

ARMY HISTORY

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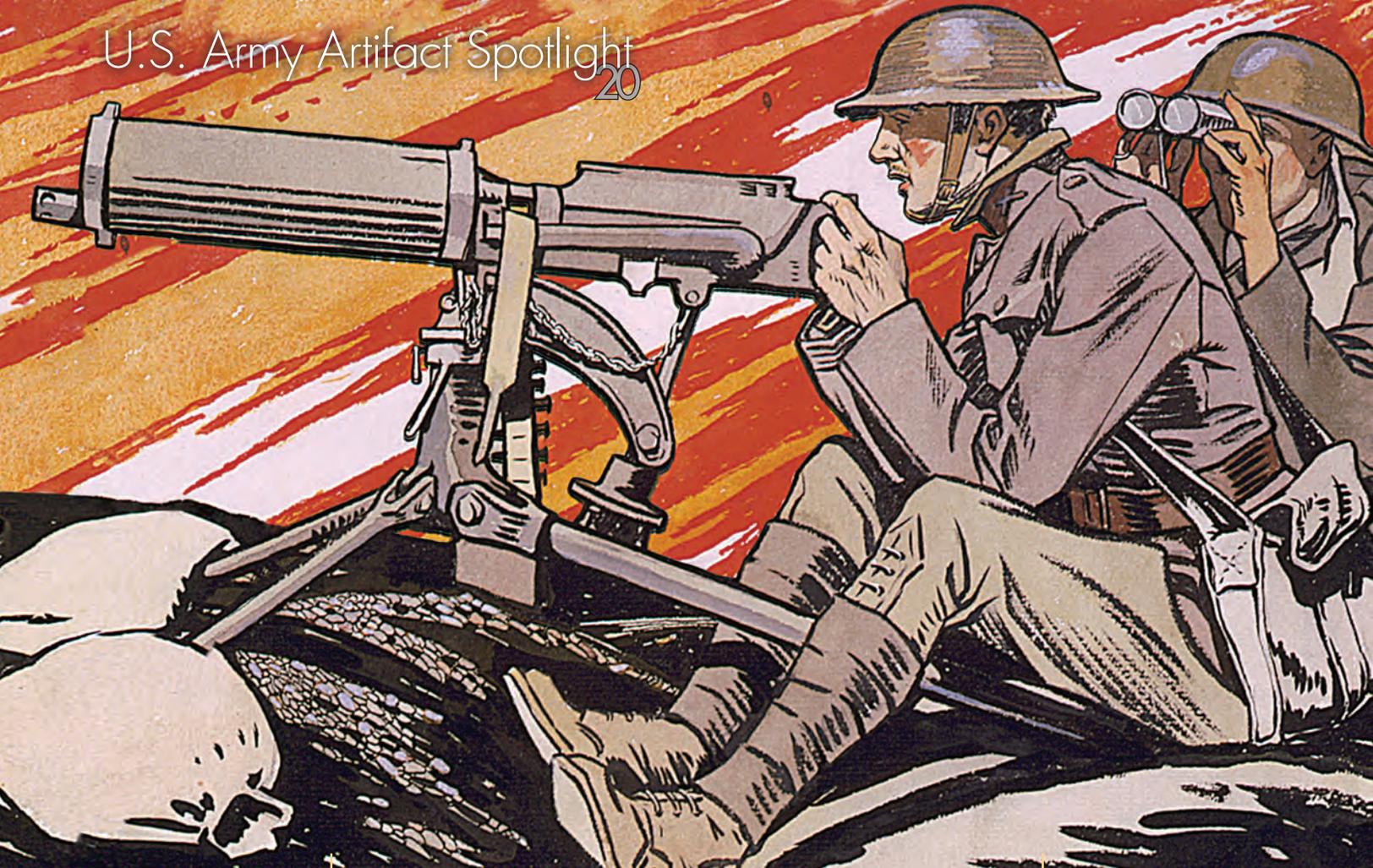
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ARMY HISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

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Cover Image: Illustration of two U.S. infantrymen by Edward Penfield, c. 1918/Library of Congress

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

The Spring 2013 issue of *Army History* opens with an article by Mark E. Grotelueschen, a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force and an associate professor of history at the United States Air Force Academy, about the contributions of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) during the final months of World War I. Grotelueschen highlights two specific examples of successful AEF offensive actions and argues that these attacks are emblematic of the type of underappreciated battlefield advances to which the AEF contributed. The author readily acknowledges that the AEF has its detractors but hopes that as we approach the centennial celebration of American involvement in the war that current and future scholarship will allow for a reevaluation of the AEF's record.

Next, we recognize an African American pioneer who broke down barriers, not only in the field of medicine, but also in the U.S. Army. During his lifetime, Alexander T. Augusta collected a number of African American "firsts." Born in Virginia, he completed his education and training as a physician in Canada, returning to his native country after the outbreak of the Civil War, determined to offer his skills as a doctor in service to the Union Army. Author Gerald S. Henig, emeritus professor of history at California State University, East Bay, details the numerous instances of racial bigotry that Augusta had to endure, both within and outside the Army. Ever defiant, the good doctor persisted, often bringing to light the discrimination that black soldiers still faced in the "emancipated" North.

This issue's Army Artifact Spotlight highlights not a single artifact, but rather a collection that symbolizes one of the many Army transformations during the World War II years. The William S. Barrett Collection is part of the core collection of artifacts of the U.S. Army and is focused on the evolution of artillery from horse-drawn to mechanized.

In his Chief's Corner, the chief of military history recounts the many accomplishments of the Army history community during the last year. The chief historian, in his Footnote, draws attention to the long tenure of cooperation between the National Park Service and the U.S. Army, calling for the Army history community to emulate the Park Service's "Post to Parks" program.

As always, I ask for your submissions on the history of the Army and for your comments on this publication.

Bryan J. Hockensmith
Managing Editor



THE CHIEF'S CORNER

ROBERT J. DALESSANDRO

TEMPUS FUGIT: 2012 COME AND GONE

Another year has passed. The world did not end. We did not “fall off the cliff.” And we survived another round of resource and budget reductions. It is important then that the Army history community takes stock of its varied accomplishments from 2012.

We continued, as always, to refine our efforts to provide top-level historical support to military operations in theater. This will culminate in April with the deployment of a theater historian to Afghanistan to document the final months of the mission there.

A Center of Military History (CMH) partnership with the Combat Studies Institute yielded two important volumes on small-unit operations in Afghanistan, which are already being used throughout the Training and Doctrine Command to improve the combat leadership training of our young officers and noncommissioned officers.

We incessantly pushed forward our strategic plan, which brings CMH back to basics, consolidates history functions Army-wide, and finally positions CMH as just that—the Army’s *center* of military history. CMH has been fully engaging in the Army Headquarters Transformation process and has toiled to position the Center as a direct reporting unit, with authority over important history organizations across multiple echelons of command.

We continue to shepherd the National Museum of the United States Army project, looking forward to a June 2017 opening.

New exhibits were developed in the Pentagon, such as establishing a Wounded Warrior Corridor with an exhibit focused on operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Display cases on the E-Ring were revamped, including an exhibit paying tribute to Army Families and a new Army Medicine case. We installed several important exhibits outside the Pentagon, including our new Making Army Exhibits Better at the Museum Support Center at Fort Belvoir; the Story of Fort Polk at, oddly enough, Fort Polk; the History of Fort Huachuca at, you guessed it, Fort Huachuca; and a special exhibit on the history of the

U.S. Army through Tactical Maps for Under Secretary of the Army Dr. Joseph Westphal.

We continued our matchless support to the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), first by continuing to provide artifact collection at the cemetery and second by staffing and manning the first truly multifunctional history office at ANC. CMH continues to provide historical, curatorial, archival, and cultural resource support to the cemetery. Most importantly, we redesigned the circa 1980s exhibits at the Arlington National Cemetery Visitor Center, transitioning it to a fully functional Welcome Center. This Welcome Center will serve over 3.5 million visitors a year! Let me assure you that working these changes through the Congressional Advisory Committee was no small accomplishment!

Consolidation of the Army’s central artifact collections continued, focusing particularly on macro artifacts, with the relocation of scores of large items from Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), Maryland, to new state-of-the-art facilities at Anniston Army Depot, Alabama, and Fort Benning, Georgia. This initiative brought us into environmental compliance at APG and the resultant efficiencies saved hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Two of CMH’s 2011 publications garnered significant awards. *Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the U.S. Army, 1989–2005*, by John Sloan Brown, received the 2012 Society for Military History Distinguished Book Award and *Freedom by the Sword: The U.S. Colored Troops, 1862–1867*, by William A. Dobak, received the Richard W. Leopold Prize given by the Organization of American Historians.

Our recent publications included James McNaughton’s *The Army in the Pacific: A Century of Engagement*, which has already received a great deal of senior leader attention. Also new are a commemorative pamphlet, *The Civil War Begins: Opening Clashes, 1861*, by Jennifer Murray; the first brochure of the U.S. Army Campaigns of the Vietnam War series, *Deepening Involvement, 1945–1965*,

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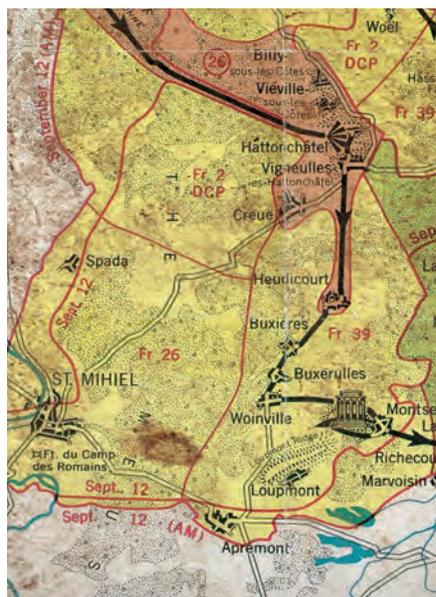
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THE DOUGHBOYS MAKE GOOD: AMERICAN VICTORIES AT ST. MIHIEL AND BLANC MONT RIDGE

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THE INDOMITABLE DR. AUGUSTA: THE FIRST BLACK PHYSICIAN IN THE U.S. ARMY

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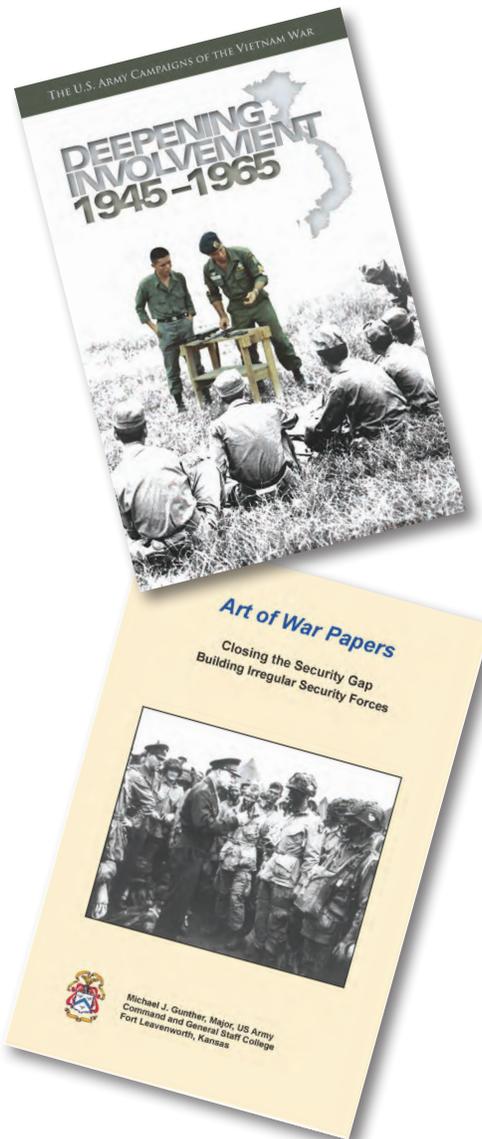
NEWSNOTES

CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY RELEASES NEW PUBLICATION

The Center of Military History is pleased to announce the publication of the first brochure in the U.S. Army Campaigns of the Vietnam War series. *Deepening Involvement: 1945–1965*, by Dr. Richard W. Stewart, examines the activity of the U.S. Army in Vietnam beginning with members of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services in early 1945 through the aftermath of the Tonkin Gulf incident in early August 1965. During this time, the United States saw its role evolve from supporting the French position after World War II to becoming an increasingly involved military adviser to the South Vietnamese. The author covers early U.S. support to South Vietnam through equipment and training as well as the increase of U.S. troops to protect air and naval bases from North Vietnamese attack. This 68-page brochure includes five maps. It has been issued as CMH Pub 76–1. Army publication account holders may obtain copies of the book from the Directorate of Logistics–Washington, Media Distribution Division, ATTN: JDHQVPAS, 1655 Woodson Road, St. Louis, MO 63114-6128. Account holders may also place their orders at <http://www.apd.army.mil>. Individuals may order the volume from the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) via its Web site at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>. GPO has priced this brochure at \$8.

NEW PUBLICATION FROM THE COMBAT STUDIES INSTITUTE PRESS

The Combat Studies Institute (CSI) Press has recently issued a new publication titled *Closing the Security Gap: Building Irregular Security Forces*, by Maj. Michael Gunther. An examination of the British and U.S. experience



with the use of local, irregular security forces suggests their importance in assisting the host nation government and counterinsurgent forces. The importance of the successful establishment, training, and employment of these forces is thoroughly examined. The author argues that several prerequisites, including the partnership with an advisory force, the consent of the host nation's government, and that the security force be accountable

to the local civil authority, must exist. However, partnership does not guarantee a local irregular force's success. Through extensive archival research and the examination of primary source interviews associated with the British experience in the North-West Frontier and the Dhofar region of Oman, the author hopes the reader will begin to understand what is needed to create a successful mentorship force. This 130-page monograph examines the method of partnership, selection and traits of the advisers, and the host nation government's role in building the Punjab Irregular Force and Frontier Corps in the North-West Frontier in India, the Firqat in Dhofar, and the Sons of Iraq in Anbar Province. This publication is the latest in the growing Art of War series and is available for download in PDF format on the CSI Web site at <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/csi/CSIPubs.asp>.

2013 CONFERENCE OF ARMY HISTORIANS CANCELED

Due to recent budget cuts and resource reductions, the 2013 Conference of Army Historians, recently renamed the Army Historians Training Symposium, has been canceled. The conference is hosted biennially in the Washington, D.C., area by the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH). Since 1974, CMH has hosted seventeen conferences. The primary purpose of the conference is to allow the chief of military history to set a focus for Army historical efforts, which in turn supports the development of both Army doctrine and training and development. There are currently no plans to reschedule this conference for 2014.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Mark E. Grotelueschen is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force, and currently serves as an associate professor of history at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He is the deputy for military history in the department of history, and has served as the chair of the academy's African studies group. He holds degrees from the Air Force Academy, the University of Calgary, and Texas A&M University, and is the author of *Doctrine Under Trial: American Artillery Employment in World War I* (Westport, Conn., 2000) and *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I* (New York, 2007), which was selected for the U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Professional Reading List in 2012.



On the Trail of the Hun, St. Mihiel Drive, by William James Aylward, 1918, watercolor and gouache drawing on paper

The Doughboys Make Good

American Victories at St. Mihiel and Blanc Mont Ridge

BY MARK E. GROTELUESCHEN

Despite the fact that the Great War ended over ninety years ago, it may not be an exaggeration to say that we are living in the golden era of First World War scholarship—probably in a global sense, but undeniably in an American sense. Regarding the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), the quality and the quantity of the scholarship over the past two to three decades has been remarkable—opening up for us, often for the first time, a better understanding of how the United States created, trained, and employed the most massive army in its history up to that time. While this scholarship has included biographies and memoirs, studies of the contributions and treatment of ethnic groups, examinations of soldiers' relationships with British and French troops and civilians, and discussions of the influence of AEF veterans on American society and government policies, it has also included a much needed examination of the operational experiences of American combat units.¹ These studies have advanced

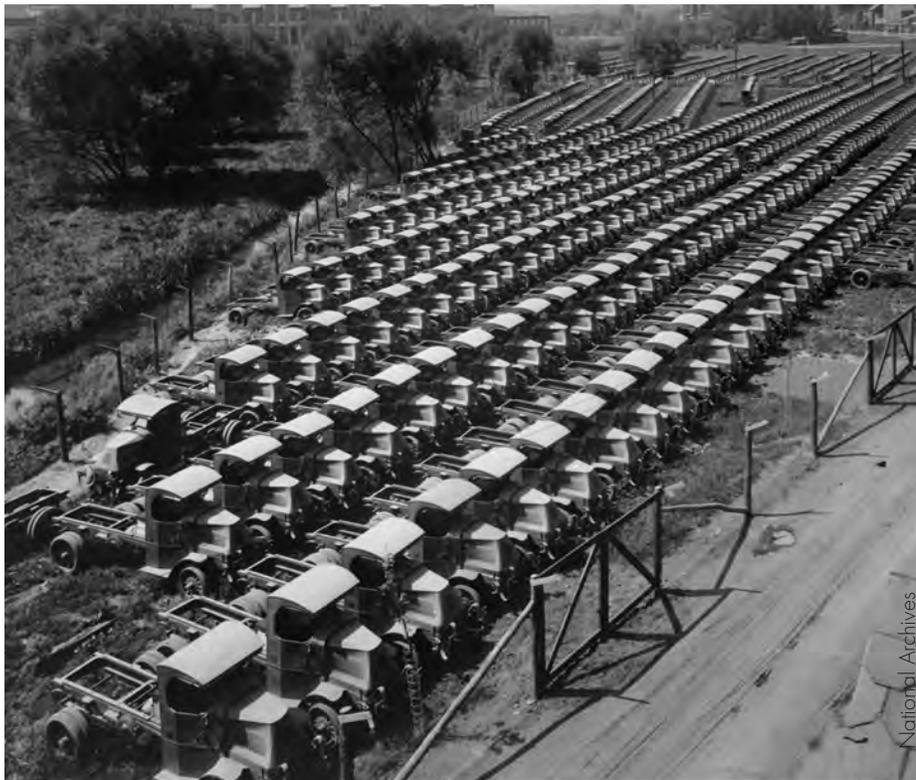
our understanding of a number of important issues, especially how the AEF fought, why it fought the way it did, what its strengths and weaknesses were as a combat force, and how it contributed to the generally impressive Allied operational successes in the so-called “hundred days,” as well as the unexpectedly rapid overall Allied victory in the fall of 1918.²

This article focuses primarily on those final questions—how and in what ways the AEF played a role in the Allied victory in 1918. Recent scholarship has begun to highlight a number of contributions that often have been neglected—such as its participation, both directly and indirectly, in the stopping of the German spring offensives; its role in the Aisne-Marne offensive of mid-July; and most recently, thanks especially to the efforts of Robert H. Ferrell and Edward G. Lengel, the AEF's overly bloody but nonetheless important 47-day-long effort in the Meuse-Argonne.³ Nearly all of these studies have shown that the AEF was an inexperienced and

flawed combat force, but also that it was ultimately a crucial element to the Allied successes in the final year of the war. To the above-mentioned operational successes, we could add the less measurable, but perhaps even more important, factors related to the improved Allied morale (at all levels of war) as a result of the arrival and employment of the more than two million American soldiers that turned the significant Allied manpower deficit of the end of 1917 into an equally important Allied manpower advantage by the fall of 1918.

