately after the first two had seized the town and its surrounding countryside. This force was commanded by British Brig. Gen. Francis Smith. Smith was the same officer who had the misfortune of having his force nearly annihilated by colonial militia during the 19 April 1775 day-long battle of Lexington and Concord. Smith’s force included the British 5th Brigade,

which consisted of the 22d, 43d, 54th, and 63d Regiments of Foot, and three more Hessian regiments: the Landgraf Regiment, Regiment von Huyn, and Regiment von Büнау. The Hessians were commanded by Col. Johann Christoph von Huyn. A detachment of the 17th Light Dragoons and the women camp followers—each regiment had about fifty or sixty women in its employ as cooks or laundresses—were ordered to remain aboard ship until security was firmly established ashore.⁵

At the time the effective size of an infantry regiment usually totaled around five hundred to six hundred men. When you include other auxiliaries such as Royal Marines, Royal Artillery, light dragoons, fleet sailors, and female camp followers, the total British and Hessian footprint on the island of Rhode Island and in the town of Newport likely approximated nearly six thousand persons, or more than one-half of Newport’s entire prewar population. Ezra Stiles, the minister of the town’s Second Congregational Church and future president of Yale College, lamented upon the arrival of a British fleet off Newport that “it seems to be our Turn now to taste of the heavy Calamities of the War. May God deliver us in his own Time out of all our Destresses.” Two days later he wrote, “this afternoon we hear that the Enemy landed yesterday about the Middle of the West Side of the Isl[an]d, about Three Thousand Men: & marched into Newport, paraded before the Courthouse & there published the Kings Proclamation, & formally took possession of the Town & erected the Kings Government & Laws.”⁶

One of the amazing things about occupying forces during the wars of the eighteenth century was the little thought given to the issue of logistics by commanders. And the British and Hessian occupiers of Newport proved to be no exception. Most commanders assumed that shelter and provisions could be locally obtained. It was also quite apparent that the British had miscalculated in landing a force in such a northerly

climate so late in the year. British Capt. Frederick Mackenzie noted in his journal the conditions faced by the British and Hessian troops the first few days ashore: “As the troops could not get their tents on shore from the transports last night, they were obliged to lie without any shelter, on a bleak hill, much exposed to the severity of the weather. . . . Very hard frost last night, and Ice an Inch and half thick this morning. The Hessian Regiment of Du Corps, marched into Newport this morning, where they are to be quartered. Three Battalions of British, and 5 of Hessians remain encamped on the height above where the Army landed.”⁷ With the invasion just a few days old, Ezra Stiles hinted at what was to come for Newport. Since so much of the population had fled, Stiles noted that “about 15 or 20 persons are imprisoned at Newport by the Regulars chiefly of the lower sort & some that had borne Arms. The Officers were taking up houses for Barracks, & among others have taken my House & Meetinghouse—which last it is said they intend to make an Assembly Room for Balls &c after taking down the Pews. As yet they have put none to the Oath of Allegiance.”⁸

Rhode Island Governor Stephen Hopkins asked Lieutenant Trevett to accompany another officer along with two of Trevett’s men from the Continental sloop *Providence* into Newport for a prisoner exchange. However, this mission was actually a cover for him to see what was going on inside occupied enemy territory. Allowing his beard to grow and dressing up, along with his fellow *Providence* marines, as sailors, Trevett sabotaged the water supply of the boat he was traveling in and thus used the need to replenish his ship’s water supply as his reason for going ashore. Once in town, Trevett noted that the British frigate HMS *Diamond* was undergoing repairs after having accidentally run aground and then been attacked by a small American flotilla, which had included the sloop *Providence*. He observed that the *Diamond* was “stopping up her



*Mrs. Aaron Lopez and Her Son
Joshua by Newport artist Gilbert
Stuart, c. 1773*



**Image removed due
to license restrictions**

Detroit Institute of Arts

Bruzes we Gave her the Week before att Warrick Neck.” Looking for a funnel to use to fill the water cask, Trevett was soon recognized by a local woman named Mrs. Batte. Earlier in the war, Trevett believed that Mrs. Batte was a Tory. But fortunately for him, her son was apparently in the American army as she asked Trevett if he had any news about how he was doing. She did nothing to reveal to the British that Trevett was walking about the town. Trevett strolled past the home of Peleg Barker and noted that the Hessian commander had been quartered there, protected by sentries and a guard detachment. Finding several trusted prewar friends, Trevett had them give him the “What and Whare and What Name of Trupes ware on the Island and Whare tha ware statined.” Trevett stopped by a local tavern and

noted the room was “Crowded with Some British & some Heshan officers.” He soon saw several locals who were opposed to the American cause and concluded that he needed to get back to his boat before he was recognized by one of them. In fact, one such person thought he had recognized Trevett and called him by name. However, Trevett ignored the man and hurried back to the wharf. It was not long before he was able to report his intelligence to the commanding officer of the *Providence*, Navy Capt. Abraham Whipple.⁹

The first few weeks in Newport were difficult ones for the occupying forces. Several storms battered the Hessians quartered in tents on the heights above the town so that their canvas was soon in shreds. As a result, the Hessians were ordered back into town and told to find shelter in the numerous now-

empty wooden homes of Newporters who had fled before the invasion. The rule of thumb for quartering troops in Newport was that a minimum of seven empty houses were needed for each company. Officers might obtain an empty house or, more likely, board with a family who had elected to remain in town. Lt. John Peebles, a Scottish officer with the 3d Battalion of Grenadiers, noted in his diary that soon after landing “the Troops Canton’d in Houses & Barns as most convenient some better & some worse, less moroding [marauding] than usual only a few pigs &ca. suffer—orders on that head more strickly attended to on account of the Scarcity on the Island.” Peebles himself boarded with a Newport family and paid rent. He believed that most of the population had fled the city and stated that “scarcely one third of the whole remaining & most of these very ill provided for the winter.” Just a month later, when Peebles and his unit were ordered to return to New York City, he stated that he “Clear’d with my Landlady this morn[in]g & tho I over paid her she did not seem to be satisfied, greedy & cunning like the rest of the Yankees.”¹⁰

Due to a shortage of wood needed for fuel to keep warm, empty houses not used as temporary barracks were occasionally pulled down so the wood could be used by the occupying force without risking a wood-cutting party being attacked by American militia outside the lines. During the winter months, the occupying forces used upwards of three hundred cords of wood a week. Later rail fences were burned, orchards were cut down, and stone from the famous New England stone wall enclosures were knocked down to provide ballast for British ships. Soldiers even pulled up Newport’s now vastly underused wharves to

get the firewood that they needed. Wood-cutting parties were sent via ship as far away as Block Island and Fishers Island in Long Island Sound. Some even went as far as Staten Island, New York. Hessian Capt. Friedrich von der Malsburg of the Regiment von Dittfurth noted that “people feel the military presence is disrupting their normal lives.” Indeed, the citizens of Newport were especially afraid of the Hessians. One citizen appealed to Captain Mackenzie that now that the island had been seized by British forces “he hoped the General would send all the Hessians on board ships again.”¹¹

Conditions within Newport soon began to deteriorate substantially. Newport merchant Aaron Lopez belonged to the town’s vibrant Jewish community. Lopez had the foresight to remove himself and much of his business first to Portsmouth, eight miles to the north, and then eventually to Leicester in central Massachusetts to, in his words, “escape the cruel ravages of an enraged enemy.” During his forced absence from his Newport home, Lopez wrote to his friend and former neighbor Joseph Anthony, “the poor inhabitants of that town have been very much distress’d this winter for the want of fewell [fuel] and provisions.” He was especially concerned that his Jewish friends who had remained behind were suffering more than others due to the lack of kosher food and wrote that they “had not tasted any meat, but once in two months” and were largely subsisting on coffee and chocolate. Lopez informed his former neighbor of what had happened to their neighborhood since the invasion and wrote that Anthony’s house had been much damaged. Another neighbor, Augustus Johnson, was found dead in his home, and a woman who lived nearby, Mrs. Sisson, had gone insane. But “what I lament the most,” he wrote, was that “several of our respectable ladys” had been molested by British soldiers in town.¹²

Since January 1776, provincial officials had been urging Newporters, with the exception of men able to

assist in the town’s defense, to flee the inevitable British storm, which would come eleven months later. The colony even appropriated two hundred pounds to enable those with insufficient means to leave. In fact, one historian calculated, “only 35 percent of Newport’s residents in 1774 were found there in 1782,” two years after the British had permanently departed the town, although newcomers had replaced about a quarter of those who had departed. While this outflow is significant, it is understandable, as a substantial portion of Newport’s population was dedicated to the maritime industry and could easily find work elsewhere in nonoccupied ports and locales. Further, many transient sailors may have been missed by census takers at any given time. But there can be no doubt that the occupation of Newport wreaked major demographic and economic damage on the town for years to come.¹³

The patriot minister Ezra Stiles noted that he believed that of the 309 persons he personally knew who chose to stay in town after the British invasion, at least 76, or 25 percent, were loyalists. The British made a list of houses so that officials would know who was being billeted where. Of the 147 houses listed on the portion of this document that survives, 21 were not occupied. At least 17 of the occupied houses listed women, mostly widows, as the homeowners. If a male head of household remained in town, he might well be either a loyalist or a Quaker pacifist. The occupation caused trade to entirely collapse. This proved to be a double-edged sword for the occupying forces who had been counting on supplying much of their needs from local sources.¹⁴

One of the most difficult situations for a people whose livelihood had been cut off by war was how little the pro-

vincial government could do for the hundreds of refugees who, it recognized, had been “thrust out from their late comfortable and peaceable dwellings” and were “destitute of the means of support and subsistence.” Fortunately for many of these destitute persons, the pious Quakers provided some emergency support to the poor. One Newport woman in town during the occupation wrote to leading Quaker merchant Moses Brown in Providence, “Where can they [the poor] go to find imploiment at this season of the year, Who will fead, clothe, or receive them into their houses, and many hundreds if not thousands are not able to provide for themselves, I have reason to think many for want to imploy are already reduc’d to live many days together on bran and water boild together and a bit of bread, and some have hardly that, to eat at a time.” Brown was convinced and immediately sent what money he could raise from Quaker leaders and from neighboring towns, and he included his own personal loan.¹⁵

Discipline of the soldiers and sailors of the occupying force was a concern to both local citizens and the British high command. Just weeks into the occupation, Pvt. John Dowling of the British 22d Regiment was charged and convicted of rape and “sentenced to suffer death.” Amaz-

**He soon saw
several locals
who were
opposed to the
American cause
and concluded
that he needed
to get back to his
boat before he
was recognized**

ingly, the “injured party” interceded on behalf of Dowling (which likely meant that his liaison had either been consensual or the Americans were shocked at the severity of the punishment), and he was pardoned by the general for his offense. Just a year from his close brush with the hangman, Dowling deserted the British Army permanently on 9 January 1778 and made his way with another soldier to Providence, Rhode Island.¹⁶

Patrols were ordered to sweep the town at night and instructed to “take up all suspected persons who cannot give a satisfactory account of themselves.” Even the camp followers came under the military discipline system and an order was published that “no soldier’s wife is upon any account to keep a shop, without permission in writing signed by the Commandant, or Deputy Commandant of the Town, for which they must be recommended. . . . The General is concerned that no recommendation will be given to any women without a certainty that she will not make a bad use of it, by selling spiritous Liquors.” Citizens of the town were not allowed to leave the island nor have houseguests without permission from the commandant, General Prescott.¹⁷

Nonetheless, discipline of the troops seemed to be a chronic problem. On 25 July 1777, notice was published in General Orders that citizens had complained to Maj. Gen. Robert Pigot that “the Gardens in Town are frequently robbed in the Night.” The general responded that he was “determined to punish the first Soldier, or Inhabitant, that is found guilty of such practices.” However, his threat must not have been taken seriously because the problem continued throughout the first summer of occupation. On 20 August 1777, it was again noted that “Brigadier General Smith and Brigadier General Los[s]berg have frequent complaints from the Inhabitants, of their Gardens being robbed, their Potatoes, and Turnips dug up, their Cows, Lambs, Pigs and Poultry destroyed and stolen, their



R. W. Norton Art Gallery, Shreveport, La.

Sir Henry Clinton by Thomas Day, 1787

young trees and Fences cut down and taken away; it is positively ordered that hereafter, any Soldier detected in any of the above infamous Actions, may never be forgiven on account of former Character, or at the Intercession of the Party injured.” General Smith even required that his order be “read to all the Companies with the utmost attention, that no Man may plead ignorance.”¹⁸

Occasionally, the soldier robberies and depredations were not just against the inhabitants but against other soldiers. An Ensign Best of the 22d Regiment was robbed by soldiers of “four guineas, two Half Joes, and some Shirts and Stockings.” In a sensational general court-martial held in February 1777, Pvt. Thomas Edwards of the 22d Regiment, acting in his role as a “Sauve Guard [safe guard] at the house of Mr. Samuel Dyer” was “charged with Maliciously Firing a Musket, and thereby wounding two Hessian Soldiers of the Regiment von Dittfurth; one of whom Fuzileer Iburg

is since dead of his wounds.” The assault had occurred on 1 January 1777. The commanding officer of the Hessian regiment, Col. Carl von Bose, complained to General Clinton and submitted the wounded men’s assertion that the attack had been made “without pretext or reason.” When the accused was called to the stand, however, Edwards noted that the Dyer’s farm had been robbed for two preceding nights, with some sheep being taken, and that on the night prior to the shooting he had been beaten and “dragged about a field by four Hessian soldiers. That on the third night of these Robberies . . . he went to look after his charge, and found ten Hessians breaking thro’ the Fence, on which he Challenged them, but not receiving any answer, Fired upon them.” Edwards further stated that after the dragging incident he had received permission from Capt. Edward Brabazon of his regiment to fire on farm trespassers in the future. And the very next night he did so. Brabazon confirmed his role. The Hessians’ regimental surgeon testified that the men had received a total of twelve wounds “from balls cut into square pieces.” Thus the weapon was used more like a shotgun than a musket and was designed to hit as many people over as wide an area as possible. But knowing how Edwards had been previously treated by the Hessians, this action was perhaps understandable. In any event, the court found Edwards not guilty, and Maj. Gen. Sir William Howe, commander in chief of the British Army in North America, approved the verdict.¹⁹

For the most part, however, the majority of the crimes by the soldiery during the occupation were of the petty theft variety. The most common punishment for such crime was lashes that could be as high as five

General Prescott, lithograph
by Max Rosenthal

hundred or running the gauntlet. This latter punishment involved requiring the soldier to run between two files of men who would then be required to beat the man with their fists or even clubs. They would then repeat this procedure depending on the severity of the crime. Historian Walter K. Schroder reports that "Lt. Johann Prechtel noted that [a] common soldier named Schmidt was punished to run a gauntlet of 200 men twelve times for having stolen money from a store." A few Hessians and British soldiers received the death penalty for crimes against the civilian population or each other.²⁰

In particular, the Hessians, perhaps owing to language problems, seemed to have the most difficulty with the local population. One diarist noted that on 13 June 1777, "last night a man was beat by Hessians. It is now dangerous to walk the streets after dark." Two days later, the same diarist wrote, "the inhabitants continue to receive insults from the Hessians quartered in town."²¹

Not every German soldier had as negative an experience as the two soldiers shot by Private Edwards. Pvt. Johann Conrad Döhla of the south German Bayreuth Regiment arrived in Newport in July 1778. Döhla's unit was part of some reinforcements sent from New York in anticipation of a possible foray against Newport by the newly established Franco-American alliance of 1778. Döhla noted that the town was composed of about two thousand well-situated houses and that due to Newport and Rhode Island having been a center of prewar piracy, "it is said an inestimable treasure of gold and silver lies buried on this island." Döhla and the rest of the Ansbach-Bayreuth contingent were ordered across the harbor to man and defend a battery on nearby Conanicut

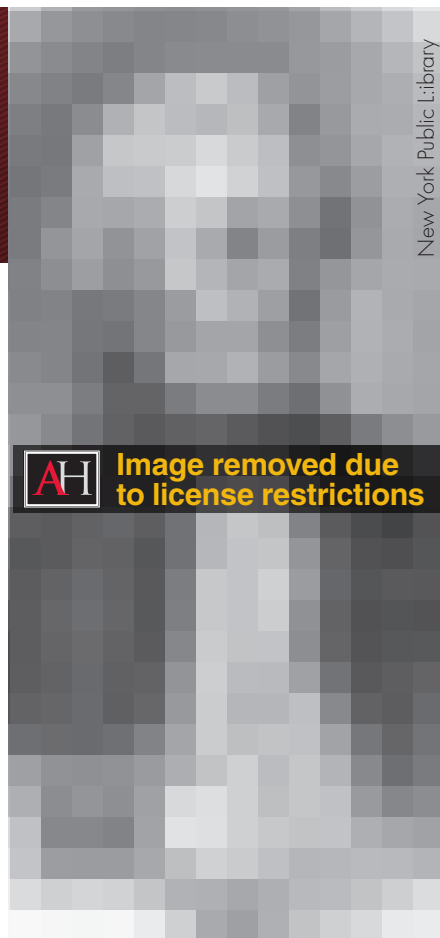
Island. Unfortunately for Döhla, he and the rest of his comrades were nearly captured when, on 29 July 1778, the long anticipated French invasion fleet under the command of Vice Adm. Charles-Hector, Comte d'Estaing, arrived off the harbor entrance. General Pigot, then in command in Newport, ordered the Conanicut defenses destroyed and the Hessians transferred back to Newport as quickly as possible. Döhla was then assigned duties improving the defenses of Newport from a possible land attack.²²

Nonetheless, garrison duty in Newport, at least until the French showed up in the summer of 1778, must have been fairly mundane. Typically, to keep the town under a modicum of control and not overcrowd it with soldiers, regiments were ordered to man strongpoint and defensive positions in other parts of the island. They were especially watchful of the major ferry crossings, Howland, Fogland, and Bristol, to thwart raids by American

militia from the mainland. Thus a standard garrison procedure was worked out where the Hessian and British regiments would alternate being forward deployed in the more austere northern island locations while the others were back manning and improving the various landward and seaward defenses of Newport proper. The forward-deployed units engaged periodically with American forces. The journal of the Regiment von Huyn, for example, noted that the American militia "frequently attacked our detachments and made several attempts to land, so that several times, especially during the night, signals were given by firing guns and setting alarm poles on fire for the regiments to turn out immediately. But every time they found the enemy quite brisk and who at all times thwarted their designs and drove them back again."²³

However, immediately beyond the town limits things were not as calm as the British and Hessians had hoped. Soldiers from both Hessian and British regiments tried to desert to the Americans if the opportunity presented itself. During the month of August 1778, reports indicated that twelve soldiers, both British and German, deserted to the enemy. And in fact, a British Army deserter named Coffin gave American militia forces across Narragansett Bay the valuable tip that the British commandant, General Prescott, habitually spent his evenings in an isolated farmstead owned by a Mr. Overing located four miles from town. Learning that Prescott was usually accompanied by a minimal personal guard, a local militia commander, Lt. Col. William Barton, conceived a daring plan to seize the general in a night raid on the Overing farmhouse.

To add a further incentive, the Rhode Island General Assembly offered bounties of twenty dollars for each private soldier captured and upwards of one thousand dollars for a general. Barton evidently decided to garner the top prize. Actually capturing Prescott, however, proved to be more difficult than it seemed. On the night of 9 July 1777,



Barton and his raid force of thirty-eight men rowed with muffled oars fifteen miles from Warwick Neck and passed undetected between the British frigates HMS *Chatham* and HMS *Diamond* patrolling offshore. Then, in total darkness, they threaded their way for roughly a mile to the Overing house on the island's West Road. Fortunately, Barton and his party reached the farmhouse undetected and quickly overcame the sentry posted outside the general's bedroom door. Simultaneously kidnapping the general; his aide de camp, Maj. William Barrington; and

an upsurge in raiding activity against exposed British and Hessian detachments on the north end of the island. He took time to note during this same period three suicides by British and Hessian soldiers and the desertion of a number of soldiers whom he had previously considered "good Characters." Mackenzie was convinced that the reason for these events was directly due to "our having remained so long in a State of inactivity. The Soldiers have nothing to do but to mount Guard once in three or four days. . . . Their present inactive state, while all the rest of

Guards or Patroles from the right of the Encampment of The Chasseurs at Point Pleasant, quite round to Easton's beach." He believed that "any Inhabitant convicted of such practices should be hanged immediately. The lenity shown so frequently to declared Rebels has been productive of numberless ill consequences." The real difficulty for British forces at Newport in preventing desertion was due to being located on an island in close proximity to the American lines on all sides. Mackenzie did observe that Pvt. William Bennet of the 54th Regiment was hanged following

Barton and his raid force of thirty-eight men rowed with muffled oars fifteen miles from Warwick Neck and passed undetected between the British frigates

the sentry, they rowed back between the frigates and were well across the bay before an alarm could be raised. Prescott proved to be such a valuable prize that he was quickly exchanged for Continental Army Maj. Gen. Charles Lee, who had been captured in New Jersey in December 1776.²⁴ Even the British had to admire Barton's audacity. Captain Mackenzie wrote on 11 July 1777 that the "rebels" had executed their raid "in a masterly manner, and deserve credit for the attempt. It is certainly a most extraordinary circumstance, that a General Commanding a body of 4000 men, encamped on an Island surrounded by a Squadron of Ships of War, should be carried off from his quarters in the night by a small party of the Enemy from without, & without a Shot being fired." Mackenzie further believed that the raid was "convincing proof that the Enemy receive from some of the Inhabitants of this Island, the most perfect intelligence of every circumstance of which they wish to be informed."²⁵

During the months of June and July 1777, Mackenzie also observed

the Army [meaning those assigned elsewhere in the American theater] is in Motion, naturally leads some to gloomy reflections, and induces others to commit actions disgraceful to themselves, hurtful to the discipline of the Army, and destructive to the Cause of their Country." Mackenzie believed that his men should conduct raiding operations themselves to "employ the minds of the Soldiery, give them something to do and talk of . . . and give them confidence."²⁶

Nonetheless, desertion seemed to continue with British and Hessian troops at a fairly brisk rate. In fact, during the eighteenth century many army units experienced desertion rates of up to 20 percent of their complement. Captain Mackenzie noted in his journal on 4 September 1777 that two soldiers of the 22d Regiment "deserted last night; and as they were seen going towards Newport, there is no doubt there are some persons there who make it their business to intice the Soldiers to desert, and assist them in making their escape; which is no difficult matter as we have at present no

his conviction by a general court-martial for desertion but believed that the punishment was less effective due to the amount of time that had elapsed between the soldier's desertion and his execution. Nonetheless, a select group of fifty men from each regiment were paraded to witness Bennet's execution.²⁷

One way General Pigot, General Prescott's successor as British commandant, responded to the problem of locals enticing soldiers to desert was to round up male citizens of military age who were suspected of disloyalty and place them aboard the now-empty transport ships in Newport harbor. In October 1777, after a series of fairly large raids on his outposts on the north end of the island, Pigot ordered seventy Newporters jailed aboard the ships for an indefinite period of time. Furthermore, common garrison practice was that as the weather got colder more troops would be quartered in the town itself and fewer men placed on outpost duty. Those that were out of town were rotated in on a monthly basis. Thus there were fewer



A view of Newport painted by a Hessian soldier

opportunities for the locals on the north end of the island to establish relationships or permanent contact with the soldiers on duty there.