Those millions of doughboys did a few very important things on the Western Front in 1918. First, as more and more of the massive 28,000-man American divisions entered the front lines throughout the spring, summer, and fall of 1918, they freed more experienced British and French divisions to fight on the most active sectors of the front. Ultimately, by mid-October, the AEF held over 100 miles of the Western Front (the French held 244, the British 83, and the Belgians 15).⁴





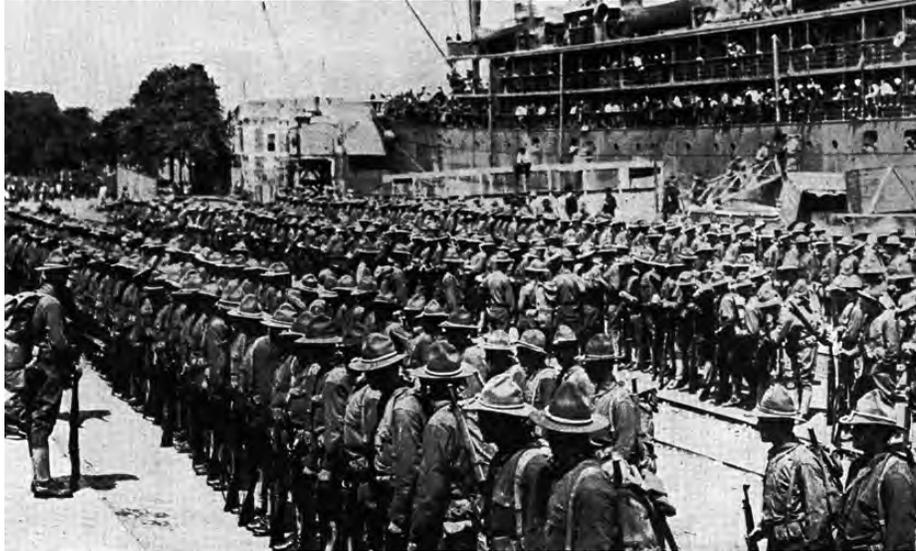
National Archives

The huge influx of American materiel greatly aided the beleaguered Allied war effort.

This was a significant contribution to Allied victory. Second, American units won—and helped win—key combat victories at various points in the line, from Flanders to the Vosges. Often they did so sloppily, recklessly, occasionally even ineptly; but nevertheless, when American units fought on the defensive, they were rarely

thrown back; and when they attacked, they usually moved forward. Though they often suffered more casualties than they should have, ultimately they pushed the Germans back and meted out much punishment along the way. As we have learned increasingly over the past few decades, the Allies did not win because they were more tactically

The first American troops arriving at St. Nazaire, France, 26 June 1917

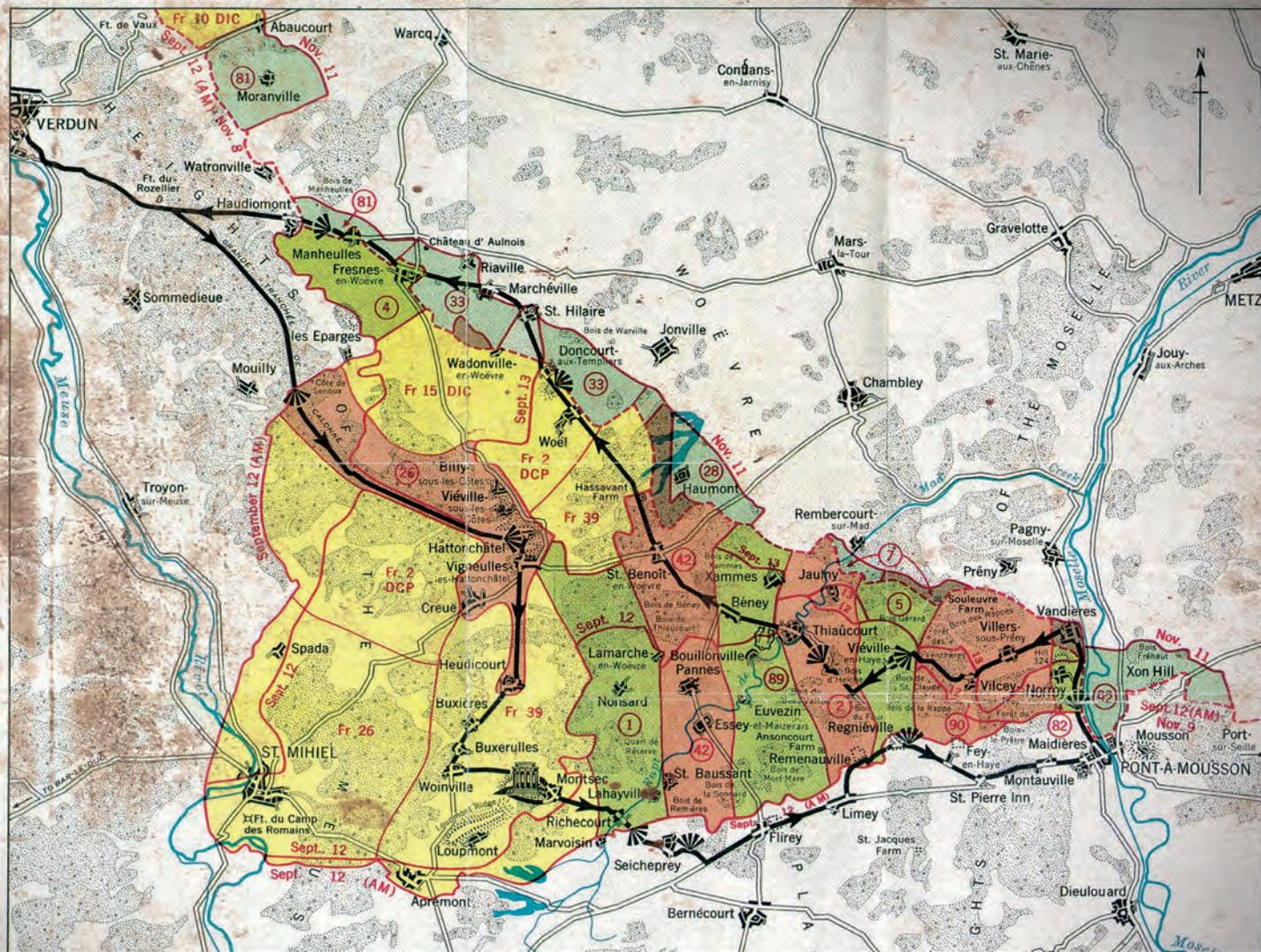


American Battle Monuments Commission

savvy than the Germans—though they often showed quite a bit of tactical competence in 1918. The Allies won on the Western Front in large part because they won the war of attrition that the Great War had become—in food, money, and raw materials, but also in aircraft, tanks, artillery pieces, and men. And the AEF attacks—flawed though they often were—were a key part in keeping attritional pressure on the Germans. In addition, the large American offensives in the last hundred days of the war were an important part of Marshal Ferdinand Foch’s strategic plan to systematically and sequentially destroy the major German salients on the Western Front and then wage a general offensive all along the line. Without a large, ever growing, and rapidly improving AEF, it is almost impossible to imagine the Allies turning from the defensive to the offensive as quickly as they did in the summer of 1918 or waging the final general push all along the front so successfully in the fall of that year.

This article discusses in greater length the kind of AEF contributions previously mentioned. First, it attempts to return some attention to the St. Mihiel offensive—what ought rightfully to be considered America’s first truly great modern battle—a massive, expeditionary, industrial, high-tech, combined arms, coalition campaign that overwhelmed its opponent. Largely due to a simplistic and often mistaken understanding of the German preparations for and reaction to the battle, historians have wrongly dismissed this significant American-planned and executed offensive. Second, and much more briefly, this article examines the taking of Blanc Mont Ridge in October 1918, which was one of the local victories an AEF unit helped win, while fighting in a foreign field army, that had a disproportionately significant impact on the remaining weeks of the war in a given region. In analyzing these battles at St. Mihiel and Blanc Mont Ridge, this article seeks not so much to offer a more favorable impression of AEF combat ability as it does to show some of the AEF’s more underappreciated contributions to the Allied victories in the final campaigns of 1918.

American Battle Operations in the St. Mihiel Region

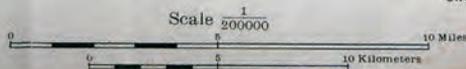


- Route, described in text
- Stop, described in text
- Highway
- Front line for date shown
- Front line of September 16

- St. Mihiel American Memorial
- St. Mihiel American Cemetery
- Ruins

- Colored areas except as otherwise indicated show ground gained by American divisions in the St. Mihiel Offensive September 12-16
- Ground gained September 13 and later abandoned; regained November 10
 - Ground gained by American divisions Sept. 17-Nov. 8
 - November 9-11 Operation of American Second Army and 81st Division American First Army
 - Ground gained by French divisions attached to American Army
- Circled numerals indicate American divisions

All front lines are as of midnight for dates shown unless otherwise noted; thus September 12 on a line indicates the line held at midnight September 12/13. The dates September 12-13 on a line indicate that the line was located at the same place at midnight of both September 12 and September 13



Most people know just a few things about the American battle of St. Mihiel (provided they know anything at all about it, that is). Faculty and students at the U.S. Air Force Academy might know that Brig. Gen. William "Billy" Mitchell led the massive air campaign in support of the offensive and commanded an international contingent of over 1,400 French, American, Italian, and British aircraft in the effort. Others might know that the battle ended

as a clear American victory, which it certainly did. Those familiar with a few more of the details of the battle know that between 12 and 16 September 1918, the U.S. First Army, only recently created in August and commanded by General John J. Pershing (acting as both First Army commander and commander in chief of the AEF), drove out the eight German divisions that had held the large St. Mihiel sa-

lient for nearly four years. The huge First Army, composed of three U.S. corps (I, III, and V) and one French corps (II Colonial), suffered less than 10,000 casualties, while capturing over 16,000 Germans, causing thousands of additional enemy casualties, taking 450 enemy artillery pieces, and freeing over 200 square miles of French territory. In the light of the previous years' fighting—and in comparison with such notorious battles as the Somme,



General Pershing in Chaumont, France, 19 October 1918

that prior to the American attack the savvy Germans caught wind of the upcoming offensive and began an orderly withdrawal from the salient days before the attack kicked off. All the AEF did was hustle the already retreating Germans out of the salient on a slightly accelerated schedule. For example, Donald Smythe, in his outstanding biography of Pershing, claims that German orders to evacuate the salient were issued on 10 September, a point reiterated by a number of other scholars.⁵ When briefly discussing the battle in his impressive study of the war from the perspective of the Central Powers, Holger H. Herwig asserts that “victory was never in doubt—especially since [Lt. Gen. Erich] Ludendorff on 11 September, the day before the attack, had ordered Army Group Gallwitz to evacuate the salient in *case of attack* [emphasis added]. The Americans in effect ‘relieved the Germans’ in the St

Mihiel salient.”⁶ In his book *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking*, David F. Trask states that the German Army, planning to withdraw anyway, simply did so “when it recognized the extent of the American attack,” thus giving credence to the allegation that “in effect the Americans simply relieved the Germans in their trenches, hardly an imposing feat of arms.”⁷ If this version of events is sufficiently accurate, then it is understandable why the AEF would not garner much credit for its achievements at St. Mihiel.⁸

A few historians also attempt to degrade the U.S. First Army’s victory at St. Mihiel by stressing the lopsided American numerical advantage in the battle. They maximize the number of Allied troops involved in the operation and minimize the strength of the German forces in the salient, in quality and quantity. These scholars regularly cite the comprehensive First

Field Marshal Hindenburg (left) and General Ludendorff, c. 1917



the Nivelle Offensive, and Third Ypres (Passchendaele), and even with such tactically successful attacks as the German spring offensives and the Allied Aisne-Marne offensive—this was no small or easy accomplishment.

However, most recent scholars who have discussed the battle have minimized the AEF victory. These historians—many of them among the finest who have ever studied the AEF—have devalued the American effort at St. Mihiel by misunderstanding the timing and the extent of the German withdrawal from the salient. The standard conclusion among scholars is



Bundesarchiv

General Gallwitz, c. 1917 (above)
Map (left)



American Battle Monuments Commission

Army strength of 550,000 Americans and 110,000 Frenchmen and compare it to the tiny force of exhausted German troops in the front lines of the salient. Trask claims that just 23,000 German troops held the salient, which seems surprisingly low.⁹ Herwig has stated that the U.S. First Army attacked “eight war-weary and understaffed German divisions of Composite Army C.”¹⁰ While there is no disputing the fact that the First Army had a dramatic numerical superiority at St. Mihiel or that its divisions were “fresher” than its German counterparts, an apples to apples comparison of the two armies would credit the Allies with about 256,000 troops in the twelve attacking divisions (eight 28,000-man AEF divisions plus four 8,000-man French divisions), and perhaps as many as 50,000 Germans in the eight defending divisions, if we assume each of them was manned at half strength (6,000 in each). Of course each side had combat troops not assigned to the divisions, especially corps and army artillerymen and support troops, and while these are added to the First Army figure to get it to 660,000, no modern historian has ever accounted

for these German equivalents in its defensive force, labeled Composite Army C. Perhaps most important is the often neglected but undeniable fact that the significant numerical advantage of the Allies at St. Mihiel was directly and solely a result of the presence of the large and growing AEF on the Western Front. For most of military history, historians have treated “getting there first with the most”—that is, giving oneself an overwhelming advantage in men and materiel at the point of attack—as a sign of competence, not a cause for criticism.

Although many modern historians have treated the events at St. Mihiel in September 1918 as no big deal, the German records related to the battle tell a different story. First, the German High Command viewed the St. Mihiel battle as a humiliating disaster, not some kind of unforeseen acceleration of its prearranged withdrawal plan.¹¹ As early as 13 September Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg was investigating what went wrong, asking the Fifth Army commander, Lt. Gen. Max von Gallwitz, why the two main reserve divisions “were not kept closer

to the front”—an odd question if the high command expected Composite Army C to have been evacuating the salient before the battle. Hindenburg had already concluded that “only in this neglect can I see the reason for the deep penetration in the direction of Thiaucourt” (a key city near the south face) on the morning of 12 September. Even more inexplicable, if a complete withdrawal had already begun before the battle, was his question of “why the center of Composite Army C was immediately withdrawn” into the reserve “Michel Position” at the base of the salient so early on the twelfth. On 17 September, clearly still not satisfied with the answers he was getting, Hindenburg wrote Gallwitz again, exclaiming that “the severe defeat of Composite Army C on September 12 has rendered the situation of the Group of Armies critical.” He insisted it was “caused for the most part by faulty leadership” and stated that “there is now nothing left for us to do but offer stubborn defense . . . the Group of Armies will bear the responsibility for this.”

Gallwitz replied that while he knew before the battle that the sa-

lient would have to be evacuated eventually, he had also concluded that “the actual withdrawal of the troops from the positions, and hence the abandonment of these positions, should be delayed as long as the tactical situation would at all permit.” Though the divisions had been ordered to shift their main line of resistance back a few miles a day before the battle (hardly equal to an evacuation of the salient), Gallwitz reported that some divisions, far from withdrawing too fast, actually made the defensive changes too slowly, and at least one continued to pack too many men into its original forward trenches. He also confirmed that after the battle began, and before any full evacuation was ordered, the reserve divisions in the salient were directed to *counterattack*, not withdraw. In fact, on 11 September, the commander of Composite Army C, Maj. Gen. Georg Fuchs, announced to his troops, “The attack preparations of the enemy on the south front continue. On the west front also an enemy attack against the left wing of the Fifth Army and the right of the Composite Army seems to be in the preparatory stages. *Composite Army C will prepare to repulse these attacks.*” He further directed that “the modern heavy artillery assigned

to the Mihiel and Gorz Groups *will be put in position so that they can be used from the forenoon of September 12 on to harass the enemy’s attack preparations*” [emphasis added].¹²

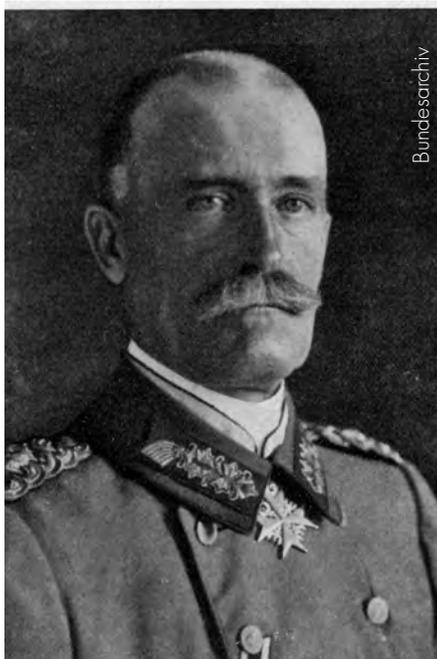
These letters and orders suggest that—regardless of any possible orders by the German High Command to fully withdraw from the salient at some later date—the German combat divisions of Composite Army C were not evacuating the salient when the U.S. First Army attacked, but preparing to defend it, and that the German command’s first reaction to the attack was not an accelerated withdrawal, but a counterattack. Only when the surprising and unexpectedly successful American attack threatened to cut off all the German troops at the tip of the salient did the local German commanders order the complete evacuation, and that happened around noon on 12 September.

This description of events squares with the experiences of the French divisions assigned to the attack. Each one of them made slow progress, much slower than any of the American divisions, and in a few cases they made practically no progress at all. In every case, the French units claimed they ran into stiff German resistance. For example, the French 39th Division, attacking immediately on the left flank of the U.S. 1st Division, advanced just a little over a mile on the first day—while the U.S. 1st Division drove in over eight miles in the first nineteen hours, captured over a thousand Germans and 31 artillery pieces, and suffered just 600 casualties. Similarly, the French 2d Cavalry Division (dismounted), which attacked the west face alongside the U.S. 26th Division, discontinued its attack at 1130 due to “strong resistance” that “required a new artillery preparation.” The French 26th Division, attacking all along the tip of the salient, made almost no progress in its attacks. It did not enter the town of St. Mihiel—just a mile behind the German lines—until the morning of

13 September, the second day of the battle, by which time the U.S. 1st and 26th Divisions had linked up in the middle of the salient after advances of as much as eleven miles each in just twenty-four hours.¹³

What does this mean for the AEF and the measure of its contribution to the Allied victories in the hundred days? The victory appears to have been a more impressive accomplishment than commonly expressed in the old yarn that “the Americans replaced the Germans.” The U.S. First Army massed such a significant offensive force around the salient that the Germans considered giving it up without a fight. Although the Germans suspected that an attack was coming, and were beginning to make preparations to methodically withdraw from the salient, they were unable to determine when the attack would come, from which direction, and how massive it would be. The U.S. First Army concealed its intentions well enough to have caught the German defenders in a terrible state—in one German staff officer’s words, the attack came “at the most unfavorable moment imaginable.”¹⁴ In doing so, by preventing the Germans from withdrawing on their schedule, they not only destroyed at least two and perhaps three or four German divisions while capturing massive numbers of guns and material, but they also prevented the Germans from devastating 200 square miles of French territory in the way they had during Operation ALBERICH prior to the Nivelle Offensive in 1917. The Germans had fully planned to implement this “scorched earth” policy prior to any full withdrawal, and the American attack prevented it from happening.

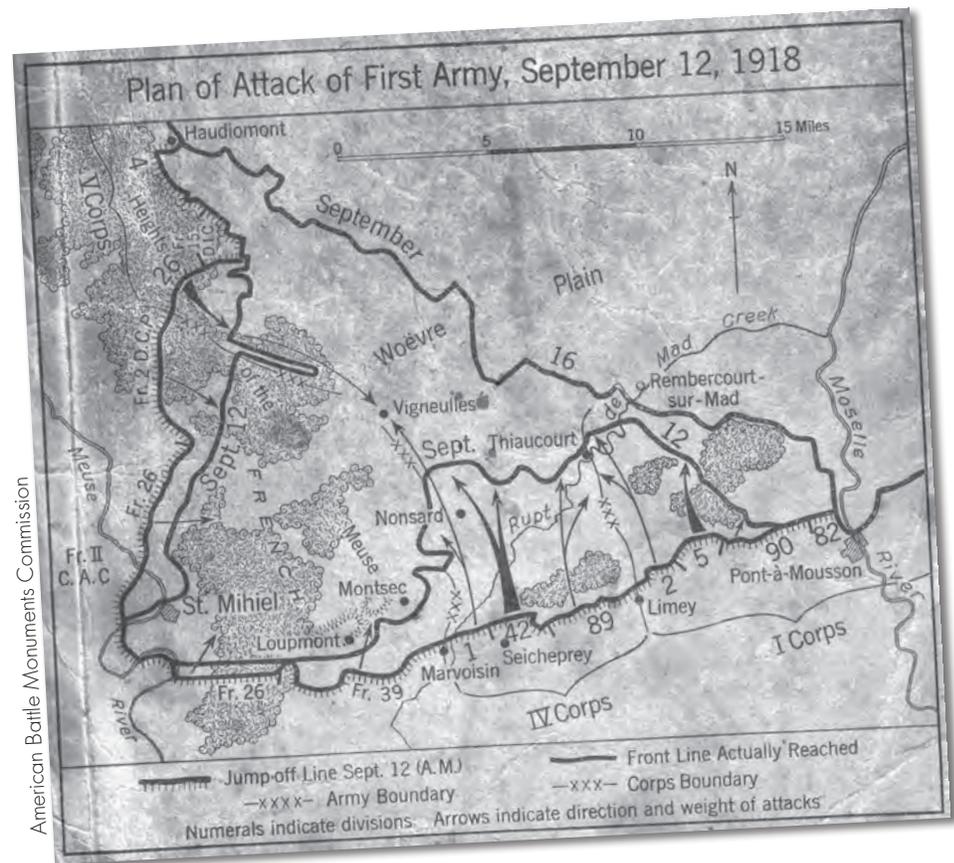
Furthermore, while the U.S. First Army has been pilloried for its supposed logistical chaos and transportation congestion (true enough in some instances), all the divisional accounts show that the American entry into battle at St. Mihiel was much better organized than, for example, General Charles Mangin’s arrangements for the American units that fought in his French Tenth Army at



General Fuchs, c. 1918

Soissons in mid-July. Although both entailed a movement into the attack positions after dark on the day before the jump off, and the weather turned foul in both instances, the American commanders noted that everything went more smoothly at St. Mihiel. All units were in position on time and went into battle better rested, better supplied, with better knowledge of the terrain and the enemy, and with all their weaponry. The First Army at St. Mihiel, composed of many of the most experienced AEF divisions and able to execute an attack that had been meticulously planned and even practiced over many preceding weeks, may have represented the high point of the AEF. Its subsequent offensive in the Meuse-Argonne was so hastily planned and organized that it took a veritable miracle to kick off less than two weeks later some twenty-five miles to the northwest. In order to make the assault happen on schedule, the U.S. First Army employed a number of new, incompletely trained, and inexperienced divisions in hurried attacks against what was by all accounts some of the worst terrain and best prepared defenses on the Western Front.

While the U.S. First Army was sending these poorly trained and inexperienced divisions into the



teeth of the German defenses between the Argonne Forest and the Meuse River, the AEF's 2d Division was performing one of the most impressive attacks of the war as part of the French XXI Corps in the

French Fourth Army, fifteen miles west of the Argonne. Like the U.S. First Army to its immediate right in the Meuse-Argonne, General Henri Gouraud's French Fourth Army attacked north on 26 September. By the end of September the French Fourth Army advance had stalled just as quickly as the U.S. First Army's, but after going forward about half as far. The Fourth Army's offensive bogged down about two miles in front of a line of ridges, the highest and most strongly defended of which was Blanc Mont Ridge, a position so secure it served as the German observation post for the whole sector, and had been the viewpoint of choice when Kaiser Wilhelm II came to watch the German Army's *Friedensturm* Offensive toward Reims in mid-July 1918.



Troops of the 18th Infantry passing through St. Baussant, France, in advance on St. Mihiel front, 13 September 1918

National Archives



General Mangin, c. 1914



General Gouraud, shown here in 1923

When Maj. Gen. John A. Lejeune, U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. 2d Division's commander, reported in to General Gouraud in late September because his division had been assigned to the French Fourth Army's reserve, the French Army commander informed him that the offensive would make no further progress until the Germans were pushed off Blanc Mont. Gouraud claimed that a successful assault of the ridge would not only get the Fourth Army moving again, but would probably convince the Germans to withdraw all the way to the Aisne River, some twenty miles to the rear. According to Lejeune, Gouraud also admitted that he did not think any of his "worn out" French divisions were up to the job.¹⁵ Other French staff officers supposedly claimed the position would never be taken by direct assault.

If these were ploys to goad the aggressive marine to action, they worked. Lejeune, then worried that Gouraud might have been planning to break up his division and use it piecemeal, jumped at the chance to make the attack with an intact unit. Despite this show of confidence, both before and during the attack Lejeune displayed a tactical creativity and a willingness to insist on certain details to ensure the success of the division's attacks with a minimum number of casualties. The division's performance in the battle showed what at least one experienced division was capable of by that point in the war, and also that at least some AEF commanders understood what needed to be done to safeguard their men's lives.

The first important facet of the battle concerns Lejeune's insistence

that the assault be delayed one day to improve his unit's chances of success, an all too rare event for young division commanders in this war. On 1 October, the day before the scheduled assault (that now included supporting attacks throughout the Fourth Army), Lejeune convinced his French commanders to delay the start twenty-four hours. Lejeune later listed three reasons for pressing for the hold: he learned that some of the supporting artillery was not scheduled to be in position in time to support the infantry; he wanted his officers to have more time to examine the terrain during daylight hours to see what they were up against; and finally, he wanted to give his infantry troops time to clear out some German outposts and machine-gun nests from the immediate front of

the jump-off positions to ensure that they could get and stay behind the rolling barrage that was essential to getting up to the top of the ridge.¹⁶

Lejeune's officers made good use of the extra day, which highlights a second key element of this assault—the change of the plan to incorporate a creative converging attack by his two brigades that isolated and cut off a wedge-shaped portion of the forward German defenses. Lejeune made the change after learning from his French corps commander that a recent local attack by the French division on his right had driven a small bulge into the German line. After consulting with his senior officers, Lejeune settled on the new plan, had his staff develop new attack orders and a new fire support plan, and got his troops into position—in some cases one mile east of the original jump-off positions—in time to follow the artillery barrage up the slope. On the morning of 3 October, the division took Blanc Mont Ridge and pushed beyond it, while the French divisions on its two flanks made little to no progress in their attacks.

As the soldiers and marines drove over the ridge, practically annihilating the German defenders along the way (the 410th Infantry alone reported 810 casualties on that day), the AEF's 2d Division found itself in a two and one-half mile salient on one of the toughest German positions on the Western Front. Despite

this success—or rather because of it—the division was rewarded by repeated orders to drive further and further into the salient, in the hope of the ever-elusive breakthrough. The commander of the French XXI Corps, Maj. Gen. Stanislas Naulin, even massed cavalry in the rear of the 2d Division's sector in order to exploit any future breakthrough. The cavalry was never needed. Yet, from that first day, Lejeune resisted Naulin's orders to drive deeper into the narrow salient, insisting that he would not move further forward until the French at least began to come up on his flanks, and until his artillery received a greater allocation of shell to support additional attacks. Although Lejeune ultimately agreed to make small advances later that first day and early the next, pushing his line forward another mile, from that point forward he resisted, to the limits of insubordination, any additional major attacks.¹⁷

On 4 October, when Naulin ordered Lejeune to drive forward in the general direction of a town nearly seven miles to the front, Lejeune issued a division attack order—but inserted what he called “the saving clause,” a provision stating that the actual jump-off time would be issued later, after he received confirmation that the French had moved forward on his flanks. Only after receiving word from the corps headquarters that the adjacent French division had successfully advanced did Lejeune announce the jump-off time. These attacks failed, and at great cost, in large part due to the galling fire from the right and left flanks and rear, as the French divisions had not advanced sufficiently. Lejeune would not fall for this trick again. He canceled all attacks to his front, had his lead units dig in to prepare for the certain German counterattacks to come, and prepared plans for supporting units to make local attacks toward his own

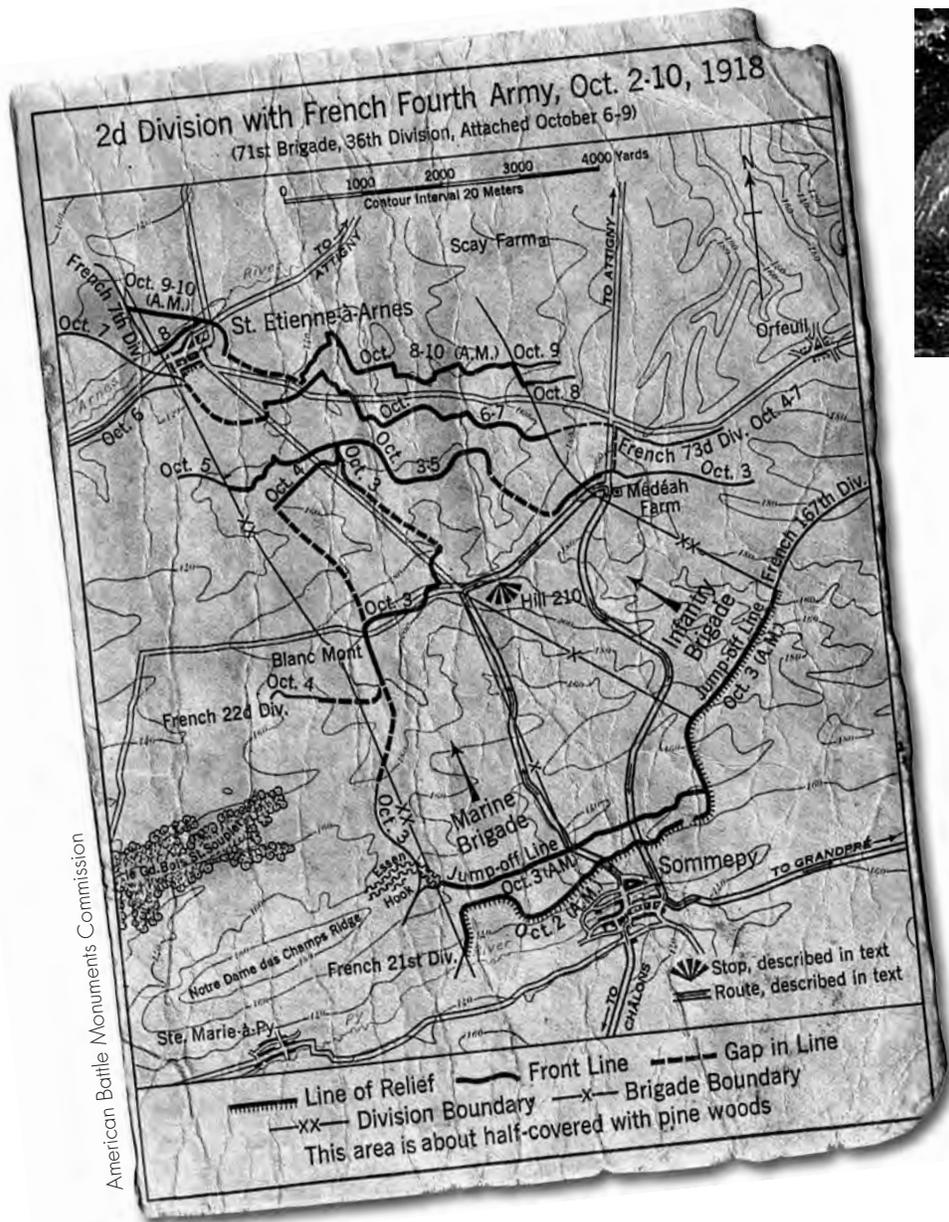
flanks and rear areas that caused him so much trouble during the day's previous attacks. These small, limited, firepower-based flank attacks succeeded, and Lejeune had learned a valuable lesson.¹⁸

The next morning, when Naulin issued a new attack order—Lejeune later wrote “as was the daily custom”—Lejeune issued his subsequent orders, but again with the standard “saving clause,” and also with the equally conservative statement that the infantry was to regulate “its advance with those of the division on the right and left.” These orders essentially kept the division in its place. In case his leading brigade commander did not completely understand his intent, Lejeune telephoned him to make clear privately that “H hour will not be given.”¹⁹ If one element of being a great commander is knowing when *not* to obey an order, we can safely say that Lejeune possessed that unique blend of wisdom and moral courage.

The 2d Division's attacks between 2 and 10 October at Blanc Mont Ridge were costly, but operationally effective. During its more than eight days in the line, the division drove a salient nearly five miles into the teeth of a tremendous German defensive position, and captured thousands of German soldiers and dozens of enemy guns. More importantly, as Gouraud predicted, its attacks unhinged the German defenses throughout the entire Champagne region and led to a significant German withdrawal. To take, hold, and advance this important position cost the division over 4,800 casualties, even with Lejeune's exceptional efforts to protect the lives of his men. His French superiors were more impressed by the division's accomplishments than they were worried about Lejeune's intransigence. Gouraud described the division's attack as “brilliant” and recommended the unit be cited in special orders. General Henri Pétain, the commander of the French Army, went even further, citing the division in special orders, appointing Lejeune a commander



General Lejeune, shown here wearing the Commander of the French Legion of Honor medal



American Battle Monuments Commission



American Battle Monuments Commission

A German machine gun emplacement on Blanc Mont Ridge, captured by troops of the 2d Division on 3 October 1918

of the French Legion of Honor, and insisting that the successful taking of Blanc Mont Ridge was “the greatest single achievement of the 1918 campaign.” Strong words, and no doubt a debatable assertion considering the achievements of certain British (especially Canadian and Australian) units in the hundred days offensives, but a clear tribute to the kind of local, but truly important, contributions various AEF units made in the last months of the war.²⁰

Although the past couple of decades have brought a flowering of AEF scholarship, we are still only beginning to form an accurate appreciation of all the ways in which the AEF contributed to an Allied victory in 1918. Many recent scholars have properly shown the many weaknesses and failures of the AEF as a combat force. Now we need to be careful not to minimize the crucial role the AEF played in ending the war in 1918, flawed though its efforts were. The U.S. First Army’s overwhelming victory at St. Mihiel, and key local victories in other areas such as that of the 2d Division at Blanc Mont Ridge, are two of those important but often neglected achievements.



General Naulin (center), shown here in Casablanca with unidentified French officers in 1925



National Library of France

NOTES

1. For key biographies, see Donald Smythe, *Pershing: General of the Armies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), Alan R. Millett, *The General: Robert L. Bullard and Officership in the United States Army, 1885–1925* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), Edward M. Coffman, *The Hilt of the Sword: The Career of Peyton C. March* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), Merrill L. Bartlett, *Lejeune: A Marine's Life* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996); on African Americans in the war, see Stephen L. Harris, *Harlem's Hell Fighters* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2003), Frank E. Roberts, *The American Foreign Legion: Black Soldiers of the 93rd in World War I* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004), and Richard Slotkin, *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005); on AEF-French relations, see Robert B. Bruce, *A Fraternity of Arms: America and France in the Great War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003); for AEF-British relations, see Mitchell A. Yockelson, *Borrowed Soldiers: Americans Under British Command, 1918* (Norman: University

of Oklahoma Press, 2008); on the impact of AEF veterans on U.S. society and public policy, see Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

2. For operational and unit histories, see James J. Cooke, *The Rainbow Division in the Great War, 1917–1919* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1994) and *The All-Americans at War: The 82nd Division in the Great War, 1917–1918* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999); Michael E. Shay, *The Yankee Division in the First World War: In the Highest Tradition* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008); Robert H. Ferrell, *Collapse at Meuse-Argonne: The Failure of the Missouri-Kansas Division* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004); Peter F. Owen, *To the Limit of Endurance: A Battalion of Marines in the World War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007); and author, *Doctrine Under Trial: American Artillery Employment in World War I* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001) and *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

3. On stopping the German offensives, see Bruce, *A Fraternity of Arms* and Michael S. Nei-

berg, *The Battle of the Second Marne* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008); on the Aisne-Marne, see Neiberg, *Second Marne*, as well as Douglas V. Johnson III and Rolph L. Hillman Jr., *Soissons 1918* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999); the only book on the St. Mihiel offensive is James H. Hallas, *Squandered Victory: The American First Army at St. Mihiel* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995); on the Meuse-Argonne, see Robert H. Ferrell, *America's Deadliest Battle: Meuse-Argonne, 1918* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007) and Edward G. Lengel, *To Conquer Hell: The Meuse-Argonne, 1918* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008), as well as Paul F. Braim, *The Test of Battle: The American Expeditionary Forces in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign* (Newark: University Press of Delaware, 1987).

4. American Battle Monuments Commission, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), p. 501.

5. Smythe, *Pershing*, p. 185. Hew Strachan expanded on this point in his widely read *The First World War*, by stating that at St. Mihiel, the AEF “got the early success Pershing had seen as

Columns of German prisoners taken by the Americans in the first day of the assault on the St. Mihiel salient, 25 September 1918



essential to buoy the morale of his young army; it had done so in part because the Germans had taken the decision two days earlier not to hold the salient." Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (New York: Penguin 2003), pp. 318–19.

6. Holger H. Herwig, *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary 1914–1918* (London: Arnold, 1997), p. 423. The exact date of the German High Command's order to evacuate the salient is disputed. Many sources mention 10 September, Herwig gives the eleventh, while Ludendorff claimed, in his memoirs, that he gave the order on the eighth. He does admit, however, that "the work of evacuation had not been carried very far" when the attack began. Erich Ludendorff, *Ludendorff's Own Story* (New York: Harper, 1919), pp. 361–62.

7. David F. Trask, *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking, 1917–1918* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), p. 113. In a subsequent book chapter, Trask wrote: "The German army had occupied this position [at St Mihiel] since 1915, but, recognizing its vulnerability, the German command planned to withdraw from it to strong defensive positions along its base. The American attack hastened and confused the withdrawal, leading to the jest that Americans had relieved the Germans in the salient. Although Pershing hailed the operation, victory obscured some painful realities, especially the inexperience of commanders and staffs. The reduction of the Saint-Mihiel salient by no means proved that the 1st Army could overcome determined defenders." Trask, "The Entry of the USA into the War," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 248–49.

8. Even some AEF officers dismissed the U.S. First Army's victory at St. Mihiel on these grounds, such as Lt. Gen. Robert Lee Bullard, a corps and later army commander, who was fighting in the Oise River area in mid-September. According to Paul Braim, Bullard later wrote, "St. Mihiel was given an importance which posterity will not concede it. Germany had begun to withdraw. She had her weaker divisions, young men and old and Austro-Hungarians. The operation fell short of expectations." Braim also repeats the phrase that "the Americans merely relieved the Germans." Braim, *The Test of Battle*, p.

72. In his memoirs, Marshal Ferdinand Foch was more positive, stating that "this attack was so violent and was carried out with such resolution that the enemy succeeded nowhere in stopping it . . . by evening all the objectives had been reached. . . . It was a splendid success." Ferdinand Foch, *Memoirs* (New York: Putnam, 1931) pp. 401–02.

9. Trask, *Coalition Warmaking*, p. 106.

10. Herwig, *First World War*, p. 423. Many other sources, including General Max von Gallwitz, claim that just seven German divisions defended the salient. See *Source Records of the Great War, Vol. VI*, eds. Charles F. Horne and Walter F. Austin (New York: National Alumni, 1923), excerpt at http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/stmihiel_gallwitz.htm.

11. According to Smythe, "Ludendorff was terribly disturbed. A German officer who visited him the night of September 12 found him 'so overcome by the events of the day as to be unable to carry on a clear and comprehensible discussion.'" Smythe, *Pershing*, p. 187. Robert Asprey states that Ludendorff was "shocked" by the news of the heavy losses at St. Mihiel and that he asked Gallwitz "Why did you allow two divisions to be beaten to pieces yesterday?" Robert Asprey, *The German High Command at War: Hindenburg and Ludendorff Conduct World War I* (New York: William Morrow, 1991), p. 465.