On 25 October 1777, one Newport diarist noted that the British provost marshal continued to arrest citizens and send them aboard the transports. However, smallpox soon broke out among the detainees and subsequently also spread to the town itself. The diarist noted that “numbers of small children break out with it.” Sick and destitute refugees from Newport flooded into Providence at the head of the bay. The winter that year was especially harsh, and Newport continued to suffer. Ambrose Serle, secretary to British Vice

Adm. Richard Howe, the naval commander in chief in North America, arrived in Newport in January 1778 and noted that “the Country is pleasant but entirely stripped of its Trees & Fences, w[hi]ch have been taken for Fuel.”²⁸

During February 1778, the new Franco-American alliance was announced, and it immediately changed the entire complexion of the war. Now the British not only had to guard against American forces surrounding the island but also against the possibility of a French invasion fleet arriving off the harbor mouth with little or no notice. Moreover, British intelligence had determined that the French fleet at Toulon had

sortied from its base and, under the command of the Comte d’Estaing, was somewhere in the Atlantic. In addition, French privateers were now capturing British ships in the English Channel, thus forcing the recall of many Royal Navy ships to home waters.

Perhaps taking the advice of Captain Mackenzie that the cause of many administrative problems was idle soldiers in Newport, General Pigot on 25 May 1778 ordered a large 600-man raid on the towns of Warren and Bristol, located immediately to the north of the island of Rhode Island and largely believed to be the primary base for American raiding parties on the island.

Burning numerous boats and skiffs found gathered along the shoreline, the soldiers also set fire and pillaged the two towns at will. Believing that the house of Mrs. Peleg Anthony had been set on fire by militia as a signal, the soldiers attacked townspeople who arrived to put out the fire. According to Newport diarist Fleet Greene, “the inhabitants, without respect of persons, were greatly abused, knocked down, and beat. Wearing apparel of all sorts, necklaces, rings, and paper money, taken as plunder at Bristol and Warren, were offered for sale by the soldiers” in Newport.²⁹

But the true revelation of the raid was not the plunder. Rather, it was the large amount of barges and other landing craft that had been gathered by the Americans for a possible assault to retake the town of Newport. The British feared that with the help of the French fleet, the Americans might seriously threaten the British hold on Newport.

And indeed on 29 July 1778, Admiral d’Estaing and the French fleet sailed into Narragansett Bay and quickly forced their way past the British batteries at the harbor entrance. Anchoring just out of range, d’Estaing’s force waited in the bay to consult with their American allies, now under command of Continental Army Maj. Gen. John Sullivan. Newport resident Mary Almy, a woman of Tory sympathy, stated that most townspeople assumed that the fleet in sight must be that of Admiral Howe. However, by 10 a.m. it was determined that the ships were French and the news “threw us into the greatest consternation.” She added that now “the merchant looks upon his full store as nothing worth. The shopkeeper with a distressed

countenance locks and bars the shop, not knowing what is for the best. . . . Heavens! with what spirit the army undertook the old batteries; with what amazing quickness did they throw up new ones.” Almy spent the night comforting her frightened children and was busy burying her “papers and plate in the ground.”³⁰

Two days later, Mary Almy was shocked to see the British burning their now trapped frigates and observed at Coddington’s Cove the HMS *Kingfisher* and two galleys furiously ablaze and stated that she spent this day, “trembling, crying and hiding.” By 3 August, she noted that American troops were landing at Howland’s Ferry opposite the north end of the island. Two days later, she observed that “at night [the British] ordered all the sailors into town, if possible to keep some order with them.” But apparently this did not take place as she noted that “every sailor was equipt with a musket that could get one; he that could not, had a billet of wood, an old broom, or any club they could find. They all took care to save a bottle of spirits, which they call *kill grief*; some fiddling, some playing jewsharps. . . . By dark the bottles were exhausted, and they so unruly that we were obliged to be safely housed that night.”³¹

The appearance of the French had clearly caused great consternation among the townspeople. Almy noted that orders had been given that upon the appearance of the American army on the island, houses within three miles of the town were to be burned; all livestock on the island except a single cow per family were to be driven into town. All the wells outside of Newport were ordered filled and blocked. Her up-island relatives fled into Newport with

all their belongings. She wrote, “Heavens! what a scene of wretchedness before this once happy and flourishing island.” On 7 August, the French shelled part of the town. Almy described a scene of sheer pandemonium: “the women shrieking, the children falling down.” Taking her children with her, Mary Almy ran with them to a house outside of town she thought might be safe from the shelling, lying flat on the ground until a broadside had passed overhead and then jumping up and running until the sound of the next salvo. The following evening was equally frightening, as the British set fire to their ships in the harbor that had not been sunk, and a brisk wind put the town in danger. Almy wrote, “to attempt to describe the horrors of that night, would pronounce me a fool, for no language could put it in its proper colors. Fire and sword had come amongst us and famine was not afar off, for the want of bread was great.” Fleet Greene concurred with Mary Almy and noted that in addition to the loss of livestock, “all carriages, carts, wheelbarrows, shovels, pickaxes, &c, are taken from the inhabitants.” The next day, “a number of trees were cut down at Portsmouth and Middletown and put in the road to obstruct the Provincials march.” Three days after that he recorded, “The army continues to lay waste the island, cutting down orchards and laying open fields, and numbers of the inhabitants without the lines are ordered to move from their houses that they may be taken down.”³²

On 9 August 1778, the Americans landed over six thousand troops on the north end of the island and the soldiers manning the British and Hessian outposts had fled to the

**By dark the bottles were exhausted,
and they so unruly that we were
obliged to be safely housed that night.**



The British warship *Renown* attacks Admiral d'Estaing's dismasted flagship *Languedoc* in the Atlantic, 13 August 1778.

safety of their lines in town. However, on this very same day, a small fleet from New York under the command of Admiral Howe arrived off Narragansett Bay to challenge that of Admiral d'Estaing. And while d'Estaing had originally planned to land approximately five thousand troops to assist their American allies, he now weighed anchor without landing any of them and prepared to engage Howe in a decisive sea battle. Passing the British forts guarding Newport, the French encountered "a very smart fire," which they returned. As a result, Fleet Greene reported, "Great numbers of shot went through the houses in the town, but no other damage is done."³³

However, despite the best laid plans of the Americans and French, the weather turned against both fleet commanders. In fact, a hurricane had likely moved up from the Caribbean. For three days the storm tossed and damaged both fleets and widely scattered them. Several of the largest French ships, including d'Estaing's flagship *Languedoc*, were totally dismasted. While Howe was able to retreat to New York City with its extensive shipyards and repair

facilities, d'Estaing limped back into Narragansett Bay with Newport's yards still in enemy hands. Thus he decided to leave the environs of Newport for American-held Boston to refit his damaged fleet. This decision, of course, left the Americans alone in their quest to liberate Newport. Even so, the American ranks, now swelled with local militia, still outnumbered the British and Hessian forces. Ominously, after d'Estaing decided to depart for Boston, Sullivan's militia began to dissipate. Still, the Americans pressed the British into their outer Newport fortifications and began exchanging cannon fire. However, with militiamen departing his force daily, Sullivan decided that, now that the French no longer controlled the bay, his best move was to retreat off the island before he was trapped by British warships whose return from New York was anticipated. Indeed on 27 August 1778, three British frigates, the *Sphinx*, the *Nautilus*, and the *Vigilant*, dropped anchor in Newport. They formed the vanguard of a relief force coming from New York.³⁴

On 29 August 1778, Private Döhla noticed that the Americans no longer returned cannon fire launched at their lines on nearby Honeyman Hill. Pigot ordered an immediate counterattack by two thousand men to see if he could catch or damage the American army as it tried to retreat off the island. During a day-long battle with American forces, which

had anticipated an attack, Pigot's regiments were repulsed and the Americans held their ground. The Hessians, in particular, suffered heavy casualties in the fighting. Sullivan was able to move his forces completely off the island the following evening. Fleet Greene reported two days after the battle that the British and Hessian troops further plundered the up-island inhabitants so that "some families are destitute of a bed to lie on."³⁵

While recriminations flew back and forth as to who was to blame for the Franco-American failure to take vulnerable Newport, life for the troops in the town and on the island returned to mind-numbing routine once again. In fact, the British increased their troop strength there to over nine thousand men. In October 1778, Captain Mackenzie observed, "We are left at present in a Strange situation: Two of the three passages [in Narragansett Bay] are entirely open to the enemy. The winter advancing, & no provision made for the supplying the Garrison with firing [wood]. . . . No Barracks provided, no materials to fit up any, nor any Straw for the troops either while in the field, or when they come into quarters." Fleet Green noted that the dearth of winter firewood forced many residents to leave town because the British refused to allow the locals to buy wood or have it brought in from the countryside.³⁶

In late December 1778, Newport was hit by a massive snowstorm that

forever afterward was known locally as the “Hessian storm.” The snow fell so fast and was so deep that German guards froze to death at their posts. Pvt. Stephan Popp of the Bayreuth Regiment stated that the snow was three or four feet deep, that nine German soldiers had frozen to death, and that their regiments had numerous cases of frostbite.³⁷

On the last day of 1778, Private Döhla noted that most of the town’s provisions and the food magazines for the troops had been exhausted. The Hessian storm had simply exacerbated an increasingly desperate situation for soldiers and townspeople alike. Now, General Prescott, who had reassumed command in Newport after his exchange as a prisoner of war, allowed the local population to leave if they had a place to go on the mainland. Döhla noted that “all of the trees that stood on this island, and all of the garden

General von Lossberg agreed with Private Döhla. After three years of occupation, he summed up the situation in Newport:

At the present time we all eat barley broth, and not much else. There is not much we can do about it. Admiral Byron’s fleet took a lot of provisions on board, and the provision boat which is eagerly expected has not shown up. When it does, we will get our regular food ration. We are on an island which allies and enemies have devastated. This is very little cattle left, and what there is gets slaughtered by those not entitled to do so. If a Hessian does it and gets convicted, he has to atone for his appetite by running the gauntlet for two days. The English are not too lenient with their men either, but it still happens. I had a cow myself which was ready to bear a calf early next month. Some good friends had

strategy that would focus his attention and that of his army in North America on the southern colonies. By mid-October 1779, the British clearly were preparing to depart the town of Newport. They burned all the wooden structures in their fortifications, including the provincial lighthouse at Beavertail Point on nearby Conanicut Island. The soldiers chopped up and burned the town’s commercial Long Wharf, and they pulled down 160 more houses and burned them as well. Town wells were filled and ruined. As the soldiers departed, they were marched to their transport ships in silent, solid columns, and, Private Döhla noted, “it was on the strictest orders of General Prescott that no inhabitants, and especially no females, permitted themselves to be seen at any window or on the street, and should anyone show themselves, those who were on patrol were ordered to fire at them

The Hessian storm had simply exacerbated an increasingly desperate situation for soldiers and townspeople alike.

fences, have been chopped down in order to supply the watches and the troops stationed here with wood to ensure their lives. At present nothing can be brought here from Long Island and Block Island because the French fleet has cut off all passages. Those regiments lying in the city received wood from the old ferryboats. These were torn apart and the wood chopped out. We received only half wood and half peat to burn.” Döhla also noted that throughout January 1779, his rations, due to scarcity, had been severely reduced. The locals might have been happier if they had accepted General Prescott’s earlier offer to allow them to leave the city. At midnight on 9 February 1779, Döhla observed, “many young people were seized” and forced by British sailors to serve in the Royal Navy.³⁸

already requested the latter. But one morning the stable was empty and the cow was gone. At any rate I shall save the wine that would have gone with the meat. Thus we have to get all our food from New York, regardless of what it is. Only hogs can still be gotten out in the country. At times, too, ships arrive with fresh meat, from where, I do not know. I suppose that those farmers prefer our guineas to their scrip.³⁹

The summer and early fall saw more of the same. Soldiers were tried and convicted of petty theft, drunkenness, and the more serious crime of desertion. By October 1779, even the British had had enough of now devastated Newport. Besides, the new commander in chief, General Henry Clinton, decided on a new

immediately. Therefore, in Newport it appeared as if the entire city had died. This was done so no one could desert or be left behind.”⁴⁰

There can be no doubt that the three-year British occupation of Newport had left an indelible mark on the town. The ubiquitous preacher, Ezra Stiles, now president of Yale College, returned briefly to Newport in 1780 and estimated that at least three hundred houses had been totally destroyed and found many of those still standing significantly damaged. All churches in town save one (the Anglican Trinity Church) were heavily damaged, having been used at times as barracks, hospitals, and even an indoor riding academy for officers. The colonial statehouse was also heavily damaged, so that when the state legislature returned

Interior view of Trinity Church,
completed in 1726

after the British had left town it met for a short time in the Jewish synagogue.

The island's landscape had been totally altered by the removal of nearly every tree on the 24-mile-long island. Hardly a wooden fence had been left standing. Farms had been used as soldier campgrounds, and much of the livestock and vegetables had been taken by the departing regiments. With the town's wharves and commerce at a complete standstill, the winter of 1779–1780 proved to be as harsh as the previous one. Even with the British and Hessian troops gone, the residents of Newport endured a chronic shortage of firewood and foodstuffs for another year.

One of the most noticeable effects of the occupation was the failure of much of the population to return to the town following the British troop pullout. Only about 35 percent of Newport's 1774 residents could be found in town by the end of the war. Concomitant with the loss of population was the nearly entire destruction of the town's trade. Before the war, Newport had been a maritime center of commerce. Most people in town were connected to or actively engaged in the seafaring industry. And even with the British gone from town, the seas were still largely controlled by the Royal Navy. The importation of molasses from the West Indies, long a staple of the rum industry in town, had totally

dried up. Moreover, even if a ship got through the British blockade, the town's wharves remained unusable. And while the legislature quickly seized the homes and estates of those who had assisted the British, these were not nearly enough to offset the destitute situation of the remaining residents.

Some residents who had stayed in town during the occupation, al-

though they professed loyalty to the American cause, were still declared *persona non grata* and banished from the state of Rhode Island altogether. The state legislature passed laws to identify and banish Tories and collaborators. Indeed, the definition of who was deemed a collaborator, as Quaker Newport resident Thomas Robinson found out, could be quite broad. Robin-



Image removed due
to license restrictions

Newport Historical Society

**Some residents who had stayed
in town during the occupation,
although they professed loyalty to the
American cause, were still declared
persona non grata and banished
from the state of Rhode Island**



Image removed due to license restrictions

Interior view of Touro Synagogue, built in Newport in 1763

Rev. Ezra Stiles (detail), copy of portrait by Reuben Moulthrop, 1794

Benjamin Waterhouse (detail) by Gilbert Stuart, c. 1777



Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, R.I., gift of Mrs. E. L. Stone



Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, R.I., bequest of Louisa Lee Waterhouse

son wrote, “the vote . . . to have the Inhabitants banished, was more of a Mob than the Sence of the Town, not a solid Character amongst them, not scarsely any to be called reputable amongst men.” After being deprived of the right to vote in his own defense, Robinson and others who had remained in town and in some way cooperated with British authorities were driven beyond the state borders and had their homes and property confiscated.⁴¹

During the course of the war and especially during its occupation, Newport not only lost its principal market, the West Indies, but also saw an exodus of most of its powerful merchant class. Businessman Aaron Lopez was one of the first to leave. Many others followed him, taking their capital and businesses with them and leaving Newport far less economically resilient than it had been before the war. Once these merchants left, most established themselves elsewhere and never returned, leaving a commercial leadership vacuum that was hard to fill.

In the end, Newport resembled, as Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse termed it, “an old battered shield.”⁴² And while this condition lasted for a number of years following the Revolution, Newport would once again see better days. Thanks to its cool sea breezes and generally healthy climate, the town was rediscovered as a resort for the emerging wealthy elite of the nineteenth century. Millionaires like the Vanderbilt family built “cottages” along the seashore and once again, Newport became an exclusive destination. Even today, tourism remains Newport’s primary industry and one that the local population seems happy to embrace.



NOTES

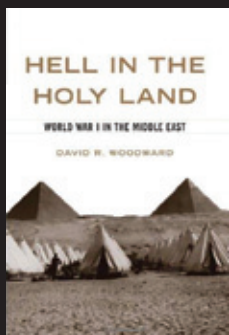
This article is a revised version of a paper read in September 2008 at the 34th International Congress of Military History held in Trieste, Italy.

1. Benjamin L. Carp, *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 218–19, 225.

2. Rockwell Stensrud, *Newport: A Lively Experiment, 1639–1969* (Newport, R.I.: Redwood Library and Athenaeum, 2006), pp. 182–88.
3. Diary of John Trevett, entry for 6 December 1776, in Charles R. Smith, *Marines in the Revolution: A History of the Continental Marines in the American Revolution, 1775–1783* (Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, U.S. Marine Corps, 1975), p. 327; Frederick Mackenzie, *Diary of Frederick Mackenzie, Giving a Daily Narrative of His Military Service as an Officer of the Regiment of Royal Welch Fusiliers during the Years 1775–1781 in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1930), 1: 124.
4. Don N. Hagist, *General Orders, Rhode Island, December 1776–January 1778* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 2001), pp. xiii, 2–3, 13.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.
6. Ezra Stiles, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, ed. Franklin Bowditch Dexter, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 2: 94–95.
7. Mackenzie, *Diary*, 1: 124–25.
8. Entry for 11 December 1776, Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 2: 96.
9. Diary of John Trevett, in Smith, *Marines in the Revolution*, pp. 327–28.
10. John Peebles' *American War: The Diary of a Scottish Grenadier, 1776–1782*, ed. Ira D. Gruber (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1998), pp. 71–82, quotes, pp. 71–73, 82.
11. Howard W. Preston, *The Battle of Rhode Island, August 29th, 1778* (Providence, R.I.: State Bureau of Information, 1928), pp. 9–10; Paul F. Dearden, *The Rhode Island Campaign of 1778: Inauspicious Dawn of Alliance* (Providence: Rhode Island Publications Society, 1980), pp. 16–19; Walter K. Schroder, *The Hessian Occupation of Newport and Rhode Island, 1776–1779* (Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, 2005), p. 5, first quote; Entry for 13 December 1776, Mackenzie, *Diary*, 1: 126, second quote.
12. Stanley F. Chyet, *Lopez of Newport: Colonial American Merchant Prince* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), pp. 157–61, quotes, pp. 160–61.
13. Lynne Elizabeth Withey, "Population Change, Economic Development and the Revolution: Newport, Rhode Island, as a Case Study, 1760–1800" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1976), pp. 7–41, quote, p. 22.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 209–13.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 213–14.
16. Orders of 24 December 1776, in Hagist, *General Orders*, pp. 14–15, quotes, p. 14.
17. Orders of 23 December 1776, in Hagist, *General Orders*, p. 14.
18. Hagist, *General Orders*, p. 61, first and second quotes, p. 64, third and fourth quotes.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 87–93, first and second quotes, p. 88; third and fifth quotes, p. 89; fourth quote, p. 90.
20. Schroder, *Hessian Occupation of Newport*, pp. 92–93, quote, p. 92. Prechtel was an officer in the Ansbach Regiment.
21. Anonymous Diarist, *Historical Magazine* 4 (January 1860): 1.
22. Johann Conrad Döhla, *A Hessian Diary of the American Revolution*, trans. Bruce E. Burgoyne (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), pp. 79–82, quote, p. 79.
23. Schroder, *Hessian Occupation of Newport*, pp. 79–80.
24. Gerald M. Carbone, "Barton's Daring Plan Nets a British General," *Providence Journal*, 13 June 2006, posted at http://www.projo.com/news/content/projo_20060613_nglive17.128a243d.html.
25. *Ibid.*; Mackenzie, *Diary*, 1: 148–50, 153–54, quotes, p. 150.
26. Mackenzie, *Diary*, 1: 135–58, quotes, pp. 146, 147.
27. *Ibid.*, 1: 173, 252.
28. Anonymous Diarist, "Newport in the Hands of the British," *Historical Magazine* 4 (February 1860): 35–36; Entry for 16 January 1778, Ambrose Serle, *The American Journal of Ambrose Serle, Secretary to Lord Howe, 1776–1778*, ed. Edward H. Tatum Jr. (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1940), p. 274.
29. "Newport in the Hands of the British: A Diary of the Revolution," *Newport Mercury*, 25 January 1862.
30. Mary Almy, "Mrs. Almy's Journal," *Newport Historical Magazine* 1 (July 1880): 18–19.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–22, quotes, pp. 19, 22.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 23–26, quotes, pp. 23, 24, 26; "Newport in the Hands of the British: A Diary of the Revolution," *Newport Mercury*, 8 February 1862, entries for 2, 3, 6 August 1778.
33. Stensrud, *Newport: A Lively Experiment*, pp. 213–14; "Newport in the Hands of the British: A Diary of the Revolution," *Newport Mercury*, 15 February 1862, entry for 10 August 1778, quote.
34. Stensrud, *Newport: A Lively Experiment*, pp. 211, 214–16.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 216–18; "Newport in the Hands of the British: A Diary of the Revolution," *Newport Mercury*, 22 February 1862, entry for 31 August 1778, quote.
36. Stensrud, *Newport: A Lively Experiment*, pp. 218–20; Mackenzie, *Diary*, 2: 414; "Newport in the Hands of the British: A Diary of the Revolution," *Newport Mercury*, 8 March 1862, entries for 13, 18 November and 6, 25 December 1778.
37. Stephan Popp, "Popp's Journal, 1777–1783," trans. Joseph G. Rosengarten, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 26 (April 1902): 33.
38. Döhla, *Hessian Diary*, pp. 96–102, quotes, pp. 96, 102.
39. Ltr, Maj Gen Friedrich von Lossberg to an unidentified major general, 18 Jan 1779, in the Papers of Friedrich von Lossberg, Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, R.I.
40. Döhla, *Hessian Diary*, pp. 111–13, quote, p. 113.
41. Withey, "Population Change and the Revolution," pp. 215–16, quote, p. 216.
42. Benjamin Waterhouse quoted in Anthony Walker, *The Despot's Heel: British Occupation of the Bay, Island, and Town, December 1776–October 1779* (Newport, R.I.: Seaford Press, 1996), p. 46. A Newport native, Waterhouse was the first professor of medicine at Harvard. In 1813 he was named hospital surgeon to the Army's First Military District.