12. Ludendorff admits that although the German High Command ordered, before the attack, that the salient be evacuated at some future date, local commanders Gallwitz and Fuchs did not order the salient to be evacuated until noon on 12 September, the first day of the attack. Ludendorff, *Ludendorff's Own Story*, pp. 361–62. Many of the pertinent German records are included in the U.S. Army's official history of the war, *United States Army in the World War (USAWW), 1917–1919*, vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History [CMH], 1990). See especially Operations Section Memorandum No. 2784, Composite Army C, 11 Sep 1918, pp. 300–301; Von Hindenburg to Group of Armies von Gallwitz, 13 Sep 1918, p. 304; Von Hindenburg to Group of Armies von Gallwitz, 17 Sep 1918, p. 312; Group of Armies von Gallwitz to Supreme Headquarters, 21 Sep 1918, p. 323.

13. Operations Rpt, French II Colonial Corps, 12 Sep 1918, USAWW, vol. 8, p. 275.

14. Maj. Gen. Otto von Ledebur, the former chief of staff of Composite Army C, is quoted in George S. Viereck, ed., *As They Saw Us; Foch, Ludendorff, and Other Leaders Write Our War History* (Cranbury, N.J.: Scholar's Bookshelf, 2005), p. 196.

15. John A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1930), p. 342; Notes on Blanc Mont, folder 33.2, box 28, 2d Division Historical File, Record Group (RG) 120, National Archives (NA).

16. Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, p. 345.

17. Headquarters (HQ) XXI Army Corps, Document 3715/3, 3 Oct 1918, folder 32.7, box 15, 2d Division Historical File, RG 120, NA; Msg, HQ XXI Army Corps to HQ 2d Division, 3 Oct 1918, 1130 hours, Messages Received During the Battle of Blanc Mont Ridge, folder 32.16, box 5, 2d Division Historical File, RG 120, NA; Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, p. 352; Memo, HQ 2d Division, 3 Oct 1918, and Field Orders No. 36, HQ 2d Division, 3 Oct 1918, both memo and field orders in U.S. Army, 2d Division, *Records of the Second Division (Regular)* (Washington, D.C.: Army War College, 1924), vol. 1.

18. Field Orders No. 36, HQ 2d Division, 4 Oct 1918, 0600 hours, *Records of the Second Division*, vol. 1; "Operations Second Division (Regular): October 1st to 10th, 1918," n.d., *Records of the Second Division*, vol. 6; HQ 4th Brigade, "Operations Report, 4th Brigade, Marines, October 1st–10th, 1918," *Records of the Second Division*, vol. 6; Messages Received During the Battle of Blanc Mont Ridge, folder 32.16, box 5, 2d Division Historical File, RG 120, NA; Oliver Spaulding and John W. Wright, *The Second Division, American Expeditionary Force in France, 1917–1919* (New York: Hillman Press, 1937), p. 181.

19. Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, p. 359; *Blanc Mont (Meuse-Argonne-Champagne)*, Monograph No. 9 (Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army Military History Institute, April 1920), p. 6.

20. Henri Gouraud is quoted in Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, p. 365; Henri Pétain is quoted in Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 284.

Continued from page 3

by Richard Stewart; and our latest work in concert with the Office of the Secretary of Defense History Office, *Defense Acquisition Reform, 1960–2009: An Elusive Goal*, by J. Ronald Fox. In addition, CMH published *Quarters Eight*, by Kim Holien; the U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Professional Reading List; a new CMH Publications Catalog, compiled by Bryan Hockensmith; and a DVD, *The United States Army and World War II: The Collected Works*. Last but not least, we continued to improve on the success of *Army History*, publishing four issues on time and on target!

We persist in our efforts to help the National Archives and Records Administration and the Army Record and Declassification Agency reconstruct missing records from the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq through the use of historical materials collected by the Military History Detachments, along with our efforts to preserve the historical

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Our digital initiatives have been simply astonishing! The CMH Web site remains extremely popular, with more than 12 million hits each month, making it the second most popular Web site in the Army—only exceeded by the Army homepage. Meanwhile, our social media engagement grows, with almost 6,000 CMH Facebook “likes.”

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U.S. ARMY ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT

EYEWITNESS TO TRANSFORMATION

THE WILLIAM S. BARRETT COLLECTION AND THE EVOLUTION OF U.S. ARMY ARTILLERY IN WORLD WAR II

By Dieter Stenger

William S. Barrett entered active service on 17 August 1941 and began his training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as an artillery officer with Battery A, 112th Field Artillery (FA). In March 1942, the 112th FA transferred from Fort Bragg to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, with truck-drawn artillery that only recently replaced horse-drawn artillery. It marked one of the greatest changes in the deployment and mobility of artillery on the battlefield, only to be eclipsed yet again by the self-propelled mechanization of artillery.

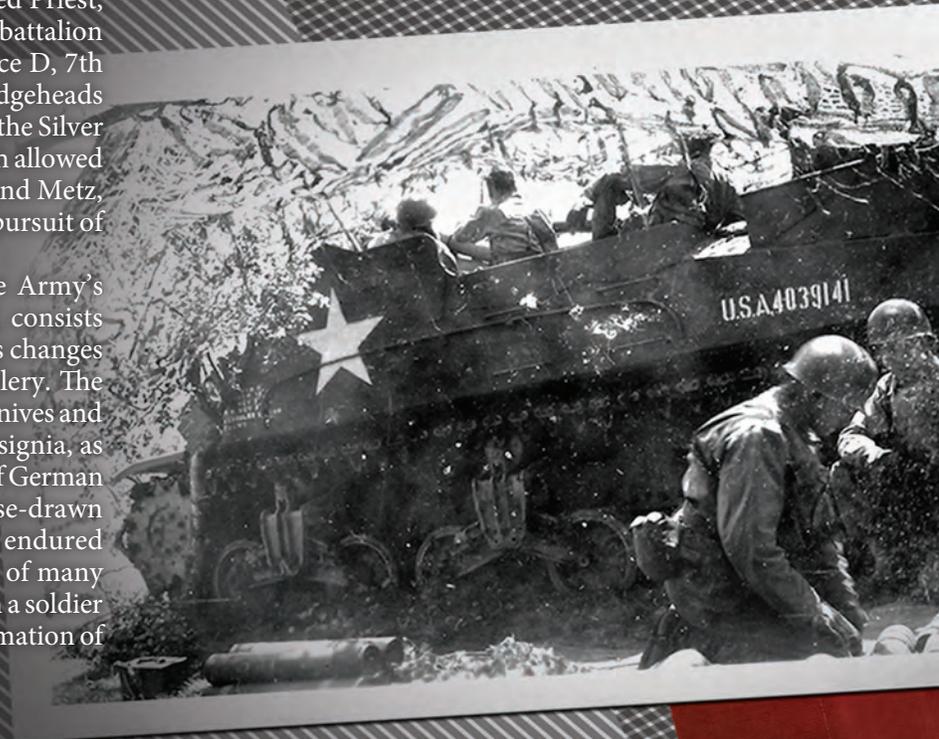
On 14 December 1942, Barrett was assigned as commanding officer, Battery C, 112th FA, and then reassigned on the first day of 1943 as commanding officer, Battery C, 695th FA. The 695th FA was redesignated as an armored field artillery battalion in August 1943 and shipped out for England on 11 February 1944, coming ashore in France on 22 July.

Beginning in August 1943, the 695th Armored Field Artillery Battalion was equipped with the self-propelled Priest, a 105-mm. M7B1 Howitzer Motor Carriage. The battalion made up part of Combat Command A, Task Force D, 7th Armored Division, and participated in seizing bridgeheads over the Moselle and Saar Rivers. Barrett received the Silver Star Medal for actions at Maizières-les-Metz, which allowed U.S. forces to attack and reduce the defenses around Metz, eventually cross the Moselle River, and continue pursuit of the German Army.

The William S. Barrett Collection, part of the Army's core collection located at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, consists of historic property documenting the tremendous changes that revolutionized the tactics of U.S. Army artillery. The collection contains numerous articles of clothing, knives and scabbards, distinctive unit and shoulder sleeve insignia, as well as items like a whistle with lanyard and a pair of German Army binoculars. Barrett's guidon from the horse-drawn Battery A, 112th FA, is a unit symbol that has endured historically to this day. It not only embodies one of many Army traditions, but also is directly associated with a soldier who personally experienced the dramatic transformation of Army artillery in the 1940s.

Dieter Stenger joined the Center of Military History in February 2006 as a curator assigned to the Collections Branch of Museum Division. He is currently serving at the Museum Support Center, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, as the curator of firearms and edged weapons.

An M7B1 Priest from the 1st Section Battery; France, 1944 (below). The citation, battery guidon, Silver Star Medal, and photo of Capt. William S. Barrett (right page)



Last Name — First Name — Middle Initial BARRETT WILLIAM S		Serial Number 0375644	Grade Capt	Organization Armd IFA Bn			
Headquarters Issuing Orders XX Corps APO 340		General Order Number 70	Special Order Number	Date of Orders 18 Dec 44	Rescinded	Revoked	Amended
Type of Award SILVER STAR	Posthumous NO	Oak Leaf Clusters			O. L. C. Number		
Present Status If Living							

Citation

For gallantry in action on 7 September 1944 ~~in~~ in***. Captain BARRETT was commanding a battery of an Armored Field Artillery Battalion when the unit moved into position near the town of *** to support attacking elements of the 7th Armored Division. Just as the occupying forces became established, they were subjected to heavy German mortar, machine gun and artillery fire. Captain BARRETT, seeking to determine the source of the action, was engaged in a personal reconnaissance of the area when he suddenly encountered a group of strongly entrenched Germans. Drawing his pistol, he organized a small group of volunteers, and, advancing at their head under the protection of covering machine gun fire, charged the enemy position. The ferocity of the assault so unnerved the hostile force that they threw down their weapons and surrendered. Determined to ferret out the remainder of the enemy strongholds from which strong machine gun and sniper fire was being directed upon his men, he proceeded to scout along the boundaries of the bivouac area. Advancing fearlessly over the unknown terrain, Captain BARRETT was repeatedly pinned down by fierce machine gun bursts poured down upon him from concealed positions. Deducing from the staccato rhythm of the guns their approximate location, he crept forward until he came within a few yards of an ingeniously concealed network of trenches occupied by snipers and machine gun crews. Withdrawing silently, he returned to his battery position, organized a gun section and led them to a point overlooking the entrenchments. Carefully adjusting his fire, Captain BARRETT directed a devastating ~~xxxx~~ barrage upon the position and successfully neutralized it. Captain BARRETT's gallant and aggressive leadership, determination and unstinting devotion to duty reflect ~~great~~ upon himself and the Army of the United States.

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, DECORATIONS
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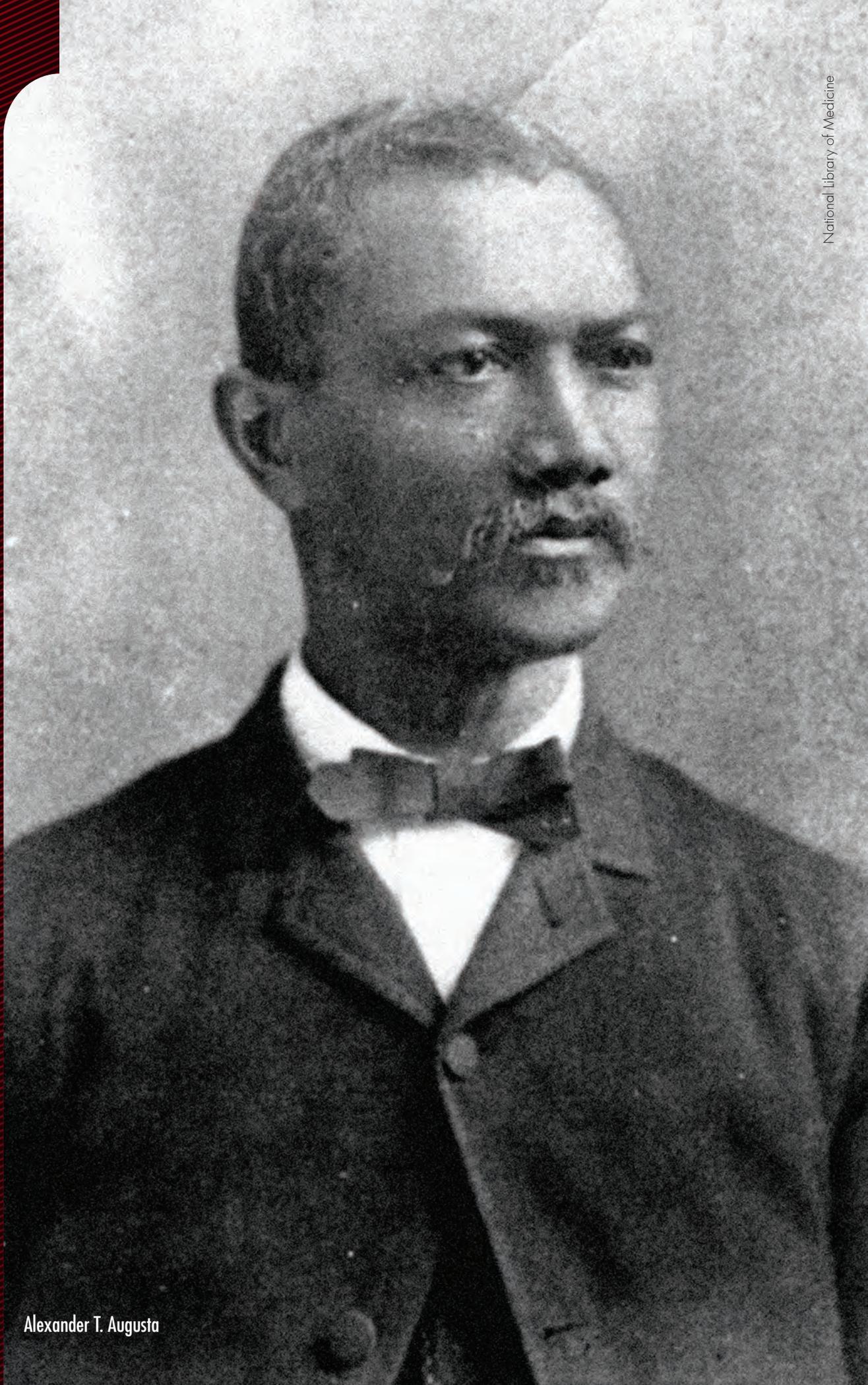


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**ABOUT
THE
AUTHOR**

Dr. Gerald S. Henig is emeritus professor of history at California State University, East Bay. He is the author of *Henry Winter Davis: Antebellum and Civil War Congressman from Maryland* (Boston, Mass., 1973) and coauthor of *A Nation Transformed: How the Civil War Changed America Forever* (Nashville, Tenn., 2001).



Alexander T. Augusta

THE INDOMITABLE DR. AUGUSTA

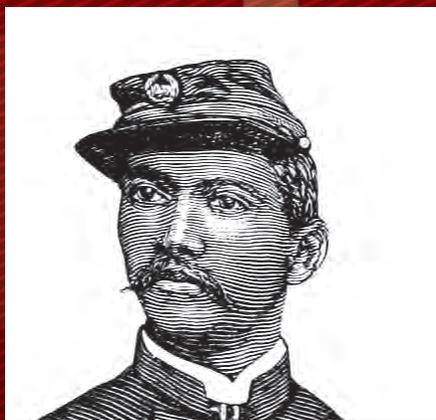


THE FIRST BLACK PHYSICIAN IN THE U.S. ARMY

BY GERALD S. HENIG

Rejection, taunts, assaults, humiliation, unequal pay—Alexander T. Augusta suffered all of these indignities as the first African American medical officer in the U.S. Army. Yet he refused to succumb to the forces of bigotry. Defiant from the very beginning, he challenged the status quo time and again, unwilling to let it diminish him, and as a result, he served his nation and his people with distinction.

Alexander Thomas Augusta was born in Norfolk, Virginia, on 8 March 1825. As with many free blacks in the Old South, detailed records are difficult to find, so little is known of Augusta's early years. However, we know that as a young man Augusta was determined to pursue a medical career and, despite Virginia laws prohibiting the education of blacks, he secretly learned to read and write under the tutelage of Daniel Payne, a future bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and president of Wilberforce University in Ohio. To support himself Augusta worked as a barber, eventually moving to



Baltimore, and then to Philadelphia, hoping to enter the University of Pennsylvania's medical school. Denied admission because of "prejudice of colour," according to Augusta, though it is also possible that he lacked the necessary prerequisites.

Whatever the reason, in 1847 Augusta returned to Baltimore and married Mary O. Burgoin. Accounts differ about exactly when the newlyweds traveled to California, but they journeyed there to earn money to support his medical education. It seems likely

that they went once the news of the discovery of gold had reached the East Coast, a year or so after their marriage. In 1852, the California state census listed Augusta as a barber in El Dorado County, the heart of "gold country," in the northeastern part of the state. The couple returned to Philadelphia around this time but eventually decided to leave the country and settle in Toronto, Canada, where Augusta had an opportunity to attend medical school at Trinity College.¹

Known for its racial tolerance, Toronto offered numerous opportunities to self-exiled, ambitious, and educated African Americans. To earn a living, Augusta opened an apothecary on Yonge Street, advertising the sale of "Patent Medicines, Perfumery, Dye Stuffs, etc.," and also announced that its proprietor had the skills to apply leeches, fill physicians' prescriptions, and extract teeth. Meanwhile, his wife Mary, one of the few black businesswomen in Toronto, owned and operated a "New Fancy Dry Goods and Dressmaking Establishment" on York Street.²



City of Toronto Archives

Trinity College in 1856

In 1856, Augusta earned his bachelor of medicine degree and passed the exams certifying him to practice medicine. Apparently, he excelled in his studies, as evidenced by the remarks of Dr. John McCaul, president of the college, who spoke of Augusta “as having been one of his most brilliant students.”³

Setting up a medical practice in Toronto, Augusta had no problem attracting patients, most of whom were white. At various times he also served as head of Toronto General Hospital and as a physician at the city’s poor-

house. Yet no matter how onerous his medical duties, Augusta remained active in the black community. As president of the Association for the Education of the Colored People of Canada, for example, he helped young blacks in Toronto and the province of Ontario to secure funds and supplies for schooling.

In addition to his professional and civic duties, Augusta played a vigorous role in racial matters. Whether seeking a venue for a visiting American abolitionist speaker or drafting a resolution opposing an anti-black candidate for Canada’s parliament, Augusta never tired of supporting the fundamental issue of racial justice. As he would do so throughout his life, he boldly confronted racism and discrimination head on. In fact, Augusta was willing to take unprecedented action whenever the cause demanded it, as he did when he canceled his membership in an all-black church in Toronto in order to demonstrate his opposition to segregated institutions that existed in the city.⁴

Battling for equality in his adopted community did not deter Augusta from focusing a close eye on developments in his native country. With the bombardment of Fort Sumter by Confederate forces on 12 April 1861, the United States had been plunged into civil war, and as the conflict dragged on, Augusta grew increasingly anxious

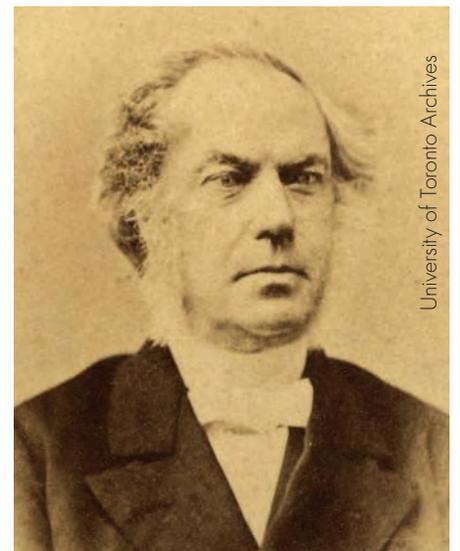
about the destiny of his country and the fate of his “race.”