BOOKREVIEWS

Hell in the Holy Land: World War I in the Middle East



By David R. Woodward
University Press of Kentucky, 2006,
253 pp., \$29.95

Review by Harold E. Raugh Jr.

Senior British Army generals in World War I, believing the stalemate of trench warfare on the Western Front to be unbreakable, employed a strategy by which numerous “peripheral” campaigns were conducted in an attempt to win the war. Accordingly, the British executed many smaller campaigns outside of western Europe in the Balkans, Africa (Togoland, Cameroons, southwest Africa, and east Africa), Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, and Egypt and Palestine. The results of these additional operations, with one major exception—the campaign in Egypt and Palestine—were generally mixed or failed to meet British expectations and goals.

Due to the large number of soldiers and resources devoted to the campaign in Egypt and Palestine and its increasing political and military significance, this Middle East theater eventually developed in importance second only to the Western Front. (In spite of the subtitle of this book,

World War I in the Middle East, this book does not include the British campaign in Mesopotamia.) British soldiers fighting in the fire, wire, and mire of the Western Front frequently thought their comrades in the Holy Land fought under “cushy” conditions against Turkish opponents who were far inferior to the Germans. While the hecatombs in France and Flanders were unparalleled, service in atrocious weather in the sandy wastes of Egypt and boulder-strewn hills of Palestine was not especially comfortable, according to author David R. Woodward. Woodward, a professor of modern European and Russian history at Marshall University, wrote this fine book ostensibly because “the campaign in Egypt and Palestine [has] been neglected in the historiography of the war, [and] the British soldier has not been given his due” (p. ix).

This study is divided into eleven chapters and a conclusion. It is organized chronologically, beginning with the deployment, training, and orientation of British, Indian, Australian, and New Zealand soldiers—many of whom were in the Yeomanry, the mounted regiments of the Territorials—as members of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF). Chapters then follow the operations of the expeditionary force, from defending the Suez Canal, the lifeline of Great Britain to its imperial jewel of India, to offensive operations in late 1916 to clear the Sinai Peninsula. After advancing across the 120 miles of Sinai wilderness by early January 1917, the British then planned for a limited offensive against the Turks in defensive positions on the ridges between Gaza and Beersheba, the two natural gateways into Palestine. This attack, the First Battle of Gaza, began on 26 March 1917 and was a British failure,

although the EEF leadership tried to portray it as a success. The following month, at the Second Battle of Gaza (17–19 April 1917), the British conducted a frontal attack against their well-entrenched adversary. With hasty preparations, inadequate fire support, and unimaginative tactics, the British were repulsed by the Turks.

The EEF commander in chief was relieved and replaced by General (later Field Marshal) Edmund H. H. Allenby. Nicknamed “the Bull,” Allenby restored a spirit of the offensive in the demoralized and stale EEF and triumphantly led it at the Third Battle of Gaza (31 October 1917) and the capture of Jerusalem (9 December 1917). His skillfully performed offensive thereafter maximized the use of artillery and cavalry and culminated in British victory at the Battle of Megiddo (19–21 September 1918) and the capture of Damascus (1 October 1918).

The strength of this fascinating, highly readable volume is the author’s extensive use of the participants’ words, from mainly unpublished letters, diaries, memoirs, and other accounts, which are woven into an operational and strategic narrative derived from the official histories and other sources. As most of these soldiers’ accounts were written contemporaneous with events, there is a strong sense of immediacy, honesty, and wonderment in them. Cairo was, according to one soldier, “a city blessed with grandeur unequalled in the world yet packed with all the lust and vice conceivable” (p. 26), while another thought it, “a huge Eastern town, with its queer old streets, queer old shops, picturesque inhabitants, mosques, flies and filth” (p. 24). The conditions were also difficult, frequently “being frightfully hot, the sun blinding [one’s] eyes as it reflected off the sand” (p. 62). In cavalry

engagements, the “shells tore through the air so close one could almost feel them” (p. 125). An overriding soldier concern, however, was that “[f]lies by the million pester one whenever one stays still, flies in your drink, flies in your food, flies in your tent, wherever they can be most inconvenient and annoying” (p. 89). Frequently eloquent, these insights help put a human face on the trials and tribulations of soldiering in the campaigns of the EEF. Although this was also the theater of operations of the arguably overrated T. E. “Lawrence of Arabia” and the dashing Australian Light Horse, these anecdotes show that service here was not “cushy.”

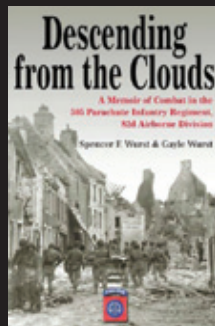
The author conducted considerable research in many archives for his sources, including the Imperial War Museum, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, National Army Museum, and others. His documentation and explanatory material are included in the 23-page Notes section. Twenty mesmerizing monograph photographs add a visual dimension to the book, and four good maps supplement the campaign narratives.

Hell in the Holy Land is an insightful and interesting study and a model of clarity, thorough research, and good scholarship. It makes a fine addition to the historiography of British military operations in Palestine, which are viewed through the honest and observant eyes of the stalwart British and Dominion soldiers who fought in them.

Dr. Harold E. Raugh Jr. retired from the U.S. Army as a lieutenant colonel. He currently serves as the command historian, V Corps, in Heidelberg, Germany. He previously served from 2002 to 2006 as the command historian, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and Presidio of Monterey, California. He is the author of *Wavell in the Middle East, 1939–1941: A Study in Generalship* (New York, Brassey’s, 1993). Raugh was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 2001.



Descending from the Clouds
A Memoir of Combat in the 505
Parachute Infantry Regiment,
82d Airborne Division



By Spencer F. Wurst and Gayle Wurst
Casemate, 2004, 266 pp., \$32.95

Review by Matthew Hardman

Spencer Wurst’s *Descending from the Clouds* follows the well-worn path of combat memoirs, such as Ed Ruggero’s *Combat Jump* (New York, 2004), but what separates Wurst’s work from many others in the genre is the goal to provide “a bottom-up historical account of airborne warfare in the ETO [European Theater of Operations]” (p. xv). In this respect, he succeeds admirably. While it does not furnish a coherent account of the 2d Battalion, 505th’s battles or campaigns in Europe, his memoir does succeed precisely because of his difficulty in accurately identifying where he was, when he was there, and what exactly occurred. Wurst acknowledges up front his inability to supply greater historical context. As we follow Wurst and his unit from hilltop to hilltop, street to street, and hedgerow to hedgerow, we come away with a better understanding of airborne operations from the paratrooper’s perspective: chaos and confusion.

While the confusion of combat is nothing new, Wurst demonstrates that the training and experiences of the 82d Airborne Division allowed paratroopers to function well in this environment. The physically demanding training of the parachute school at Fort Benning provided self-confidence and camaraderie. He also felt the instructors made training harder on the

officers, which helped instill a degree of trust and respect for them in the enlisted men. Wurst writes that the numerous training jumps forced these soldiers to confront their fears on a daily basis. The physical nature and high stress of the training resulted in a core of paratroopers well selected and prepared for the rigors of combat. Likewise, based on his experience serving in the 112th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division, Wurst also believed that paratroopers received better training. From cross-training with all of the organic weapons in an airborne company to extended tactical field problems and night training, airborne units had more resources and time to develop the skills necessary to fight and win on the battlefield. This is an observation that Wurst makes in his assessment of other units that he encountered throughout his combat experience in Europe and particularly in Normandy and the Hürtgen Forest. He does not denigrate the contributions or sacrifices of these units and soldiers; instead he conveys sympathy and even pity for their lack of cohesion due to the high rate of transfers to other units and their limited access to resources, training, and preparation. An additional advantage he feels the airborne units had was their ability to integrate and train replacements in rear areas versus receiving them while on the front line. For the military professional, his insights raise important questions, such as “What makes a unit elite?” “How do we best train soldiers for combat?” and “How best to integrate replacements?”

Of all the campaigns and battles that Wurst describes, his account of the Battle of Nijmegen is the most gripping. For squad leader Wurst, this conflict was really the Battle for Hunner Park, which was at the center of the German defense of a key highway bridge over the Waal River. After several days and nights of chaotic urban fighting, two platoons of Company F hastily attacked elements of the 9th SS Panzer Division Reconnaissance Battalion. In Wurst’s depiction, the details from the squad leader perspective are most illuminating. The lack of maps left him with little situational

awareness. His description of fighting is broken down to the micro terrain of a city street: wall, doorway, backyard, and curb. He did not know the layout of the city, though he clearly understood the geography of the street he was fighting his way down.

Wurst's honesty about his mistakes and fears is also important. With the suddenness of the attack, he failed to move his machine gun team forward to support the effort. After gaining an initial foothold in the park, the company commander was killed and the failure of the assault became clear. Wurst found himself forward of most of the company with a malfunctioning rifle. Alone and virtually unarmed, he felt isolated. Making the decision to break contact, he leaped over a fence in an ungraceful manner. Wurst's ability to capture the surreal nature of combat with its terrifying, its tragic, and even its humorous moments allows us to see what John Keegan famously called "the face of battle."

Wurst's book, like Phil Nordyke's *All American, All the Way* (Osceola, Wisc., 2005), an oral history of the 82d Airborne Division, serves also to dispel the myth of the "good war." Wurst is candid about the transformation that occurs within combat soldiers: the difficulty of maintaining discipline and the slipping of humanity. He found that several points of the Geneva Convention were loosely interpreted due to a lack of officer supervision. Within this framework, each man determined for himself the acceptable limits. Stealing from prisoners and looting the dead were common practices restrained only by the individual's own morality. In another more ominous example, after capturing a group of Germans, his squad jokingly directed them toward a stone wall. He wrote that "we thought it was pretty funny, but as I look back, I realize it must have been terrifying for the prisoners" (p. 171). Throughout the book, the description of the wounded and treatment of the dead of all combatants make clear that this was not a "good war."

For the historian, this volume gives a good sense of the confusion of airborne operations and close combat. Wurst addresses his experience in the

Army replacement system, relationships between officers and enlisted men, and the military justice system at some length. *Descending from the Clouds* makes an excellent book for company-level leader development on the subjects of discipline, training, and combat leadership.