For Augusta, matters came to a head on 1 January 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation formally went into effect, which not only freed the slaves in Confederate-controlled states and areas, but also called for the enlistment of blacks into the Union Army. Only days after issuance of the proclamation, Augusta wrote letters to Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton seeking “an appointment as surgeon to some of the coloured



New York Public Library

Bishop Daniel Payne, c. 1888



University of Toronto Archives

Dr. John McCaul, c. 1860

regiments, or as a physician to some of the depots of 'freedmen.'" His letters were forwarded to the Army Medical Board in Washington, D.C., which flatly rejected his request. Not only was he unsuitable because he was "a person of African descent," but his entry into U.S. military service would violate Great Britain's Proclamation of Neutrality since he was, technically, a British subject.⁵

Given the fact that thousands of British citizens served in the Union Army in various capacities, it was clear that the *real* reason for the denial of Augusta's request was because of racial prejudice. Never one to back down, he went to Washington, D.C., to plead his case. "I have come near a thousand miles at great expense and sacrifice, hoping to be of some use to the country and to my race at this eventful period," he informed the Army Medical Board.⁶

Augusta's sincere and heartfelt plea caused the members of the board to reconsider his request. Although his persistence might have impressed them, what probably convinced those on the board to reverse their decision was the desperate need for physicians to care for African American soldiers. The rate of death from illness and disease among black servicemen was more than twice as high as among their white counterparts, due in large measure to woefully inadequate medical care.⁷

The board invited Augusta to take the qualifying examination, and after passing the test on 14 April 1863, the 38-year-old physician was duly commissioned as a surgeon (all doctors in the military at the time were called surgeons) with the rank of major in the Union Army.⁸

With his appointment, Augusta became the highest-ranking African American officer in the U.S. military, and an instant hero of the black community. In many respects he fit the role perfectly. Though not a large man—of only average height and slender build—he had a "light brown complexion" with uncommonly handsome features, accentuated by a distinguished-looking mustache that extended slightly downward. Self-



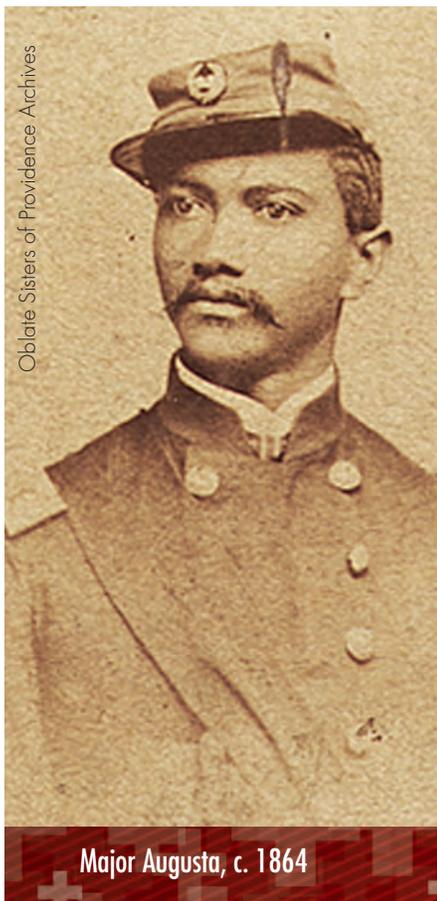
confident to the core, he cut a dashing figure in his new officer's uniform.

Two days after receiving his commission, he attended a celebration at the 15th Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, commemorating the one-year anniversary of the emancipation of all slaves in the nation's capital. "The appearance of a colored man in the room wearing the gold leaf epaulettes of a Major," reported a correspondent for the newspaper the *Evening Star*, elicited "much applause and [con]gratulation with the assembly." Augusta received a similar

response when he appeared at the mustering of the first two companies of black soldiers in Washington.⁹

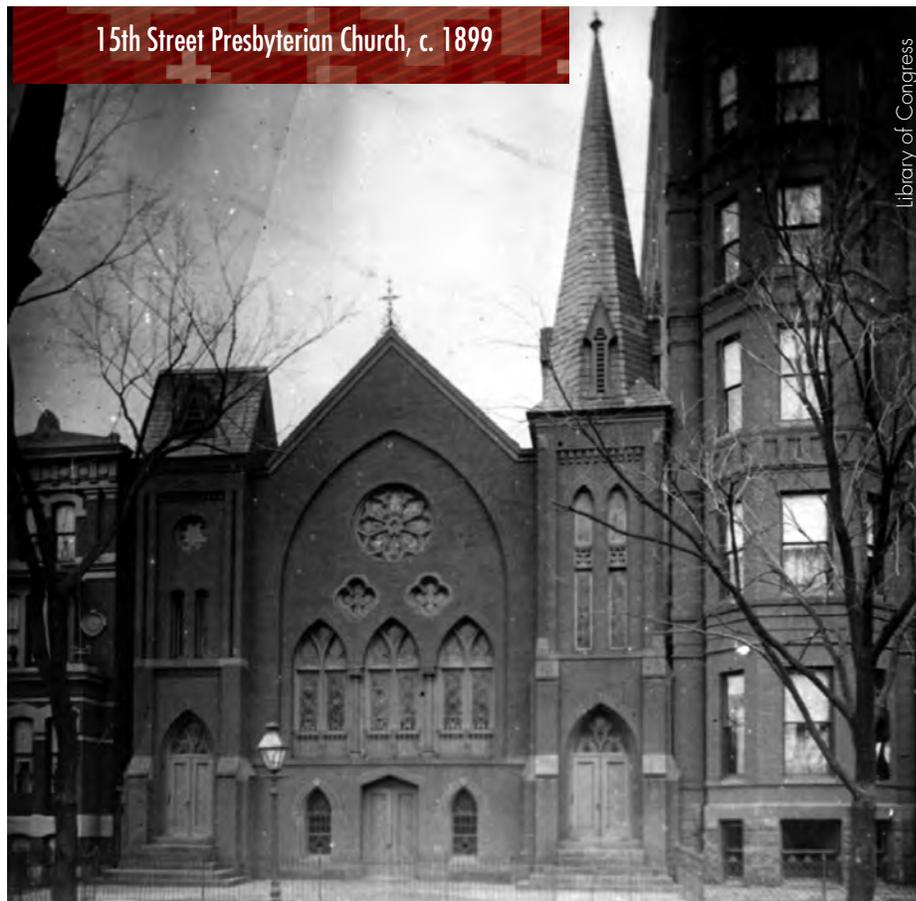
But an officer's shoulder boards did not always shield him from the racism of the era. On 1 May 1863 upon boarding a train at the President Street Station in Baltimore and taking his seat, a teenager, encouraged by a few adults, approached Augusta, swore at him, and then tore off the epaulettes from his uniform. When the major held the boy to task, a crowd of "eight to ten roughs" surrounded him. Luckily, there were





Oblate Sisters of Providence Archives

Major Augusta, c. 1864



15th Street Presbyterian Church, c. 1899

Library of Congress

provost guards on the train who came to his rescue. Augusta was assured that he would be protected for the remainder of his travel, but, as he explained later, “I was determined . . . to have the parties punished, knowing full well that the same thing might occur again, unless a stop was put to it at once. I therefore went up to the provost marshal’s office with one of the guards, and reported the facts to Lieut. Col. [William S.] Fish, the provost marshal.”¹⁰

Fish expressed outrage over what had happened and ordered a lieutenant to accompany the major back to the depot and arrest the responsible parties. The two men returned to the station and Augusta, spotting one of the perpetrators, personally took him into custody. After failing to find any others, they decided to head back when suddenly a man “emerged from the market and assaulted” Augusta. With the lieutenant’s help, the attacker was subdued and now both prisoners were escorted back to the provost marshal’s office.

Despite an unruly crowd of some two hundred people milling around outside the office, Augusta insisted on returning to the station and completing his trip. Protected only by the lieutenant and several “detectives in citizens’ clothing,” Augusta began walking to the depot, followed by an increasingly angry throng. Not far from the station, a man (who had been one of the instigators on the train) blocked their way and, before he could be dislodged, punched Augusta squarely in the face causing his nose to bleed heavily. This sudden burst of violence served only to incite members of the mob, who shouted “lynch the scoundrel,” “hang the negro.” With revolvers drawn, the guards encircled the major and escorted him aboard the train, where two armed cavalymen were assigned to protect him. A Union officer, already on board, also agreed to accompany him to his destination.¹¹

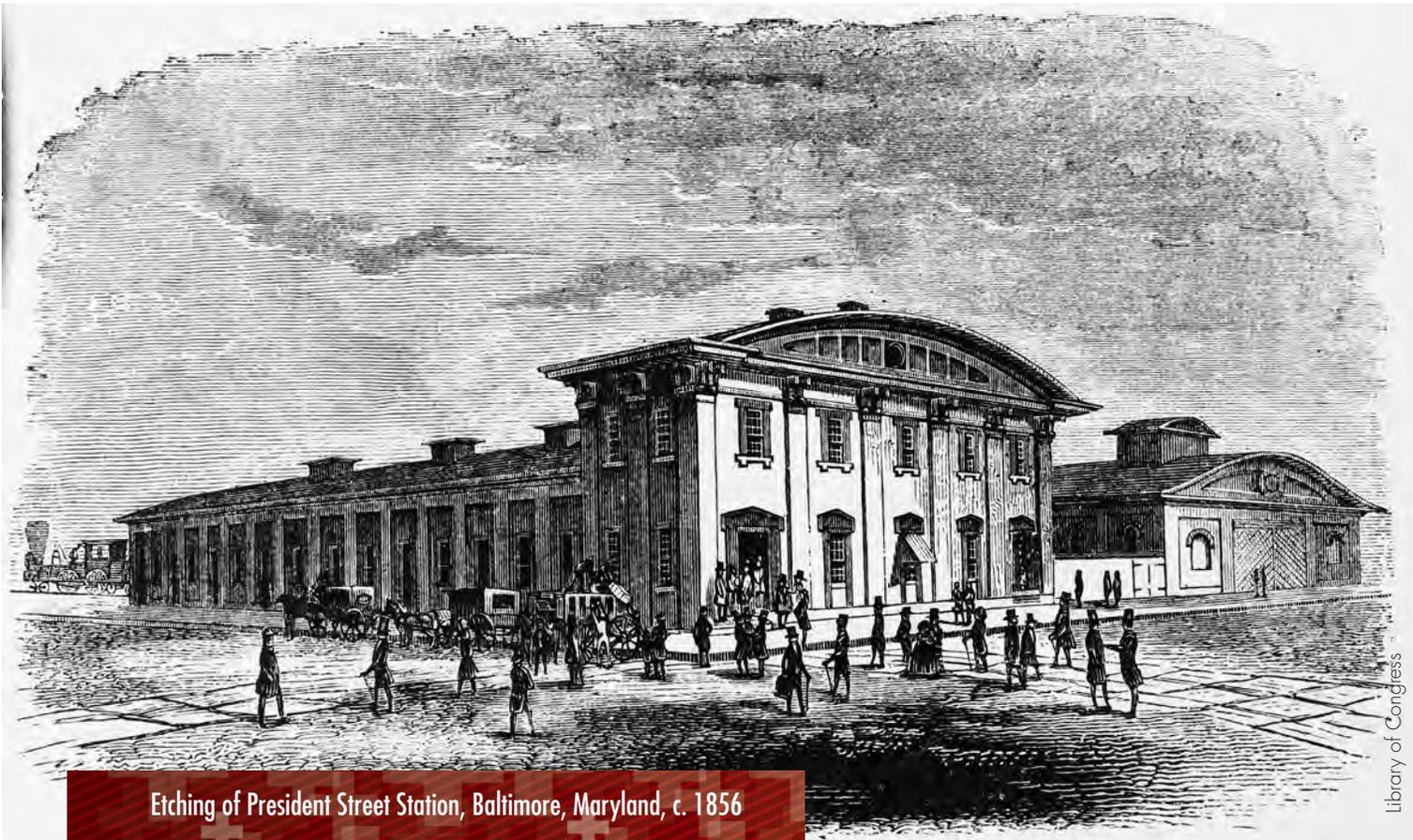
As was his nature, Augusta was not about to allow this incident to go unreported. On 15 May he wrote a letter, detailing the attack, to the

editor of the Washington newspaper the *National Republican*. The letter was soon reprinted in other papers as well. After describing the incident, he pointed out that he was not surprised by his treatment in Baltimore, “where it is considered a virtue to mob colored people.” What disturbed him most was



Camp Stanton historical marker

Public Information Office, Charles County, Maryland



Etching of President Street Station, Baltimore, Maryland, c. 1856

Library of Congress

that his attackers, blinded by racial hatred, were incapable of realizing that he was simply a volunteer whose job was to care for the sick and bind up the wounds of those on the battlefield, even those on the opposing side. Beyond his commitment as a physician, however, he was also a major in the Union Army. And in that capacity, he left no doubt where he stood. “My position as an officer of the United States,” he declared, “entitles me to wear the insignia of my office, and if I am either afraid or ashamed to wear them anywhere, I am not fit to hold my commission, and should resign it at once.”¹²

Unfortunately for Augusta, his troubles had only begun. Not long after he reported for duty with the 7th United States Colored Infantry, garrisoned at Camp Stanton near Bryantown (present-day Benedict), Maryland, the other surgeons, all of whom were white, refused to work with him. It was their understanding that all commissioned officers were to be white men. In addition, Major

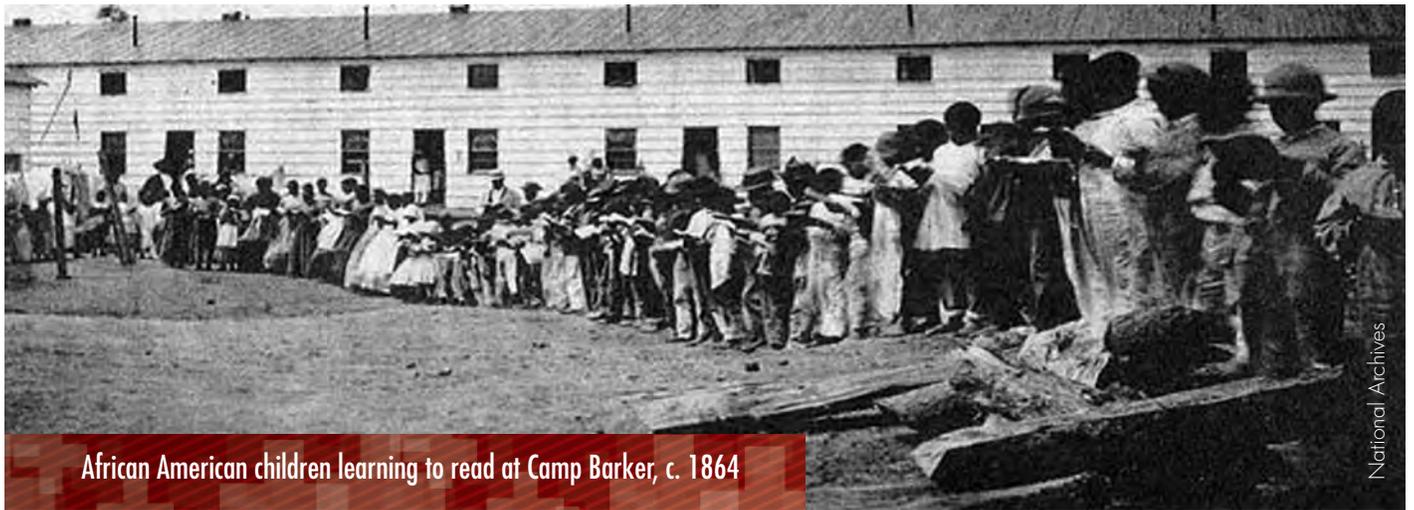


General Birney, c. 1863

Lawrence E. Walker Foundation Collection

Augusta outranked them, which meant that they would be subject to orders from a black man. Writing directly to the White House, to the War Department, and to members of Congress, the surgeons requested “that this *unexpected, unusual*, and most unpleasant relationship in which we have been placed may in *some way* be terminated.”¹³

Although the request was fully supported by the Camp Stanton medical staff, other officers dissented. Brig. Gen. William Birney, for one, noted that “Surgeon Augusta has worked indefatigably while at Camp Stanton.” Nevertheless, the War Department, not wishing to antagonize the physicians who had been so difficult to recruit in the first place, transferred Augusta out of the regiment and placed him in charge of a recently created hospital for African Americans at the site of Camp Barker, near present-day Logan Circle in Washington. Whether he or his contemporaries realized it at the time, this appointment was groundbreaking. Augusta became the



National Archives

first African American to serve as head of a hospital in the United States. But his tenure as medical director of the facility was brief. Since he was placed on “detached service,” which meant that he could be sent wherever needed, in early 1864 he was reassigned to Camp Belger (also known as Birney Barracks) in Baltimore, where he examined newly enlisted black soldiers.¹⁴

Augusta’s position and rank continued to spark controversy as he was shifted from one assignment to another. At the time of his appointment, all enlisted men of color, including noncommissioned officers, were paid \$7 a month, the standard wage for a black private (even though a white private received \$13 a month). As a commissioned officer, Augusta at first escaped this indignity and was paid

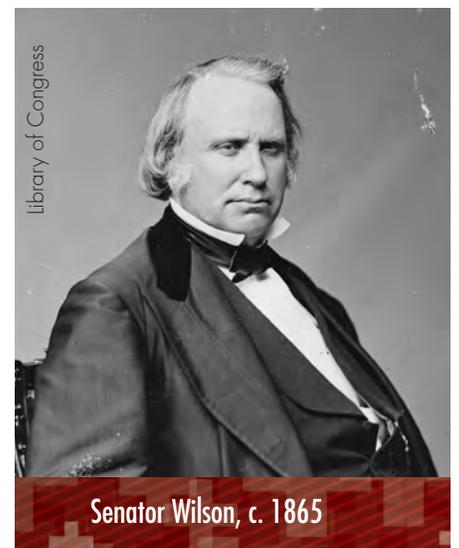
\$169 per month, the compensation of an army surgeon holding the rank of major. But in early 1864, the Army paymaster at Baltimore had “refused to pay him more than seven dollars per month,” which Augusta rejected outright. His reaction paralleled those of enlisted men of color who had endured the hardship for more than a year. Members of the famed 54th and 55th Massachusetts Colored Infantry, for example, refused to accept their pay unless it was equal to that of white soldiers. Finding inequality of pay for all African American soldiers intolerable, Augusta characteristically joined the protest, complaining directly to Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. In Augusta’s case, given his rank and status, the situation

was soon rectified, but black enlisted men had to wait until June 1864 when Congress finally established equal pay for U.S. soldiers regardless of color.¹⁵

Physical violence, outright discrimination by his peers, and unequal pay were not the only problems confronted by America’s first black military doctor. On 1 February 1864, in the midst of a rainstorm, he boarded one of the horse-drawn streetcars in Washington, and, wanting to stay dry, sought a seat in the covered area. The conductor prevented him from doing so, insisting that the section was reserved for white passengers only and directing him to ride up front in the exposed area with the driver. Augusta, in full uniform, refused to do so, whereupon the conductor pushed him off the streetcar and gave orders to the driver to go on.