Maj. Matthew Hardman is an infantry officer in the U.S. Army and is currently a student at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He received his M.A. in history from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.



Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., and Joseph Stilwell



Edited by Nicholas Evan Sarantakes
Texas A&M University Press, 2004,
190 pp., \$29.95

Review by Michael Bonura

Nicholas Evan Sarantakes' *Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., and Joseph Stilwell* is an edited volume of the memoirs of two colorful and controversial figures as they commanded the U.S. Tenth Army through the invasion and occupation of Okinawa in the spring of 1945. This is an excellent primary source that touches on many different aspects of operations in the Pacific, from logistical problems to interservice rivalry. It can only add to the understanding and the study of the operations in Okinawa through the end of the fighting in the Pacific and would

be a terrific resource for undergraduate research. These two diaries focus on different parts of the Okinawa operations and can thus be used individually when studying the wide and varied aspects of both the invasion and the occupation of the island. In both his introduction and his conclusion, Sarantakes compares these two extremely different generals and reaches some interesting conclusions that add to the historiography of the Pacific theater of World War II.

Buckner's war diary begins in September 1944 with the reorganization of the U.S. Tenth Army and its subsequent preparations for the invasion of Okinawa. The Tenth Army was under the operational command of the Navy and would remain so until after combat operations on the island ceased. As such, Buckner's diary is full of the issues and problems of making joint operations work at the Army level and provides important insights into how these joint operations affected the Pacific theater. It also describes his campaign plan for both the invasion and the reduction of the Japanese defenses on the island. He reported from a wide variety of front-line positions throughout the attack and provided detailed descriptions of the operations, his subordinate commanders, and the Japanese resistance. This diary is an extremely accessible primary source that provides a wealth of information concerning both Buckner as a commander and the invasion of Okinawa as an operation.

Lt. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. died while commanding the Tenth Army on 18 June 1945 and was replaced by General Joseph Stilwell, who had been making a tour of the Pacific for the preceding month hoping a combat command would become available in the upcoming invasion of Japan. While Stilwell's diary does not cover the invasion of Okinawa itself, it does deal with several vitally important issues that developed in the proceeding months and can only improve our understanding of the end of the war in the Pacific. Due to his rank and previous experience, Stilwell was connected to the Pacific theater in a different way than Buckner. While Buckner was focused on the operations on Okinawa and improving relations with

the Navy, Stilwell was much more willing to fight for what he considered the prerogatives of the U.S. Army and to have the Tenth Army separated from the operational control of the Navy. Amid these negotiations, Stilwell's diary comments on the competence and character of every personality he met, which gives the reader a better feel for the interpersonal politics that decided policy in the Pacific.

Stilwell's discussion of the occupation of Okinawa following the surrender of the Japanese forces focused on a variety of activities, from clean-up operations against saboteurs to individual attacks on command posts and ammunition dumps. His diary offers a unique perspective on the combat missions required for the occupation, construction in support of future operations, and returning the Okinawan people to a sense of normalcy. He was also in command when the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan and his diary entries are particularly interesting as they follow his attempt to understand what occurred, and what political and military effects dropping the two bombs would have on the operations of the Tenth Army. These entries, plus the ones concerning the Japanese surrender, paint a distinct picture of the events surrounding the end of the war that make an important contribution to future research on the Pacific theater.

Sarantakes does a wonderful job in connecting the two diaries to produce a primary source history of the U.S. Tenth Army and its fight for Okinawa. The editing is transparent, the background information included in both the introduction and the conclusion is helpful, and, when appropriate, Sarantakes has inserted important comments from contemporary sources: the news, the U.S. military, and testimony from the Japanese commanders who defended Okinawa. However, in addition to editing these diaries, Sarantakes uses his introduction and conclusion to make comparisons between Buckner and Stilwell in an effort to rehabilitate Buckner's reputation from a number of criticisms he has received over the past several decades.

While Sarantakes makes several excellent arguments in Buckner's favor,

Seven Stars furnishes little in the way of support to his thesis. In the introduction, he supplies his rationale for editing out of Buckner's diary all references except those of a military nature. This results in an extremely sanitized version of the events, which prevents a full understanding of Buckner's character and leadership. Placing Buckner's diary next to Stilwell's does nothing to make the reader impressed with the former's performance because Buckner spent the majority of his time commanding from his headquarters. In contrast, Stilwell's diary is full of opinion, foul language, and honest observation about the people he met, the soldiers he saw, and the units he inspected. While Buckner comes across as a commander who visited the front occasionally and never penetrated past his subordinate divisional headquarters, Stilwell often times drove jeeps through washed out roads and flew Piper Cubs through bad weather to see the front line. *Seven Stars* is the well-written story of the battle for Okinawa, as told by the senior ground commanders, and furnishes a new understanding of the events and decisions that led to the American victory. However, it does nothing to rehabilitate the reputation of General Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. and the attacks on his competence or leadership.¹

NOTES

1. Lt. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. was posthumously promoted to the rank of four-star general on 19 July 1954 by an act of Congress (Public Law 83-508).

Maj. Michael Bonura is a nuclear research and operations officer in the U.S. Army and served as an assistant professor in the Department of History at the United States Military Academy, where he taught the core course on military history from 450 A.D. to the present. He earned his Ph.D. in military history from Florida State University.



A Clash of Cultures: Civil-Military Relations during the Vietnam War



By Orrin Schwab
Praeger Security International, 2006,
195 pp., \$49.95

Review by Deborah Kidwell

In *A Clash of Cultures*, Orrin Schwab argues that historical context, along with the structure and values of American political, military, and social institutions, determined the actions taken by civilian and military leaders during the Vietnamese conflict. Schwab describes the “clash” of very different cultural groups—an essentially conservative military leadership steeped in tradition and corporate values, and politicians receptive to a more liberal society strongly focused on the individual and more sensitive to change. The policy enacted was a product of this conflict. Schwab contends that fundamental institutional culture and the specific historical context that influenced each group resulted in an “ever more conflicted” relationship that “also had a mutual and interactive influence on American society” (pp. xi, 1). Schwab's discussion of civil-military relations from 1961–1975 indicates that this past experience is, to a great extent, responsible for the continued separation of social, political, and military institutions and perspectives.

Schwab analyzes Clausewitz' classic trinity of the army, the government, and the people through the lens of cultural history methodology. However, the incongruities are deeper than mere cultural perspectives. Dissimilar institutional outlooks guided

each group to identify a specific frame of reference. The author draws a sharp contrast between a military primarily shaped by long-term institutional memory, a government heavily influenced by World War II and the immediate postwar environment, and a public sensitive to both views. Americans' shared wartime experience—near total mobilization and high levels of public support and participation—championed patriotism, anticommunism, and military identity, as well as promoted social mores throughout the 1950s. Later, many Americans began to reevaluate racial, gender, and other societal norms.

Schwab outlines several major factors that also influenced American policy. Vietnam's history played a significant role. The institutions of the growing U.S. security state, the active role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) as the Cold War developed, and the containment policy informed the decisions of military leaders. Nuclear weapons strategy and the strong desire to avoid appeasement—the “Munich analogy”—encouraged public support for decisive military action. Moreover, the complexity of the military mission—the enemy's use of regular and irregular forces, U.S. strategic mission creep, and shifting operational strategy—further shaped the conflict and its legacy.

These differences in worldview and context colored the strategy each group proposed. Military leaders advocated an essentially Clausewitzian strategy that Schwab describes as the “powerful directed use of force to accomplish specific objectives,” while political leaders, led by successive presidential administrations, were more likely to support graduated political strategies like the strategic hamlet program, Peace Corps initiatives, and military advisory efforts (p. 17). Many military leaders, however, believed civilian proposals often ran counter to sound principles of warfare. Kennedy's strategic hamlet program, for example, was a vulnerable defensive strategy that offered little opportunity for victory in the military sense. Moreover, Johnson's

preferred methods sent contradictory messages; his decision to commit ever larger numbers of ground troops after 1965, stood in contrast to his selective and graduated use of airpower. Schwab observes that the Joint Chiefs “favored three aggressive actions that were opposed by the State Department and the Department of Defense: (1) The removal of bombing restrictions on all military significant targets in North Vietnam (2) The mining of North Vietnamese deep water ports (3) The expansion of military operations into Cambodian territory” (p. 91). Service perspectives also promoted conflicted policy; the Army preferred to plan more conventional ground operations, Air Force leadership favored an extensive bombing campaign similar to the combined bomber offensive during World War II, and the Marine Corps was more comfortable with pacification techniques. Thus, Johnson fought the war with a strategy of graduated response, Nixon favored a directed political-military solution, Congress preferred a “managerial combined political-military approach,” and the enemy fought a deadly war of attrition (p. 36). Schwab notes that “the leadership groups were trapped. They were committed by their own institutional interests, ideologies, and self-defined political realities to wage a bureaucratic war against each other, while engaging the enemy in a very deadly, albeit limited, war in Indochina” (p. 41).

The clash of cultures Schwab describes had profound consequences. The intense debate produced distinct cultural memories and perceptions that set the tone for military strategy. Military leaders became reluctant to support large-scale overseas deployments and the draft as a means of acquiring manpower. In addition, they advocated the use of military power only when used decisively, as a last resort, and with the full support of the American people.

At first glance, there is little new in Schwab's current work. He concludes that some combination of pacification and conventional military action would probably have been more suc-

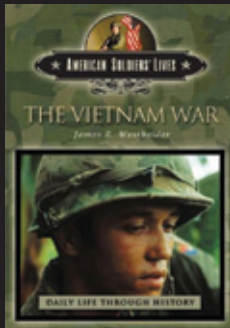
cessful in achieving the ultimate goal of this and any military operation—that of breaking the enemy's will to resist. Schwab argues that Congress and three presidential administrations limited effective military operations, which led to the failure of the South Vietnamese government. Some assumptions, such as a belief that given more time Kennedy would have initiated withdrawal, appear to be in contrast to the escalation described elsewhere and pass with little resolution. Likewise, Schwab's exploration of policy alternatives may be too counterfactual for many historians. However, these are minor criticisms of an excellent work.

The author's use of cultural history methodology provides a concise discussion of how institutional cultures and diverse prioritization of contextual influences prevented the development of effective strategy. Schwab traces the various groups responsible for American policy—politicians, military leaders, and the public; documents their interaction; and explains why each group advocated particular approaches. In a final chapter, Schwab notes that civilian leaders rejected strategies that produced military results, including counterinsurgency, pacification, and covert operations such as the Phoenix and Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) programs. A perceived lack of progress contributed to the loss of public support. Each group fought the war it wanted and failed to craft a comprehensive strategy that would provide for the continued survival of South Vietnam.

Dr. Deborah Kidwell is a former associate professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and now serves as a staff historian at Edwards Air Force Base, California.