Library of Congress



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Senator Sumner, c. 1865



Freedmen's Bureau Lincoln Hospital, Savannah, Georgia, c. 1865

Medical College of Georgia

As he had done in the past, Augusta made certain that the incident received the full attention of the public. His account of the affair (in the form of a letter to the judge advocate in the District of Columbia) was forwarded to Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, who at the time was sponsoring a law to prohibit street railroad companies in the nation's capital from segregating passengers on account of race. Sumner, one of the great orators of the time and a fiery advocate for black rights, seized upon the incident, and on the floor of the Senate, as reported by the *Congressional Globe*, made certain that his colleagues understood that "an officer of the United States with the commission of major, with the uniform of the United States, has been pushed off one of these cars on Pennsylvania Avenue by the conductor for no other offense than that he was black." What happened to Augusta, Sumner argued, "is worse for our country at this moment than a defeat in battle. It makes our cause abroad enemies and sows distrust." The Massachusetts senator then read Augusta's letter to the assembled body, which, according to historian James M. McPherson, "added strong impetus" to the eventual passage of legislation in March 1865 forbidding streetcar discrimination in the District.¹⁶

Undoubtedly, this was a victory for black residents in Washington. But for those in the Confederacy, who read about the streetcar controversy in the

Congressional Globe or excerpts of the proceedings in Northern newspapers, it sent an ominous message. In the opinion of the *Daily Richmond Examiner* (a prominent rebel newspaper), the debates in Congress "show very clearly and conclusively the 'mission of the war'"—"To Enforce . . . Negro Equality."¹⁷

Although the *Examiner* misinterpreted (purposely or not) the deliberations over a local issue as representative of a national goal, no doubt Augusta would have preferred that the Confederate newspaper had been right. Yet despite holding such "radical" views and having a reputation for upsetting the status quo, Augusta did not lose the respect of the military leadership. Less than a month before the war ended, he received the brevet rank of lieutenant colonel. Because his promotion was by brevet, which meant that it was honorary, there was no increase in pay or authority. Yet it held much prestige, making Augusta the highest-ranking African American officer of the Civil War period.¹⁸

After the cessation of major hostilities in the spring of 1865, Augusta eventually mustered out of military service and went to work for the Freedmen's Bureau, a War Department agency, which provided food, clothing, fuel, medical care, legal aid, and education to former slaves (and poor whites) in the war-torn South. Augusta was placed in charge of the bureau's Lincoln Hospital in Savannah, Georgia.¹⁹

Augusta returned to Washington in the late 1860s, and in 1868 when Howard University was established in the city as an institution of higher learning for black students, Augusta applied for a faculty position in the medical department and once again shattered



Toronto Public Library

Anderson Abbott, shown here in military uniform, c. 1865

barriers by becoming the first African American to teach medicine at the university level in the United States. During the next decade, he taught anatomy at Howard, served briefly as dean of the medical department, and worked at the Smallpox and Freedman's Hospitals.²⁰

However, these were difficult times for black educational institutions. As a result of the Depression of 1873, Howard University suffered a major loss of government funding, and for months at a time Augusta and his colleagues worked for little or no financial compensation.²¹

As if to add insult to injury, black physicians at Howard were also subjected to racial discrimination. When they applied for membership in the all-white Medical Society of the District of Columbia, they were turned down. Augusta and his fellow black physicians appealed to the American Medical Association (AMA), the national ruling body for the local societies. Afraid to antagonize its affiliate organizations throughout the country (almost all of them were segregated), the AMA refused to take any action. There the matter might have ended if not for Augusta, who, along with several other black medical professionals, in early 1870, founded the National Medical Society, which opened its membership to all physicians regardless of race or color.²²

After a decade of teaching, Augusta left the university to practice medicine privately full time in the capital. Feisty as ever, he renewed his efforts to join the all-white Medical Society of the District of Columbia, but to no avail. Ultimately, in 1884 Augusta became one of the founders of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, the first black medical organization in the United States.²³

In 1869, for his long and distinguished career in medicine, Howard University awarded Augusta the degree of medicinal doctor, the first honorary degree ever given to a man of color by an American university. Two years later, he also received an honorary master's degree. These accolades were well deserved. As an African American and as a doctor, he had

overcome numerous obstacles, had fought more than his share of battles against racial inequality, and had broken new ground for people of color. By his sheer refusal to accept second-class status, Augusta had compiled an extraordinary list of *firsts* for an African American: as a physician in the U.S. Army; as an officer holding the ranks of major and brevet lieutenant colonel; as a director of a hospital; as a faculty member of a medical school; and as a recipient of honorary degrees. Above all, however, Augusta symbolized hope for African Americans in all walks of life. Dr. Anderson Abbott, the first black Canadian physician and a fellow Union Army surgeon, who also

attended the deathbed of Abraham Lincoln, observed during the war that Augusta, even "among the shabby field hands . . . stirred the faintest heart to faith in the new destiny of the race."²⁴

Dr. Alexander T. Augusta died on 21 December 1890 at the age of 65. Buried at Arlington National Cemetery, he was the first black military officer laid to rest in that hallowed ground. Ironically, whether it was intentional or not, his grave was set apart from those of white soldiers.²⁵



Public Affairs Office, Arlington National Cemetery

Gravesite of Alexander Augusta at Arlington National Cemetery

NOTES

1. For Augusta's early years, the most comprehensive (though occasionally differing) accounts are "Augusta, Alexander T. (1825–1890)—Surgeon, Physician, Educator, Chronology, Early Work in Toronto City Hospital," posted at <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages4107/Augusta-Alexander-T-1825-1890.html>; Heather M. Butts, "Alexander Thomas Augusta—Physician, Teacher and Human Rights Activist," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 97 (January 2005): 106; and Dalcyce Newby, "Augusta, Alexander Thomas," in Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *African American National Biography*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 199–200; see also Ltr, A. T. Augusta to President Abraham Lincoln, 7 Jan 1863, in Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II, The Black Military Experience* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 354 (hereafter cited as Berlin et al., eds., *Freedom*); James de T. Abajian, comp., *Blacks in Selected Newspapers, Censuses and Other Sources: An Index to Names and Subjects* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1977), p. 78.

2. [Toronto] *Provincial Freeman*, 11 Jan 1854 and 14 Apr 1855, in Daniel G. Hill, *The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada* (Agincourt: Book Society of Canada Limited, 1981), pp. 168–69.

3. Donald George Simpson, *Under the North Star: Black Communities in Upper Canada Before Confederation (1867)*, ed. Paul E. Lovejoy (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2005), pp. 412–13.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 207–08; Newby, "Augusta," p. 199; C. Peter Ripley et al., eds., *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume II: Canada, 1830–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 376–77, 382–84, 462; Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), p. 203.

5. Ltr, Augusta to Lincoln, 7 Jan 1863, in Berlin et al., eds., *Freedom*, pp. 354–55.

6. Ltr, A. T. Augusta to the President and Members of the Army Medical Board, 30 Mar 1863, in Berlin et al., eds., *Freedom*, p. 355.

7. Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Free Press, 1990), pp. 187–95.

8. Ltr, Surgeon W. Moss to Brig. Gen. Wm. A. Hammond, 1 Apr 1863, in Berlin et al., eds., *Freedom*, p. 355; Quarles, *Negro in the Civil War*, p. 203.

9. Later in the war, two other African Americans, Francis E. Dumas and Martin Delaney, received commissions as majors in the Union Army. Berlin et al., eds., *Freedom*, pp. 310–11; *Douglass' Monthly*, Jun 1863; [Washington, D.C.] *Evening Star*, 17 Apr 1863; "Binding Wounds, Pushing Boundaries: African Americans in Civil War Medicine," United States National Library of Medicine, posted at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/bindingwounds/inuniform.html>.

10. C. Peter Ripley et al., eds., *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume V: The United States, 1859–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), p. 207.

11. Ltr, Alexander T. Augusta to Editor, [Washington] *National Republican*, 15 May 1863, in Ripley et al., eds., *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume V*, pp. 205–10; *Baltimore Sun*, 2 May 1863; *Douglass' Monthly*, Jun 1863; [New York] *Weekly Anglo-African*, 9 May 1863.

12. Ltr, Augusta to Editor, 15 May 1863, in Ripley et al., eds., *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume V*, p. 209; see also [Philadelphia] *Christian Recorder*, 30 May 1863.

13. J. B. McPherson et al. to President Abraham Lincoln [Feb 1864], in Berlin et al., eds., *Freedom*, pp. 356–57.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 357; Butts, "Augusta," pp. 107, 109; "Augusta, Alexander T.," posted at <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages4107/Augusta-Alexander-T-1825-1890.html>.

15. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, pp. 169–75; Quarles, *Negro in the Civil War*, pp. 200–203; Noah Andre Trudeau, *Like Men of War: Black Troops in the Civil War, 1862–1865* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), pp. 91–93, 252–55; Stewart Brooks, *Civil War Medicine* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1966), p. 25; William Montague Cobb, "Alexander Thomas Augusta," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 44 (July 1952): 327; Butts, "Augusta," p. 108; Lydia McNeill, "Augusta,

Alexander T.," in Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith, Cornel West, eds., *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, vol. 1 (New York: MacMillan Library Reference, 1996), p. 222; Richard H. Abbott, *Cobbler in Congress: The Life of Henry Wilson, 1812–1873* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972), p. 138.

16. *Congressional Globe*, 38th Cong., 1st sess., 7 Dec 1863–4 Jul 1864, pp. 553–55; [Washington, D.C.] *Evening Star*, 10 Feb 1864; James M. McPherson, ed., *The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the War for the Union* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 262.

17. *Daily Richmond Examiner*, 6 Apr 1864; see also Robert G. Slawson, *Prologue to Change: African Americans in Medicine in the Civil War Era* (Frederick, Md.: National Museum of Civil War Medicine [NMCWM] Press, 2006), pp. 31–32.

18. Berlin et al., eds., *Freedom*, pp. 357–58.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 358; Ltr, A. T. Augusta to Henry Wilson, 19 Jan 1867, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.

20. Ltrs, A. T. Augusta to President and Trustees of Howard University, 21 Jun 1867, A. T. Augusta to J. A. Cole, 12 Jun 1869, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center; Rayford W. Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867–1967* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. 41.

21. Logan, *Howard University*, pp. 42–43.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 44–47.

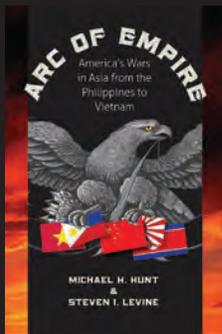
23. The Medical Society of the District of Columbia remained segregated until 1952. W. Montague Cobb, "The Door That Opened Wide," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 79 (1967): 649–50; Butts, "Augusta," p. 108.

24. Butts, "Augusta," p. 108; "Augusta, Alexander T.," posted at <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/4107/Augusta-Alexander-T-1825-1890.html>; "Binding Wounds, Pushing Boundaries," quotation in <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/bindingwounds/inuniform.html>.

25. "Alexander Thomas Augusta, Major, United States Army," posted at <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/ataugust.htm>.

BOOKREVIEWS

Arc of Empire: America's Wars in Asia from the Philippines to Vietnam



By Michael H. Hunt and
Steven I. Levine

University of North Carolina Press, 2012
Pp. iii, 340. \$35

Review by James C. McNaughton

According to Michael H. Hunt and Steven I. Levine, America's withdrawal from Vietnam marked the end not just of a war, but of America's quest for dominion over eastern Asia. In their new book, *Arc of Empire: America's Wars in Asia from the Philippines to Vietnam*, they tell the story as a tragedy in four acts: America's empire was "unleashed" in the Philippines, "secured" by the defeat of Japan, "challenged" in Korea, and finally "undone" in Vietnam, bringing the curtain down on America's "imperial project."

Some readers may be put off by this framework, but military historians would be wrong to overlook this book. At its core are four case studies, each a masterful synthesis of half a century of American scholarship that could stand alone as smart, up-to-date surveys of the literature in diplomatic, political, and cultural history. The book ends with a wide-ranging bibliographic essay.

The authors are distinguished scholars of Asia and of America's long involvement in East Asia. Hunt is the author or editor of eleven books, including titles on American foreign policy, China, and the Vietnam War. Levine is author or editor of four books on modern Asia.

The book's first chapter on the Philippine War bears the heaviest burden. It must remain true to the particularities of that conflict, while introducing themes the authors will pursue in later chapters. It describes America's first leap into the ranks of imperial powers in 1898 and how America then "collided with Asia's first national liberation movement" (p. 63). The authors describe the heavy costs the U.S. Army's counterinsurgency campaign inflicted on Filipinos. They highlight the similarities among their case studies, yet the Philippine War bore little resemblance in origin, scale, or opponent to later wars against other, more capable opponents. They give short shrift to President William McKinley's strategic dilemma: he ultimately chose what seemed to be the best option when he granted independence to Cuba, but not the Philippines.

America's war against Japan fits uneasily into the authors' framework, making this the least satisfactory chapter. The authors strike an unnecessarily provocative tone, writing that "the Pacific War was in essence a war between empires with mutually exclusive regional ambitions" (p. 65). Yet it was Japan, not America, that chose military force to overthrow the status quo and seize territory, which prompted an overwhelming American response.

It is difficult to draw parallels between the Philippine War, where the United States never committed more than seventy thousand soldiers, and the war

against Japan, where the United States committed more than two million men backed by America's industrial might and massive air power. The authors can offer no more than cursory treatment to military operations on land, sea, and air. However, they highlight the immense suffering and devastation, particularly in Japan, whose cities were systematically smashed by American air power.

The success of arms brought America's empire to its apogee by August 1945. Over the next few years, the United States withdrew where it could (China and Korea) and stayed where it believed its vital interests were at stake (Japan, the Philippines, Okinawa, Guam, and the South Pacific). It did not oppose the return of the British, Dutch, and French to reclaim their colonies. In Japan, America undertook a nation-building project far more ambitious than in the Philippines.

The authors give a nuanced account of the war in Korea, paying careful attention to all sides. In response to the North Korean attack in June 1950, the United States extended the containment doctrine to Asia. The war proved costly and frustrating to all parties, each of whom entertained illusions of victory. The authors credit the Chinese Communists with delivering the first check to American ambitions in Asia. They draw attention to the terrible destruction of Korean society, not just from mass political executions or battlefield atrocities, but the systematic destruction of towns and infrastructure from the air.

In Southeast Asia, the authors' "arc of empire" comes full circle. Americans were drawn into yet another land war in Asia for murky reasons, waged war with unprecedented firepower, supported an indigenous government

that was often ineffective and corrupt, caused massive destruction, and then displayed “an almost studied and certainly dysfunctional determination to avoid a searching consideration of what had gone wrong” (p. 239).

The authors accuse Americans of having “sought to impose their will on Vietnam as a territory and a people, applying the full range of tools at their disposal” (p. 242). Like McKinley before him, President Lyndon B. Johnson chose the least bad option when he committed the United States to defend the Saigon government. Nevertheless, the comparative analysis serves to set the conflict into a deeper historical context.

The authors’ ultimate perspective is symbolized by the book’s final pairing of photographs: the My Lai memorial, the embodiment of grief, defiance, and solidarity, and the somber and enigmatic Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the facing page (pp. 244–45).

The authors tell a story of empire. But one could easily turn this book on its head and write about the repeated attempts America made through the years to extricate itself from Asia, from setting up the Philippine Commonwealth in 1935, to withdrawing from Korea in 1949, and the messy disengagement from unsought wars in Korea after 1951 and Vietnam after 1969. Empires, once acquired, are not easily ended.

On the details of how America’s armed forces fought and defeated their enemies the authors have little to say. When summarizing military operations, they sometimes betray unfamiliarity with the sharp end of empire. For example, the American landings on Guadalcanal in August 1942 were not spearheaded by the 1st and 5th Marine Divisions (p. 83). The U.S. Army did not raise one hundred divisions in World War II (p. 137). The X Corps did not land “several marine divisions” in northeast Korea in October 1950 (p. 143). American units in the Ia Drang valley in November 1965 were not elements of the “Seventh Cavalry Division” (p. 216).

But military history is not their purpose. Rather, by examining these four wars together, they highlight the

patterns that connect them. In each, the United States fought opponents it understood only poorly. American forces caused massive destruction, especially by air power after 1944. In the Philippines, occupied Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, the United States supported local elites.

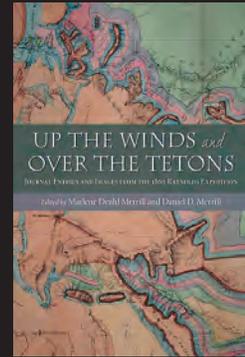
The authors leave unanswered a larger question: if America’s empire ended in 1973, what are we to make of America’s continued engagement with Asia since then? America still has deep diplomatic, military, economic, and cultural ties throughout the region. If not empire, what should we call it? After Vietnam, the authors conclude, the United States “could no longer assume that it could work its will in the region by force of arms whenever it chose to do so” (p. 254). But I doubt America’s leaders ever made such an assumption, certainly not before 1941 and probably not much after 1945.

These questions aside, Hunt and Levine have written a valuable book that merits careful reading. They have done a great service by pulling together the literature on these individual conflicts, set in a provocative overarching framework that will encourage readers to take a fresh look at wars usually treated in isolation. Their comparative analysis is sure to provoke debate and new research.

Dr. James C. McNaughton is chief of the Contemporary Studies Branch, Histories Division, U.S. Army Center of Military History. He previously served as the command historian for several Army and Joint commands, including the U.S. Army, Pacific. He received a master’s and Ph.D. degrees in history from the Johns Hopkins University. He has served as an officer in the Active Army, National Guard, and Army Reserve. He is the author of *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II* (CMH, 2006) and *The Army in the Pacific: A Century of Engagement* (CMH, 2012).



*Up the Winds and over the Tetons:
Journal Entries and Images from
the 1860 Reynolds Expedition*



Edited by Marlene Deahl Merrill and
Daniel D. Merrill
University of New Mexico Press, 2012
Pp. xv, 118. \$34.95

Review by Steven C. Haack

William F. Reynolds graduated from West Point in 1839 and joined the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. There were many postings available for such an individual in an expanding and largely unexplored nation and, over the next two decades, he plied his skills in many regions. Reynolds worked on the surveys of the northeastern boundary of the United States, the Ohio River, and the Northern Lakes. He served as a topographical engineer in Mexico during the Mexican-American War and oversaw the construction of lighthouses on the East Coast. In 1857, he was promoted to captain. It was thus fitting when he was directed in April 1859 to prepare to lead an Army expedition in the Intermountain West. Funded by a government appropriation of \$60,000, he was to explore country that now constitutes western Wyoming, eastern Idaho, and southern Montana.

The Reynolds Expedition was actually a continuation of a number of expeditions led by Lt. Gouverneur K. Warren in the mid-1850s through Nebraska, South Dakota, and eastern Wyoming. Warren would later become a general in the Union Army, becoming known as the “Hero of Little Round Top” for his actions at Gettysburg. It is fortunate that Reynolds was able to secure the services of

several individuals who had previously accompanied Warren. These included the legendary guide Jim Bridger and Ferdinand Vandever Hayden, a very knowledgeable and experienced naturalist. Artist Anton Schönborn and topographers James D. Hutton and J. Hudson Snowden had also participated in at least one of Warren's expeditions and they joined the expedition as well. Although Raynolds' career had taken him over a variety of landscapes, mountainous terrain was not among them, and the knowledge of those who had been there before, particularly Bridger, would prove invaluable.

The expedition left St. Louis in late May 1859 aboard two steamboats and reached Fort Pierre, near present-day Pierre, South Dakota, in mid-June. From here, they struck out overland to the west and spent the summer exploring what is now northern Wyoming, returning to the North Platte River in mid-October to set up winter camp at Deer Creek Station, near present-day Glenrock, Wyoming. This leg of the expedition and the winter at Deer Creek is afforded only a few pages, since the book actually concentrates on what the editors consider to be "the most dramatic" portion of Raynolds' journal entries, the expedition's travels from 10 May to 4 July 1860.

The expedition left Deer Creek on 10 May 1860, traveling west over the floodplains of the North Platte and Sweetwater Rivers. As it entered the Wind River Range, the terrain became more rugged and on 22 May, it left its wagons behind and proceeded with mules. It was at this point that a group led by Lt. Henry E. Maynadier separated from the main expedition and headed north, following the Bighorn River. Raynolds followed the Wind River into the mountains. The party now consisted of Raynolds, eight assistants, seven laborers, and an Army escort of thirty men. As the canyon walls closed in, it was forced to cross and recross the river many times. Raynolds had intended to follow the Wind River to its headwaters and then proceed straight north to the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, staying on the Atlantic side of the Continental Divide throughout.

Jim Bridger had told him this was not possible but, strangely, Raynolds did not believe him. Only upon seeing the mountains confronting them did he agree that it was better to cross the divide and head down the valley of the Gros Ventre River.

Not only was the terrain rugged, but the snow was quite deep in many parts of the mountains, making passage difficult. The odometer wagon that Raynolds insisted on taking over any and all obstacles became an unpopular burden among the men. At one point, Raynolds was sure that the men were intentionally tipping it over in an attempt to destroy it. Astronomical observations were, of course, an important part of determining the expedition's precise location, but cloudy skies persisted and Raynolds could make only a few observations.