The Vietnam War



By James E. Westheimer
Greenwood Press, Daily Life Through
History Series: American Soldiers'
Lives, 2007, 248 pp., \$65

Review by Erik B. Villard

James E. Westheimer, an associate professor of history at Clermont College, University of Cincinnati, has undertaken the difficult task of writing a concise history of the American military experience in the Vietnam War. Professor Westheimer has already made a name for himself in the field, having written two books about African-Americans in the war. His latest book, which appears in the Daily Life Through History Series by Greenwood Press, sets out to explain the dangers, difficulties, and rewards of being a “grunt,” or common infantryman. A work of that sort is useful; indeed, several books, particularly two, Christian G. Appy’s *Working-Class War* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993) and James R. Ebert’s *A Life in a Year* (Novato, Calif., 1993), have used the same approach with satisfying results. Unfortunately, Westheimer’s book cannot compete with the quality of those earlier works and is ultimately hamstrung by its uncertain grasp of military events, its limited use of primary sources, and numerous errors when identifying weapons and units.

It can be easier to write a voluminous book than a concise one. Barely tipping the scales at just over two hundred pages including footnotes, yet bearing the weighty title *The Vietnam War*, Westheimer’s book had to go on a severe narrative diet in order to reach its bantam size. His first chapter, which pro-

vides an overview of the war from 1944 to 1973, rushes through those events in just twenty-four pages. The author devotes at least a page each to a few key battles such as the Ia Drang campaign in November 1965, the JUNCTION CITY and CEDAR FALLS operations of early 1967, and the siege of Khe Sanh in early 1968 but passes lightly over other major campaigns such as Dak To in November 1967 and the incursion into Cambodia of May 1970. As a result, his chapter on strategy ends up feeling impressionistic and somewhat unbalanced.

Furthermore, the few times that Westheimer discusses a battle in any depth we are left to wonder about the extent of his knowledge. In his discussion of the Ia Drang campaign, for example, he identifies the commander of the “First Air Cavalry Division” as “General Douglas Kennard” when the correct name for the unit is the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and its commander was Maj. Gen. Harry W. O. Kinnard. The author says the division was based “north and west of Pleiku” when in fact it was based some fifty miles *east* of Pleiku at An Khe (pp. 15–16). Westheimer describes the battle for Landing Zone X-Ray as occurring 16–24 November when the correct dates are 14–16 November. Precision matters in these things.

The author’s analysis of the Ia Drang campaign is also suspect. To some degree he misunderstands the lessons that the North Vietnamese drew from the battle; however, many historians who have not read the Vietnamese Communist sources make the same mistake. Certainly, the North Vietnamese acknowledged American superiority in technology and firepower, but they also concluded that fighting and beating the Americans in conventional battles would be possible. General Nguyen Chi Thanh, the main Communist strategist until his death in mid-1967, was especially convinced of this and did not hesitate to wage an aggressive main force war. The frequency with which the enemy threw entire battalions and sometimes whole regiments against allied firebases and border camps year after year proves this point beyond question. Guerrilla tactics definitely

continued to play their role in the war, but Westheimer should do more to emphasize the active conventional war that was going on at the same time.

The primary aim of Westheimer’s book, however, is to “[depict] the daily routines of soldiers at war” (p. ix). His second chapter, devoted to the recruitment and training of soldiers going to Vietnam, contains vignettes on life in boot camp, weapons and tactical training, and the draft. His third chapter on life in the field covers the different types of assignments a soldier might receive, his options for rest and relaxation, and his interactions with local Vietnamese civilians. The fourth chapter, which deals with combat, examines the weapons and tactics of the war on both sides as well as topics such as casualties and the media. Westheimer’s concluding chapter surveys a host of problems that soldiers faced during and after their tours including race hostility, Agent Orange, post-traumatic stress disorder, and readjusting to civilian life. Considering the limited space at his disposal Westheimer does a reasonably good job covering that broad array of topics.

This brings us to the issue of sources. Unfortunately, to illustrate his points, the author tends to rely heavily on a dozen or so interviews culled from the Oral History Project found online at the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University. While those interviews are useful, one might wish that the author had consulted a broader array of archival material. The Vietnam Archive, itself, contains tens of thousands of pages of primary documents generated by the United States armed forces during the war. The Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, a facility which appears in the author’s acknowledgments, also maintains a treasure trove of interviews, official documents, and various kinds of military ephemera that would have shed valuable light on the world of the Vietnam War grunt. Even a small sampling of such material would have bolstered the authority of Westheimer’s book.

Errors in nomenclature further undermine the credibility of the author. He writes about a “175-mm. howitzer”

when the proper description should read “175-mm. gun” (a howitzer being different from a gun in various technical matters such as trajectory and range). The author mentions an “AK47 submachine gun” when the proper description for the weapon is an AK47 assault rifle, an important distinction that relates to a weapon’s range, caliber, and accuracy. Along those same lines, a caption on page 34 describes two American soldiers “holding machine guns” when clearly they are holding M16 assault rifles. When writing a book about soldiers it is no small matter to understand their tools of the trade.

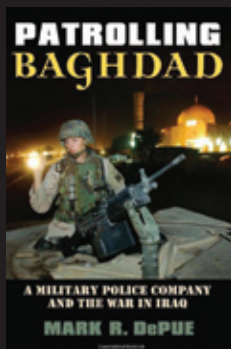
Westheider also has trouble with unit identifications. He sometimes leaves out important information, such as when he talks about “Charlie Company, First Battalion, First Air Cavalry” (p. 126). An experienced military reader will immediately wonder: First Battalion of what regiment? Does he mean First Air Cavalry Division? It might seem like quibbling to focus on such technical issues but those errors, especially when they appear numerous times, detract from the credibility of the book.

Taken in whole, Professor Westheider’s *The Vietnam War* is a commendable attempt to describe the world of the American soldier in Vietnam to a general readership who probably knows little about the conflict. In the end, however, a combination of technical errors and the paucity of sources on which it relies consign the book to second-rate status behind several more polished and thorough works of the same kind.

Dr. Erik B. Villard is a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History who is currently writing a book on Army combat operations in Vietnam, November 1967 to October 1968. He received his doctorate in history from the University of Washington, where he wrote his dissertation on the influence of Progressivism on the Army during the First World War with a focus on Camp Lewis, in Tacoma, Washington.



Patrolling Baghdad: A Military Police Company and the War in Iraq



By Mark R. DePue
University of Kansas Press, 2007,
253 pp., \$29.95

Review by Wm. Shane Story

In *Patrolling Baghdad*, Mark R. DePue sketches the experiences of the 233d Military Police (MP) Company during its 2003–2004 deployment to Iraq. The 233d reached Baghdad two weeks after the fall of the regime and spent an exhausting year trying to restore order and find relief from miserable conditions. The unit made fitful attempts to win hearts and minds, but both Iraqis and Americans lacked the vital ingredient of trust. Due to the continuing danger and tactical confusion, the company commander calculated “the only prudent thing to do was to assume an Iraqi was an enemy until proven otherwise” (p. 143). The 233d redeployed in April 2004, just as violent uprisings exploded in Fallujah and Sadr City. Iraq was spinning out of control, the campaign teetering on the brink of failure; it seemed the 233d’s year of effort and sacrifice had come to nothing. As a record of frustrations, anxieties, and personal stories, *Patrolling Baghdad* captures the 233d’s view of the war, but it lacks strategic context and empathy for Iraqis.

An oral historian and a retired lieutenant colonel of the Illinois National Guard, DePue appreciates soldiers and lauds the 233d as “hometown heroes” from his own Springfield, Illinois. His scholarship is solid and his timing was

right in tackling the subject soon after the 233d returned home. He uses interviews, e-mails, operation and fragmentary orders, unit logs, and newspaper articles to capture soldiers’ views of what happened. DePue organizes the book like a thematic diary, with topical chapters arranged in rough chronological order. A few maps and photographs round out the work.

The citizen-soldiers of the 233d Military Police Company, a National Guard unit from Springfield, Illinois, were theoretically better suited to stability operations and law enforcement than active-duty combat troops, but there is little evidence they accomplished much. The company was a cross-section of Illinois citizens, from police and corrections officers to mechanics, farmers, college students, and teachers. Formed by a state worried about urban civil disturbances in the wake of the 1968 riots, the 233d deployed in 1991 for DESERT STORM and developed strong confidence in its history and professionalism from that and other deployments through the 1990s. In early 2003, it went through a hasty mobilization and deployment, going from Springfield to Baghdad in just ten weeks. The unit began by rebuilding looted Iraqi police stations and recruiting and training a new Iraqi police force. Iraq’s ruined infrastructure made the mission more difficult and the supply situation was dire. Vehicles wore down quickly from heavy use, harsh conditions, and a lack of spare parts. Like the rest of the Coalition forces in Iraq, the 233d had more missions than troops, and frequent changes in the chain of command and its area of operations left guardsmen disoriented for months.

Many of the 233d’s experiences demonstrated why some consider military intelligence an oxymoron. Shootings and bombings provided abundant evidence of bad guys out to get Americans, but bad reporting and poor intelligence meant many of the unit’s efforts to root out insurgents left it chasing after ghosts. Because the unit was in a combat

zone, the troops believed action was its own justification and the rules of civil society did not apply to them; they owned the roads and Iraqi vehicles that got in their way deserved the damage caused by High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) playing bumper cars. If the tactical situation was bad, strategy was no better because the American-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) undermined the mission with mindless policy making. Isolated in the Green Zone, the CPA was notorious for issuing utopian proclamations and making decisions without planning, coordination, resources, or means of implementation. For example, when the Coalition Provisional Authority announced Iraqi policemen would be paid \$20, Iraqis looked to Coalition soldiers on the ground to make good on the declaration though Coalition units lacked the funding, guidance, or legal authority to pay Iraqis. The best the Coalition could hope for was to look foolish rather than malicious.

DePue's focus on individuals gives his history personal depth, and there are sharp contrasts among his subjects. Sfc. John Gillette was a hard-nosed, aggressive platoon sergeant. Perhaps overwhelmed by his responsibilities, Gillette was dangerous. Days after arriving in Baghdad, Gillette claimed he was ambushed by a dozen Fedayeen "laying down murderous fire." He drove a HMMWV with one hand while spraying fire from his M16 with the other, rammed into a bus, spun tires to escape while burning rubber, changed magazines, and continued firing before escaping the kill zone. He recounted eleven Fedayeen dead and nine wounded along with numerous civilian passengers on a bus, but not a single round hit an American or an American vehicle, an unlikely outcome for a prepared ambush by dozens of insurgents (p. 43). DePue's most interesting figure is Sgt. Dana Hodges, a rare female MP team leader and a trained medic, full of empathy and a deep thinker. DePue's Americans are complex, but

his Iraqis are a simplistic collection of incompetent policemen, bad insurgents, and foolish civilians.

Soldiers think of war as a bonding experience, something that inducts them into a band of brothers, but alienation was common in the 233d. Hard work, body armor, and high temperatures produced many heat casualties, but one female soldier feared others thought she was weak because she succumbed and that they looked at her differently for it; she never again felt part of the team. Just after Christmas 2003, an improvised explosive device produced the unit's worst combat casualty, a lieutenant. Evacuated home, he received a hero's welcome but felt hollow. He could not shake the feeling that he had been merely in the wrong place at the wrong time. Months of isolated medical treatments felt like punishment for leaving his unit in combat.

Sergeant Hodges helped the wounded after dozens died at the bombing of the United Nations' compound, but pools of blood became a lasting trauma. She was glad her squad members did not see the carnage, but such empathy brought more isolation (p. 126). Alienation tested individuals' resilience, and keeping faith in others, especially in Iraqis, was the hardest thing to do.