Passing through Jackson Hole, the expedition met a serious challenge in the form of the Snake River, which was running deep and swift with melt water. It was necessary to stop here for several days and build a boat with which men and equipment could be ferried across. From this point, the expedition traveled northwest and then northward over the Teton Pass, looping around present-day Yellowstone National Park and on to the headwaters of the Missouri, where it met up with Maynadier's party on 3 July and started for home. At the conclusion of the expedition, the Civil War interrupted the process of organizing and interpreting the expedition's experiences, and the official report was not published until 1868.

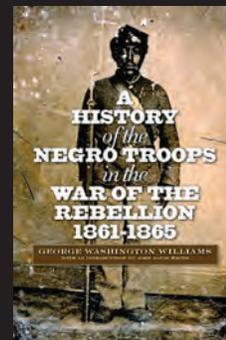
Up the Winds and over the Tetons is a slim volume, with Raynolds' actual journal entries running only fifty pages. Several of the landscapes produced by Anton Schönborn and James Hutton are reproduced and show the magnificent country through which the expedition traveled. The endnotes are thorough and very helpful. The expedition's route could have been rendered much clearer by the inclusion of maps. With access to standard United States Geological Survey maps, the reader can follow the course of the expedition quite closely as many of the features mentioned

in the journal entries, even small creeks, still have the same names. In the endnotes, the editors pinpoint the expedition's location a number of times. Maps would have been a valuable addition throughout, particularly to accompany descriptions of some of the problematic terrain in which the men found themselves.

Steven C. Haack has published research on a variety of subjects, including ancient astronomy, Egyptology, paleontology, and the history of the American West. His article "Peace Be to Their Ashes: The 11th Kansas Cavalry and the Battle of Red Buttes" was featured in the Summer 2011 issue of *Army History* (No. 80).



A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion, 1861–1865



By George Washington Williams
Fordham University Press, 2012
Pp. xl, 257. \$28

Review by Roger D. Cunningham

In 1887, Harper & Brothers published a history of the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) in the Civil War that had been written by a talented African American author, George Washington Williams. This paperback edition of that classic volume has been published by the Fordham University Press, as part of its The North's Civil War series. The new edition includes an excellent introductory essay by John

David Smith, the Charles H. Stone Distinguished Professor of American History at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1849, George W. Williams ran away from home and used an assumed name to enlist in the 41st U.S. Colored Infantry during the Civil War, mustering out of the Union Army in Texas in late 1865. He then served for a short time with the rebel army that was fighting the French-supported Emperor Maximilian in Mexico. In 1867, Williams enlisted in the 10th U.S. Cavalry, and after sustaining a non-combat-related gunshot wound, he was discharged from the Army a year later. Williams was ordained as a minister in 1874, and in 1875, while he was serving as the pastor of the Twelfth Baptist Church, in Boston, he was commissioned as the chaplain of the all-black 2d Battalion in the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia (National Guard). Thus, he brought quite a varied martial background to the task of writing his military history of the USCT during the Civil War.

Williams had no formal training as a historian, but he was wise enough to make use of many important primary sources in the research for his book, including the multivolume *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, which the War Department had begun to publish in 1880. He also conducted research in the Library of Congress, and he consulted the papers located in various state adjutant generals' offices.

Williams began his book with chapters on black soldiers in ancient and modern times, before he examined the employment of black soldiers during the Civil War. In 1861, as soon as the fighting began, thousands of African Americans across the North were eager to serve in the Union Army, but the U.S. government did not want to enlist them. In 1862, the first regiment of black troops was finally raised in Kansas, and elements of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry engaged rebel forces in combat at Island Mound, in western Missouri, in October. That represented the first use of black Northern troops

in battle, although the 1st Kansas Colored was not accepted into the Union Army until 1863. Eventually, it was redesignated as the 79th U.S. Colored Infantry (New).

In discussing the many other USCT regiments, which eventually enlisted almost 180,000 black soldiers, Williams organized his account into chapters describing their use in the Department of the South (1862–1865), the Mississippi Valley (1863), the Army of the Potomac (1864), the Army of the Cumberland (1864), and the Army of the James (1865). The first commander of the Army of the James, Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, strongly believed in the capabilities of his African American troops, and he even created the Butler Medal (illustrated in the book) to recognize their courageous conduct during the campaign before Richmond.

In separate chapters, Williams also examined the black soldiers' special plight as prisoners of war, as well as the Fort Pillow Massacre, in western Tennessee. That infamous massacre occurred when black artillerymen and Tennessee loyalist forces unsuccessfully attempted to surrender to Confederates under the command of Nathan Bedford Forrest in April 1864. The events at Fort Pillow are still disputed, but there were no doubts among African Americans at the time, and after word of the massacre spread throughout the North, "Remember Fort Pillow!" became a potent rallying cry for recruiting and motivating black soldiers.

In his closing chapter, "The Cloud of Witnesses," Williams included quotes from numerous high-ranking officials attesting to the "martial valor of the Negro soldier" (p. 230). Williams also recommended that a federally funded monument should be erected in Washington, D.C., to recognize the USCT's many contributions to the North's victory. He provided detailed instructions on what that monument should look like, although his ideas had no effect on the monument that was finally erected in the 1990s.

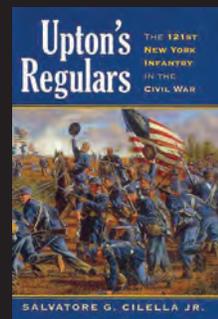
As a work of history, Williams' book is flawed. Being a USCT veteran, the author was too close to the subject

to be able to examine it objectively. As Professor Smith points out in his introductory essay, Williams tended to overstate the USCT's heroism in battle, as well as its contributions to the overall Union victory. Nevertheless, his book is an important work in showing how the record of the contributions of the North's African American soldiers evolved over the past 150 years. For those who want to understand the initial stage in that process, this is an important book to read.

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



Upton's Regulars: The 121st New York Infantry in the Civil War



By Salvatore G. Cilella Jr.
University Press of Kansas, 2009
Pp. xiv, 586. \$39.95

Review by Russell G. Oates

As we commemorate the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, attention on the subject is likely to grow. Of particular interest to many will be the local angle, the story of the rank and file men from specific regions who participated in the war. One of

the more storied units that fought in the conflict was the 121st New York Infantry, popularly known as Upton's Regulars. That moniker arose from their commander, Col. Emory Upton, a young West Point graduate who took control of the regiment in 1862. But as Salvatore G. Cilella explores in *Upton's Regulars: The 121st New York Infantry in the Civil War*, the common soldiers of the regiment offer a remarkable look at the ordeal of the conflict.

The men of the 121st came from Otsego and Herkimer Counties in upstate New York. Perhaps best known for Cooperstown, the area had been well suited for farming. Herkimer County, however, developed into a manufacturing region by midcentury, and as the war years went by, the men of that county would differ greatly from their Otsego counterparts. These men came from a variety of backgrounds and joined the Army for a number of reasons. However, fighting to preserve the Union was often a common theme that connected them.

Though offering a narrative history of the regiment through the battles it fought in, *Upton's Regulars* focuses on the social aspects of the war as it concerned the men of the regiment. Fighting in many of the key engagements in the Eastern theater of the war, the 121st's engagements took them from Fredericksburg to Chancellorsville, from Gettysburg to Spotsylvania, and then from Petersburg to Appomattox. Over the course of three years of fighting, the soldiers slowly progressed into becoming abolitionists. By the end of the Battle of Gettysburg, the soldiers of Otsego and Herkimer Counties held their convictions on abolition to varying degrees. Some celebrated the thought of freeing the slaves, while others believed the loss of slaves as property was a just consequence for the slave owners for their attempts to destroy the Union. On county lines, men from Otsego often disparaged slaves in their letters, while the men from Herkimer seldom spoke ill of them. This change in attitudes was also reflected in the dislike displayed toward New York Governor Horatio Seymour. Following the July draft riots in New York, men in the 121st

wrote back to their families informing them that they no longer respected Seymour, a Democrat, for remarks that appeared as support for the rioters. They saw abolition as the way to preserve the Union halfway through the war.

While his role and voice in the book is secondary to that of the men, Colonel Upton's exploits and leadership are captured throughout. Of the 121st's three commanders during the war, Upton was the men's favorite. While Upton punished deserters by withholding pay, especially during the winter of 1862–1863, and conducted courts-martial, he also urged those back in Herkimer and Otsego Counties to send essential supplies for the men. For his use of column tactics to assault the Muleshoe salient during the Battle of Spotsylvania on 10 May 1864, Colonel Upton received a promotion to brigadier general on 12 May. Due to this promotion, he no longer commanded the 121st, but Upton continued to be strongly admired by the men he left behind. His replacement, Egbert Olcott, though a man of order, never gained the respect of the men he led.

Upton's service in the conflict colored his postwar thoughts on the structure of the Army. His call for a professional army instead of a citizen army had its roots in his command of volunteers and draftees with the Union Army. Frustrated by a stalled career and possible clinical depression, Upton committed suicide in 1881. He did not receive his dues until the first years of the twentieth century when his works were published posthumously by Secretary of War Elihu Root and his ideas implemented as the country entered the First World War.

Overall, this is a worthy addition to the field of Civil War studies for the social history it provides. To understand why men fought in the Civil War is one of the enduring questions of the conflict because there is no single answer. As the men of the 121st demonstrate, wartime attitudes evolved over time, from preservation of the Union to supporting the end of slavery. As President Abraham Lincoln saw the war as one that transformed the nation, so too did the men of the 121st.

Once that war ended, the men went back home and led their lives, firm in the belief that they helped create a better Union.

Russell G. Oates received his master's degree in history from Queens College of the City University of New York. In 2010, he participated in the Canadian-American Staff Ride of Sicily, conducted by the Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society.



Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I



By Adriane Lentz-Smith
Harvard University Press, 2009
Pp. ix, 318. \$35

Review by Larry A. Grant

The dust jacket of *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* shows a group of African American doughboys advancing with fixed bayonets into a German-occupied trench with colors flying. Despite the image and title, historian Adriane Lentz-Smith has not written a book about World War I or about the contributions of black Americans to its prosecution. Lentz-Smith writes, "I do not wish to tell a story of war; I wish to tell a story through war" (p. 2). *Freedom Struggles* is, she writes, an examination of a "transformative moment" in

African American history—the simultaneous struggles against Germany for world democracy and against Jim Crow for equal citizenship (p. 4).

It was widely believed before World War I that military service, particularly in combat, had the power to “make men,” thereby fulfilling a prerequisite for citizenship. Lentz-Smith argues that this notion, and Woodrow Wilson’s rhetoric of democracy, was central to the bargain made by many African Americans who went to war in 1917–1918. Even though Wilson’s democratic administration had segregated the federal government, African Americans still believed that their war service could earn them full recognition of their manhood, citizenship, and place in an increasingly segregated American society.

The author foreshadows the result of this bargain in her chapter on the Houston race riot of 1917. Black soldiers of the 24th Infantry rioted and killed white citizens after white policemen attacked members of their unit. The Army hanged more than a dozen men and imprisoned many more. Lentz-Smith writes that “the government’s failure to punish treasonable Texans and its harsh punishment of the Houston mutineers broke black Americans’ hearts” (p. 74). Fearing the militant masculinity that contributed to the riot, the Army gave black soldiers little opportunity to prove their manhood in France. Most were assigned as laborers and discovered that Jim Crow rules applied more widely in the American Expeditionary Forces than all of Wilson’s grand democratic ideals. Ultimately, African Americans who had hoped that they might earn equal standing as citizens in exchange for their service were disappointed.

However, the author contends that individual black soldiers were never “just soldiers,” and their disappointments were never solely their own. She identifies them as “emblems and agents in this struggle” and argues that the entire African American community shared their frustration (p. 4). Failing to achieve an acceptable result but unwilling to retreat, African Americans sought new paths to equality. Lentz-Smith writes that after the war a new

political sophistication led to tactical changes as black Americans abandoned bargaining for greater militancy. This tactical shift played out as African American soldiers returned home to find stronger Jim Crow sentiment than before. Race riots were widespread in 1919, but Lentz-Smith chooses the murder trial of Sgt. Edgar Caldwell as her “test case for postwar civil rights” struggle (p. 189). She traces the course of the trial, its importance to African Americans, and highlights the new tactics employed by Caldwell’s defenders.

When Sergeant Caldwell responded to abuse by killing a white streetcar operator and wounding another man, he was quickly tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by an Alabama court. His supporters tried to get the Wilson administration to assert jurisdiction over Caldwell as a soldier in federal service but managed only to delay the outcome until the Supreme Court denied the appeal. Though the effort failed, Lentz-Smith documents the learning process as supporters developed new organizing skills, tactics, and mechanisms and mobilized widespread public support. These were later applied in other situations with greater success.

Lentz-Smith concludes by acknowledging that “World War I had not resulted in dramatic change” for African Americans, but it had taught them how to fight the battle for equality with increased effectiveness in the years before America’s entry into World War II. “The democracy hoped for in the first (*sic*) World War became the democracy demanded in the second” (pp. 234–35).

The author constructs her history from selected memoirs underpinned by archival research. In her writing, she shifts between a compelling narrative of the wrongs suffered by African American soldiers at the hands of their fellow citizens and occasional academic ponderance. Her use of themes of sexuality, masculinity, feminine agency, or other academic jargon dilutes the power of the individual stories as plain—and effective—statements of injustice in their own right. Since *Freedom Struggles* was adapted from Lentz-Smith’s Yale dissertation, “The Great War for Civil Rights: African American Politics and World War I, 1916–1920,”

these detours are understandable but distracting.

For example, in her discussion of sexuality, she argues that relations with French women “stirred white supremacists’ fears as fully as it did racial activists’ hopes” (p. 83). Perhaps, but fears and hopes do not prove consummation. Her argument that sexual relationships were widespread needs more than the slight support offered even if it includes testimony (that must be approached with care) from the young men involved. Lentz-Smith weakens her argument further when she notes that soldiers were “herded into camps surrounded by barbed wire, with passes into town ‘as hard to secure as American gold.’” She adds that “African Americans stationed at St. Nazaire engaged one another and their white fellow soldiers more than they did the civilians around them” (p. 124). The author ought to at least address this inconsistency.

There are a few other areas Lentz-Smith might have explored more carefully. Her comments on African American soldiers’ reasons for fighting serve her main argument largely to the exclusion of other interpretations. *Freedom Struggles* would have benefited from a more detailed discussion of soldier motivations in combat. In fact, she might have included the occasional combat soldier’s narrative, if possible. While, as she shows, most African Americans were denied combat roles, over forty thousand were at the front and some certainly must have written about their experiences. She should ask whether fighting soldiers were more or less or differently affected by their experiences than soldiers who only labored.

More familiarity with front conditions and the abject failure of the Army’s First World War logistics organization also might have added nuance to her understanding of the conditions suffered by African American soldier-laborers. Horrendous as these conditions were, they probably were not the exclusive product of Jim Crow racism. Sometimes what seems like a deliberate affront is just incompetence. Her racial interpretation of the dangerous, difficult, nasty conditions on the docks, where soldiers worked long hours with

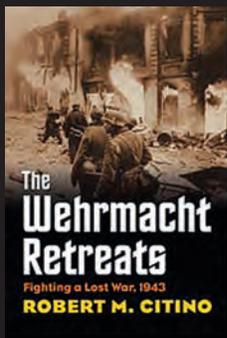
little rest or even proper nourishment, would have benefited from a comparison to the front. It might be argued that mud, trench foot, and typhus, not to mention poison gas, bullets, and shell-fire, trumped most conditions suffered by soldiers in the rear.

Lentz-Smith has put together a compelling narrative history despite these shortcomings, and hopefully she will do so again. This is a book worth the effort if only to marvel at the strength of character that moved men to fight for an organization and a nation that treated them and their families so poorly.

Larry A. Grant is a retired Navy officer and the editor of *Caissons Go Rolling Along: A Memoir of America in Post-World War I Germany* (Columbia, S.C., 2010) by Maj. Gen. Johnson Hagood.



The Wehrmacht Retreats: Fighting a Lost War, 1943



By Robert M. Citino
University Press of Kansas, 2012
Pp. xxviii, 410. \$34.95

Review by Bryan R. Gibby

For decades following the end of World War II, the German military (air, naval, and ground forces collectively known as the Wehrmacht) has held a high position in the pantheon of American military deities. This position was probably inevitable given the onset of the Cold War and

the possibility of military conflict with the Soviet Union. Since the German Army had the most recent combat experience, and its former commanders were eager to write and speak about their experiences fighting “the Red hordes,” American Army officers in particular looked to the Wehrmacht’s history for insights on operational art, battle command, tactics, and intelligence. This was certainly a curious approach, given the undeniable fact that Germany had lost the war. Still, the mystique of the Wehrmacht’s fighting power has had an enduring effect on our understanding of war at the operational level.

With that background, it is a pleasure to welcome Professor Robert M. Citino’s latest publication, *The Wehrmacht Retreats: Fighting a Lost War, 1943*. This is the third book in a series assessing the strength and capabilities of Prussian and German military forces since the rise of the “Great Elector,” Frederick William, in the seventeenth century. Call it the “German way of war.” Citino makes his case forcibly and with panache, relying on a vast array of original source materials that explode myths and bring the image of the Wehrmacht back to reality. However, make no mistake, for Citino acknowledges that despite the hype, the German military was and remained a formidable force throughout the war, and that even during the disastrous year of 1943, it managed to hold the field despite numerical and materiel inferiority vis-à-vis the Allied powers.

The Wehrmacht Retreats picks up where Citino’s *The Death of the Wehrmacht* (Lawrence, Kans., 2011) left off in the winter of 1942–1943, when German spearheads in the Caucasus, along the Volga River, and west of Cairo suffered significant setbacks operationally and lost the initiative strategically. The most critical point made in the latter work, and which is considerably expanded and evaluated in *The Wehrmacht Retreats*, is the idea of military cultural continuity. Citino argues that the debacles of 1942 represented “more than simple defeat . . . a traditional, centuries-old

military culture, a ‘way of war,’ we might say, crashed into the realities of the industrialized warfare of the twentieth century” (p. xvii). This is an interesting assertion, as most histories of the period 1939–1945 typically give credit to the Germans’ competence at “machine-age warfare.” However, Citino argues that by 1943, the Prussian/German culturally derived system of operational war-fighting (*Bewegungskrieg* or war of movement), which had sustained the tiny kingdom of Prussia and created the German empire, “had proven itself obsolete” by the mid-twentieth century (p. xvii).

Citino follows the mentalities and the professional outlook of senior German commanders such as Erich von Manstein, Erwin Rommel, Hans-Jürgen von Arnim, and Albert Kesselring throughout the grueling campaigns in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, and the Ukraine. One key theme returns repeatedly: the Germans had a professional obsession with a particular form of the offensive that demanded (hyper) aggressive battle command, high mobility, good road networks, and a short duration so as not to challenge the logistical systems of the day. By 1943, though, it becomes clear that the Soviets, British, and even the Americans (newcomers to the global war) possessed resilience and other qualities that either nullified the Germans’ strong suits in maneuver or turned the tables completely against them. For example, German attacks in Tunisia, at Kursk, or Salerno all followed a similar pattern: the concentric assault. Despite initial success, these attacks all failed spectacularly with high casualties and the loss of very valuable, and irreplaceable, men and materiel.

Despite this recipe for failure, Citino rightly suggests that German leaders probably did not have the flexibility of imagination or initiative to try anything different—a shocking revelation given the reputation that Wehrmacht officers have had for flexible tactics and operational acumen. When thrown on the defensive and confronted by enemies with a

nearly limitless base of resources, tremendous firepower, and a level of mechanization the Germans could not match, the reliance on *Bewegungskrieg* almost appears quaint. The Germans were still capable of smaller battlefield victories, but the ultimate outcome was never in doubt. They knew they were losing, but would continue offensives often risking heavy losses for only modest returns because it was in their blood (the battle for Sicily provides a succinct example at both the tactical and operational levels of war [pp. 179–83]).