Patrolling Baghdad fills a niche in the occupation of Iraq, but it suffers significant gaps. Readers will not understand the 233d's role in the larger campaign. Guardsmen secured meetings of Iraqi politicians and responded to the bombing of the United Nations' compound on 19 August, but they did not comprehend the collapse of Iraqi governance or how the United Nations' departure heralded a more violent future. DePue relays the guardsmen's certainty, occasional regret, worry that things are not right, and hope they will get better. He places the story in a larger American context. On their return home, the guardsmen shook hands with Governor Rod Blagojevich and Senator Barack Obama, the tension between the ambitious politicians palpable between smiles and mugs for the camera. Sergeant Hodges struggled to

understand what had happened. She drifted for a time before landing on her feet in Las Vegas' booming real estate industry, but the subsequent bust belied DePue's frail grasp at a happy ending.

Lt. Col. Wm. Shane Story is a strategic planner in the Office of the Chief, Army Reserve. He received his Ph.D. in history from Rice University and served as the Multi-National Force-Iraq historian from 2007 to 2008.



THE CHIEF'S CORNER

DR. JEFF CLARKE

Continued from page 3

have been collected otherwise. These products provide immediate doctrinal and instructional material to the Army school system, training material for deploying Army soldiers and commands, and at least a factual basis for the larger historical interpretations and judgments that must follow. Rather than hesitate and delay their initial findings and analysis, Army historians have embraced such tasks, although the work has often demanded the full measure of their professional skills regarding everything from the weighing and organizing of historical evidence to the presentation of completed findings that are balanced, well-reasoned, and clearly written. But only in this way can they make best use of their special skills and knowledge, better serving the organizations they support while contributing as well to the larger professional historical community to which they belong.



THE CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

DR. RICHARD W. STEWART



Historical Mindedness

*"A knowledge of military history—the acquisition of a sense of historical mindedness—is a necessary component of an officer's technical competence, whatever his rank or position."*¹

General Donn A. Starry

During the mid-1980s, when I first entered the world of Army history, the emphasis within the community was on how to increase the degree of "historical mindedness" in the Army, especially in the officer corps. The goal was to instill at all levels of the Army a sense of the value and applicability of history so that thinking through problems using a historical perspective would become almost automatic. Although the use of the term has gone somewhat out of favor over the intervening two decades, it really encapsulates a lot of what we try to do today as we teach, write, publish, and use history. To remind us of its inherent worth, I present to you an extract from a short paper written over seven years ago by then-Chief of Military History Brig. Gen. John S. Brown, who has since retired from the Army but continues to write for the Center on history, transformation, and the U.S. Army. The paper presents observations and arguments that are important for today's historical community, and it deserves reprinting as we continue to encounter a declining sense of historical mindedness within the Army and look for new ways to reengage the Army and prove the enduring value of history.

We who live and work in the world of official military history—whether on the supply or demand/whether as producers or consumers—take for granted its value to the government and to the nation. But others, intelligent men and women who are diligent in their public service, do not. To them, therefore, we are especially obligated to assert and justify objectively, cogently, and succinctly why military history is valuable. Doing so involves building an argument around three related notions: the first speaks to how military history benefits our soldiers; the second to the institutional context within which the soldiers receive their history; and the third to the historical assistance certain Army institutions, such as the Center of Military History, provide to the Army staff, major commands, and the educational system.

The first notion has two aspects—a general and a particular one. At all levels of the army, in the combat and support

branches, soldiers exposed to military history broadly construed gain a sense of basic issues of national security and military strategy as they have developed in the American past. They also explore these issues in the context of the evolution of American values such as free expression and also observe how competing ideas have influenced American military leaders and their actions. The knowledge and understanding of the military past so acquired provide to soldiers insight into the military present, allowing them to better understand, again in broad terms, what the nation is doing militarily, why it is doing what it is doing, and what it expects from the Army. In a more particular sense, the study of military history fosters practical knowledge. While one would be foolish to argue that combat lessons learned and taught to the officer corps in historical context automatically translate into solutions for problems encountered in, say, a firefight in Afghanistan, one would be equally foolish to contend that there is little for the combat leader to learn the study of significant battles and campaigns in military history. By so doing they develop, or should develop, a sense of why attacks and campaigns succeeded or failed, and, in turn, be more likely to reach the correct decision if faced with a similar situation, be it at the strategic, operational, or tactical level, in time of war.

Our officers receive doses of history appropriate to their rank and responsibilities at various times in their career: at the officer in training level (at West Point and in ROTC programs), at branch schools, at the Command and General Staff College, and at the Army and National War Colleges. As officers move up the career-ladder, their historical requirements transition from the intensely practical and relatively straightforward (infantry tactics in the Mexican War) to the more complex (how notions of command and control developed over time) and finally to the highest levels of complexity and sophistication a senior officer can face (national strategy and its multiple subordinate manifestations in a global conflict). Although the information they receive in courses at these schools derives from the work of professional historians, it is presented within the

framework of applied history by professors and instructors in Army institutions who have long experience concerning the best methods to impart both history and its lessons to the officer corps. Thus it is vitally important that these institutions continue to exist in vigorous health so that current and future military leaders will be able to receive much of their military history education at these schools. Because those attending typically return to a more traditional Army assignment after their school time, the Army gains in another way—that is, each experience instructs and enhances the other, making the officer more sensitive to the utility of ideas and theories in his work, yet more realistic regarding their limits in real-time practices.

Several institutions within the Army are tasked with the job of providing on demand historical assistance to senior Army leaders. In substance, the assistance might be to answer questions and/or provide options by showing how, for example, the Army has down-sized after wars, transformed in the face of new conditions and/or technology, dealt (or failed to deal) with social problems, reacted to combat failures, or developed new tactical and operational methods. The range of questions is broad and diverse. In form, the assistance might be delivered as a briefing, an information paper, a brochure, a monograph, or as a volume. Because these institutions have on hand, as permanent civil servants, professional historians who have for years immersed themselves in American and world military history, there is almost no military subject on which they cannot provide a quick, accurate, and helpful examination to a requesting principal. It is difficult to imagine contractors or even permanent staff in agencies not primarily focused on history able to offer the high-quality and timely support the professionals in these institutions do. These same institutions act as an outstanding resource for those in the Army education system mounting courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences on Army history. They can, among other things, produce bibliographies of primary and secondary sources, provide relevant documents, advise on syllabi, deliver lectures, and give guest lectures.

Through these three notions, or strands, the argument is made that military history is a net-plus for the Army and the nation. The strands also under gird another notion, implicit in and critical to the argument—i.e., that the strands create, or at least reflect, the virtues of historical mindedness. While an exact definition of the concept may be elusive, one may be sure that it assumes a high level of interest in the past—interest that is critical (in the sense of critical thinking, not of criticizing) and skeptical. Furthermore, it includes, but is not limited to,

- the practice of seeing parallels and relationships in history while appreciating the uniqueness of each event
- the need to be objective
- an awareness of the continuity with the past that we find in every time and place coupled with an awareness of how and why things change
- a realization that there are multiple causes for events in history and varying interpretations as to which causes are the most significant ones

- a deep appreciation of the simple fact that our knowledge of the past will always be, no matter how much we discover, incomplete and tentative

When we inculcate in Army officers the habit of historical mindedness, we empower each one in a special and positive way to contribute more fully to his profession and to the nation. Just as the infantry officer who has learned to study terrain as ground to fight on never again strolls through a park without doing terrain analysis, the historically minded officer will never again read an account of a past war—its politics, policy, strategy, campaigns, and battles—without applying to the narrative critical analysis along the lines marked out above. And, because he knows the past and understands it, he may, when essaying such analysis, make a connection, see a relationship or pattern that suggests an answer, or even produces one, to the problem he faces. In a nutshell, military history and historical mindedness exist as the necessary laboratory of the military professional.

Every day let's do all we can to bring a greater sense of this historical mindedness to the Army we serve.

NOTE

1. Msg, General Donn A. Starry to multiple addressees, 17 Jul 1979, printed in *Press On! Selected Works of General Donn A. Starry*, ed. Lewis Sorley, 2 vols. (Leavenworth, Kans.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2009), 1: 615.



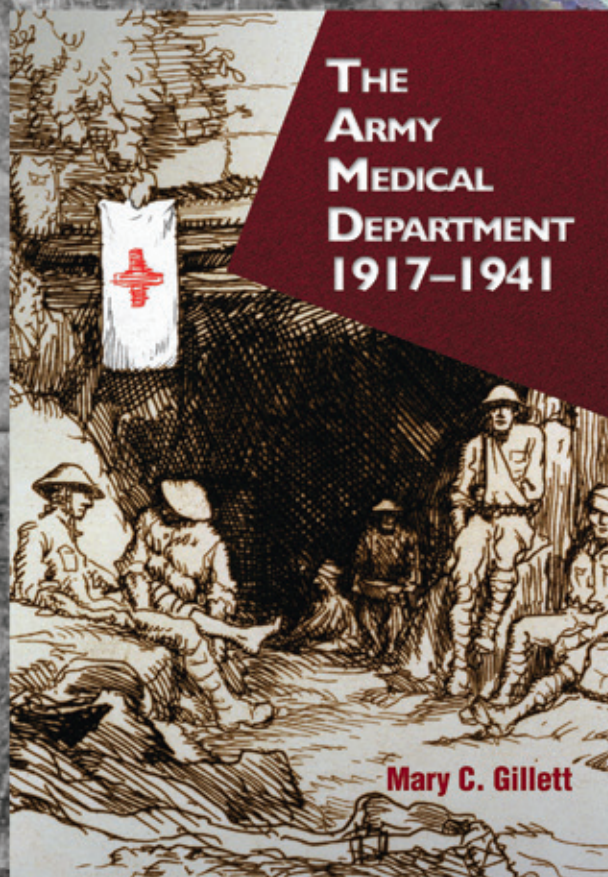
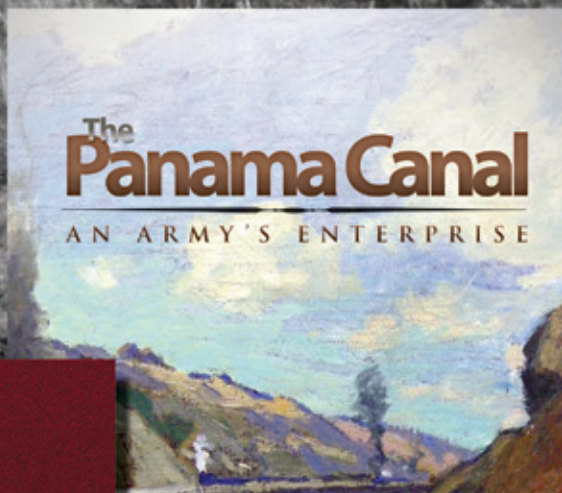
ARMY HISTORY

OnLine

The Center of Military History now makes current and recent back issues of *Army History* available to the public on its Web site. The posted issues begin with that of Winter 2007 (no. 63), and each new publication will appear shortly after the issue is printed. Issues may be viewed or downloaded at no cost in Adobe® PDF format. An index page of the available issues may be found at www.history.army.mil/armyhstory.

New CMH Publications

See page 5 for more information.



ARMYHISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History