Beyond the erudite and captivating narrative, Citino is capable of some analytical gems worth remembering. In assessing German operations in the Ukraine in the fall of 1943, he quotes General Hermann Balck's chief of staff, Friedrich von Mellenthin, who said, "From the tactical aspect the conduct of operations was the most brilliant . . . Balck handled his corps with masterly skill." Fair enough says Citino, "but by this time, it hardly mattered." In other words, great tactics can only do so much in the face of a hopeless strategic situation. In the context of the collapsing Eastern Front, Citino calls this Manstein's First Law: "It's only a delaying action if you actually have something to look forward to," which the Germans certainly did not (pp. 236–37).

Turning to the Italian campaign, Citino considers how the Germans responded to the "incessant waves of enemy fire" that made maneuver impossible. No matter—the attack would proceed as planned. At Salerno, the *Hermann Göring Parachute Panzer Division* launched an assault against the British that resulted in "two hundred yards in exchange for massive casualties: bad math for the Wehrmacht" (p. 256).

These two examples point to the strength of Citino's argument for a "German way of war." Although dangerous at the tactical level, by this critical year of the war—sandwiched between the disasters at Stalingrad and El Alamein, and the future twin catastrophes of Operations OVERLORD and BAGRATION—the German

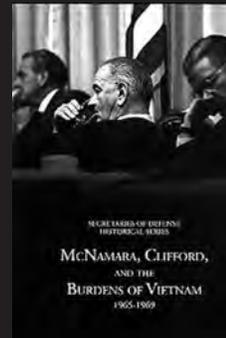
military had not developed an acceptable operational-level technique to deal with its opponents' own ways of war. *Bewegungskrieg* had limited utility, and the Wehrmacht never came to grips with those limitations, nor could it maneuver well in a strategic arena in which the demands of a two-front war applied intolerable strains on limited resources for strategic decision making and manpower.

In summary, this is a fine book, well written and relevant to professional military officers and academics alike. Furthermore, it is good history. Citino demonstrates the power of objective analysis to illuminate present challenges through a rigorous study of the past. He shies away from simplistic explanations and blame, relying instead on a more comprehensive approach that gives a fair hearing to both sides. Even those who consider themselves well read on the topic will find new and interesting nuggets and will have their preconceived notions challenged. Perhaps the greatest merit of *The Wehrmacht Retreats* is the idea that "ways of war" have a shelf-life. American military leaders would do well to examine their own assumptions and prejudices regarding armed force and how it is employed to achieve strategic objectives in the future.

Lt. Col. (Dr.) Bryan R. Gibby is the commander of the 707th Military Intelligence Battalion at Fort Gordon, Georgia. He has served two tours in Iraq with the 4th Infantry Division and taught military history at West Point. He received his Ph.D. degree in history from the Ohio State University and is the author of *The Will to Win: American Military Advisors in Korea, 1946–1953* (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 2012). He is currently researching a book on military tactics and strategic policy during the stalemate phase of the Korean War.



McNamara, Clifford, and the Burdens of Vietnam, 1965–1969



By Edward J. Drea
Historical Office of the Office of the
Secretary of Defense, 2011
Pp. xiii, 694. \$68

Review by Youssef H. Aboul-Enein

Serious students of U.S. national security decision-making or those with orders to serve on the major staffs of the Pentagon—Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, or the offices of the service chiefs—need to make time and read the Secretaries of Defense Historical Series. The sixth volume of this series, published in 2011, covers the last years of Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. Award-winning author and military historian Edward Drea has done the American public a great service with his highly readable history of the tortuous decision-making processes during the escalation of the Vietnam War. He chronicles two U.S. secretaries of defense, Robert S. McNamara and Clark M. Clifford. Readers will gain a seat in the conference rooms of the Pentagon, Saigon, the White House, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs as Robert McNamara balances Vietnam with crises in the Dominican Republic, the 1967 Six-Day War, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) alignment, and the superpower competition with the Soviet Union.

The author discusses how policy is made at the Office of the Secretary of Defense and how this office interacts with other federal agencies, Congress,

service chiefs, and field commanders in Vietnam. The book mainly covers McNamara's tenure as secretary of defense from 1961 to early 1968. His successor, Clark Clifford, served from 1968 to 1969, a brief but pivotal tenure, as Clifford began to introduce an "honorable" withdrawal from Vietnam, at least in the mind of President Johnson.

What strikes this reviewer is how Pentagon officials in 1965 find ways to escalate the conflict in Vietnam without drawing on a full mobilization. Among the mechanisms used were shifting forces from Korea and Germany to Vietnam, extending deployments, and avoiding the full engagement of the draft system. The North Vietnamese would conduct several daring operations on U.S. forces demanding an increase in troop levels. An entire chapter, "Paying for the War: Budgets, Supplements, and Estimates, 1965–1967," is devoted to the hard realities of financing a war. President Johnson and his staff understood that raising taxes or increasing mobilization was certain to erode the public's support for the war. Drea provides details of administrative wrangling over the fiscal year (FY) 1965 budget supplemental, the FY 1966 defense budget, and the projected FY 1967 budget. Of note, the arguments over the three components of funding would occur simultaneously, and the volume, over the next few chapters, takes readers through to the FY 1970 budget cycle. Readers will begin to gain an understanding of the budgetary trend of financing America's conflicts by amassing deficits and avoiding the raising of revenue to fund wars. This debate continues to this day between the legislative and executive branches of government. Technological improvements on current weapon systems, coupled with the development and fielding of sophisticated weapon systems, created economic burdens on the United States and the Soviet Union. The author discusses the evolution of the concept Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). This concept developed not only because of U.S. attempts at nuclear parity with the Soviets, but more vitally because

of the limited resources during the Vietnam War.

The chapter titled "NATO Readjustment" is a detailed look at the defense strategy concept of "flexible response," whereby it is unrealistic to rely solely on nuclear weapons as a deterrent to war. The chapter covers McNamara's and Clifford's relations with European allies, and how the decision to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Western Europe was reached. The discussion in this chapter focuses on weighing political decisions and the actual number of conventional forces between the Soviet Bloc and NATO. There is a fascinating section of the volume that discusses the logic and debate of allocating military assistance to countries around the world. South Vietnam received \$1.6 billion from FYs 1967 to 1970, while other American allies received far less because of several competing crises that changed priorities, such as the Pueblo incident in 1966 or the 1968 deployment of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. The Military Assistance Program remains a cornerstone of American engagement, and a yearly debate occurs between the United States, the ally, Congress, and competing entities over the size and nature of foreign military assistance. Those with orders to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the State Department's Political-Military Affairs (POL-MIL) Bureau, in addition to major staffs at the Pentagon will find this section of particular interest.

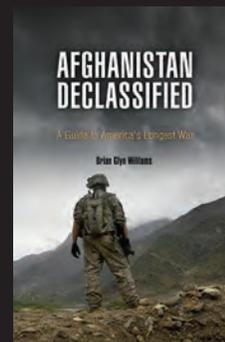
This is a book about how leaders had to make hard choices. Chapter 16 has an excellent insider look at how the United States decided to arm Israel after the 1967 Six-Day War as a response to the massive sea and air lift of Soviet weapons to Egypt and Syria. The book demonstrates the enormous pressures on the United States in addressing multiple crises simultaneously and the all-consuming nature of the Vietnam conflict on materiel, resources, and even political capital in the international arena. The book provides many insights for those interested in tracing the logic behind strategic and military operational decisions. For example on a national level, the author shows how funding for Johnson's Great So-

ciety programs began to erode in the face of demand to produce resources for the Vietnam War. This book is a must-read for those interested in the strategic and operational aspects of the Vietnam conflict.

Cdr. Youssef H. Aboul-Enein, a Navy officer, is an adjunct military professor of Islamic Studies at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and is author of *Militant Islamist Ideology: Understanding the Global Threat* (Annapolis, Md., 2010), which was named among the top 150 books on terrorism and counterterrorism by the journal *Perspectives on Terrorism*. He served as a Middle East adviser at the Office of the Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs from 2002 to 2006.



Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America's Longest War



By Brian Glyn Williams
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012
Pp. xii, 248. \$34.95

Review by Priyanka Singh

As witness to an unrelenting crisis, Afghanistan today is reminiscent of a strategic enigma, its history replete with external interventions and persisting internal conflicts. Beginning with the British, then the Soviets, and now the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) presence, Afghanistan

has followed a downward trajectory, fast slipping toward further instability and uncertainty. In the aftermath of the attacks of 11 September 2001, as the war on terrorism was unleashed, a tremendous body of work dealing with Afghanistan and the adjoining regions has been produced.

Against this profusion, *Afghanistan Declassified* by Brian Glyn Williams, an assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, stands out as a book with a unique purpose and genesis. In 2010, Williams was commissioned by the Joint Information Operations Warfare Command of the U.S. Army to prepare a field manual based on his extensive travel in and research on Afghanistan. The manual was designed to educate U.S. soldiers fighting in Afghanistan and provide them with a comprehensive background on basic and pertinent aspects of the war-torn country. This book, an expanded version of that manual, is published primarily for a larger civilian readership. The book is based on the premise that a strong understanding of the geographical and cultural terrain gives a tactical advantage over adversaries. A lack of this requisite background information could be disadvantageous, especially when a war has to be fought in a region as “alien” as Afghanistan.

The author begins by providing the basics—the ethnic and geographical profile of Afghanistan. Williams deftly presents a comprehensive overview of the country’s complex multiple ethnicities and tribal groups. In due course, he offers details and little-known facts, further acquainting the reader with the ethnic profile of Afghanistan, which is quite intricate. In Afghanistan, tribal groups are a predominant force and warlords play a key role in the Afghan system of governance. In view of the possibility that these warlords are likely to play some kind of role in the ultimate resolution of the Afghan problem, a rudimentary understanding of the composite ethnicities and tribal systems is a prerequisite.

The author then proceeds to detail the geographical extremities of Afghanistan, which make it picturesque,

unique, and one of the toughest terrains in which to fight a war.

The author dismisses drawing any parallels between the Soviet intervention and the American war against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The Soviets, the author argues, invaded to establish “a more pragmatic” Communist government in Afghanistan (p. 174). They had a fair advantage, their actions not constrained by fear of collateral damage in terms of civilian casualties, which for American forces is a paramount concern. The current coalition forces aim to win the hearts and minds of the Afghans, whereas the Soviets embraced the philosophy of collective punishment. This section in the book juxtaposing the American and Soviet efforts in Afghanistan is engaging and should be of particular interest to the reader. The comparison could possibly curtail pessimism regarding the consequences of American involvement in Afghanistan. That the two wars did not have much in common could help reduce the prevalent fears among American forces, who dread they are destined to meet a fate similar to the Soviet’s.

The author believes that, while much has been written on Osama bin Laden as a terrorist, the days of his earliest involvement with *Jihad*, or holy war, remain uncovered (p. 153). The author also believes that it is important to duly understand bin Laden’s affiliation with fundamentalism, which dates back to his early years amid an environment charged with the Arab-Israeli animosity and fierce conflict between the two.

The book’s subtitle, *America’s Longest War*, is meant to reflect the fatigue and desperation of Americans both at the military and policy-making levels. The United States has conveyed its intentions to start withdrawing by 2014. Amid the growing realization that the United States needs to begin removing its forces from combat and finding new ways to successfully manage a conclusion to this unceasing conflict, the commissioning of a manual (leading to this book) can be viewed as a positive measure undertaken by the U.S. Army. Williams advocates solutions that best serve the “soft approach,” or rather, to help form an

understanding of the things that lie, conventionally, beyond the realm of war. If applied in the initial phase of the war on terrorism, these ideas would have been truly worthwhile. As such, the author’s wisdom could now be implemented and only hope to incur success in the long term. It would, nonetheless, be immensely useful if the United States maintained a minimal presence in Afghanistan after 2014.

The key contribution of the book lies in its simple approach and disentangling of rather complex issues like the origins of al-Qaeda. The author believes that the American-Saudi nexus and the preemptive Soviet invasion were jointly responsible for the creation of transnational terror groups such as al-Qaeda.

The author admits the book is not a purely academic work, which is true considering there are no citations or bibliographic references in the study. It is, however, an apt source to acquaint American service members with the war zone in Afghanistan. It brings to the table the author’s rich cumulative experience from his travels to the war-stricken country over the last ten or so years. The study is best when used to enhance one’s understanding of the finer nuances of a beautiful land, its people, and how its disparate society and systems function. The book looks beyond Afghanistan’s identity as a battleground, or graveyard of great empires, presenting the country as a unique mix of diversity, fragility, uncertainty, and deprivation situated in the middle of an otherwise emergent Asia.

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THE CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

DR. RICHARD W. STEWART



THE ARMY AND THE NATIONAL PARKS

The U.S. Army and the Army's history community have numerous interesting connections with the National Park Service. Many of the Army History Program's history and museum professionals have served, at one time or another, with the National Park Service. We share many values. Our mutual commitment to preserving our nation's past and educating our fellow Americans unites us in many ways. We also share a deep sense of the importance of public service for the greater good. Thus, our shared sense of mission and shared community of employees brings us together in idealistic and practical ways. Each organization has, I believe, been enriched by the other over the years.

What is perhaps less well known is the role that the United States Army played in the formation of the National Park Service and the Army's involvement in the preservation of the wonders of Yellowstone National Park, the country's first national park. For most of the first four decades after the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, it was the Army that provided the organization and manpower to protect animals from poachers, to preserve geysers and hot springs, and to prevent souvenir-hunting tourists and crass entrepreneurs from exploiting the wonders of the park.

The condition of Yellowstone Park from its formation in 1872 until the early 1880s was certainly dire. The early superintendants did not have the staff to guard the park adequately against the aforementioned threats. This would have been disastrous for Yellowstone National Park and it could even have put into question the viability of the very concept of national parks. In 1886 the secretary of the interior turned to the secretary of war for help and the Army dispatched Troop M, 1st Cavalry, to the park to bring things under control. (As a side note, although this unit is not currently active, the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, at Fort Bliss, Texas, is still on the active rolls of the U.S. Army and is the unit that probably holds the best claim to that heritage.) The Army established Fort

Yellowstone in the northwestern portion of the park and maintained those facilities until 1918 when they were turned over to the newly formed National Park Service. (For more on the role of the Army at Yellowstone National Park, see <http://www.nps.gov/yell/historyculture/ftyell.htm>.)

We can see from the Yellowstone experience that there were close connections between the Army and the very beginning of what some have called "America's Best Idea": the national parks. This can even be seen today in the uniforms worn by park rangers, which are variants on the first uniforms worn at Yellowstone. The Park Service uniforms still retain a number of Army-like features, especially the distinctive "campaign" ranger hat, which is based on the Army headgear of the time when the Army ran Yellowstone Park. A variant of that campaign hat is still used today by Army drill sergeants. Thus, it should be no surprise that this close connection continues.

In January I visited Fort Carson, Colorado, to see my son then serving as a Fire Support Officer (FSO) with the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. While in Colorado, I took a side trip to nearby Florissant Fossil Beds, a national monument and part of the National Park Service system. Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument protects a famous fossil repository and also preserves petrified sequoia tree stumps created by a volcanic eruption and mud flow some thirty-four million years ago. When I happened to mention to one of the Monument employees, Mr. Scott Harper, that I had an Army connection, he told me about a great program started at Florissant that is beginning to catch on at other locations around the nation called "Post to Parks." This program involves National Parks engaging with nearby military installations to find soldiers, either separating at the end of their enlistment or in Warrior Transition units due to injuries, willing to work part time in the parks as interns during their last few weeks or months of service. The idea is not only to provide manpower to the always cash- and personnel-strapped Park

Service, but also to give the soldiers experience in working at the parks with the possibility of finding a job after they leave the Army. It provides our soldiers an invaluable period of transition back into civilian life. In this climate of high veteran unemployment, it is a “win-win” for the Army and the National Park Service. While at the National Monument, I even met with two of those soldiers from Fort Carson, S. Sgt. Alex Jones and Sfc. Chris Hughes. Each soldier was very enthusiastic about the program, believed that more parks should adopt the program, and hoped that more soldiers would hear about and take advantage of the program.

The Post to Parks story is just one more way in which elements of the federal government can help out soldiers leaving the Army. I think that we in the Army History Program can take a look at this program, spread the word about it to our historians and museum professionals throughout the Army, and perhaps think about ways (especially in museums) to take advantage of some of this soldier talent for ourselves.

There is no reason we cannot develop local initiatives like Post to Parks to identify soldiers in transition and match them with intern duties or initial-entry positions in our museums based on their skills. Whether or not this program could lead to permanent positions is, of course, somewhat problematic in these uncertain fiscal times. But that should not keep us from being as creative as our National Park Service brethren and seeing what we can do to gain dedicated employees for our programs. These soldiers have served their country with distinction, are already committed to the idea of national service, and can provide some of our best new employees. It’s worth a try. After all, the National Park Service learned a lot from the U.S. Army in its early days as it was getting established. Maybe it’s time we learned something from the National Park Service.

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



ARMY HISTORY

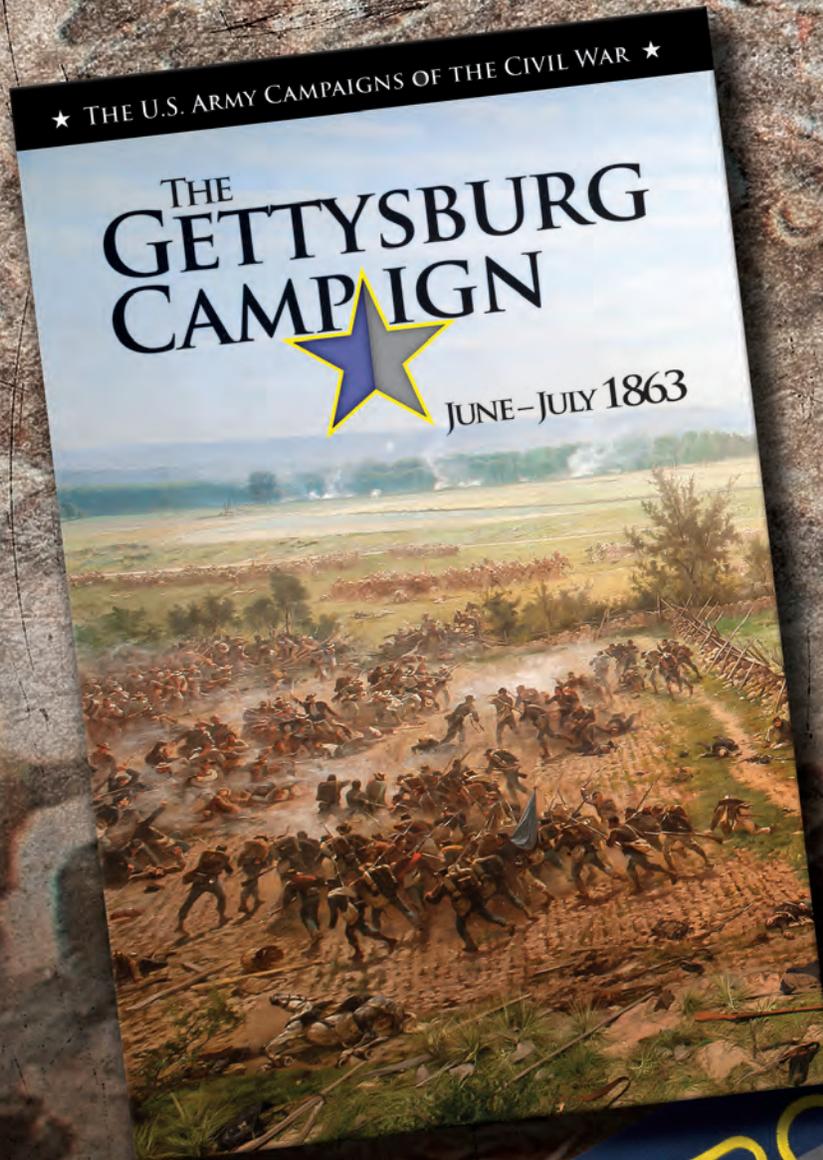
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