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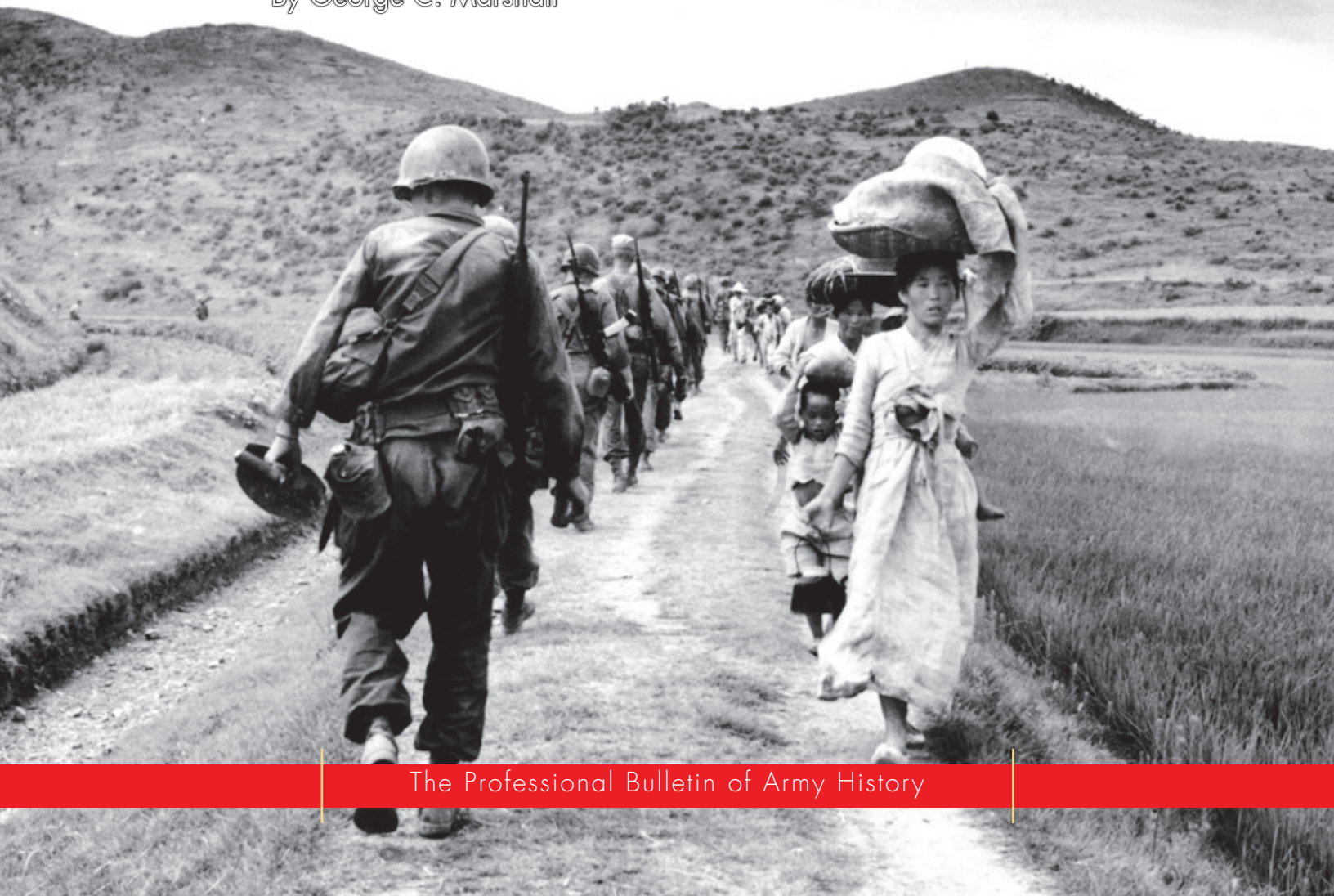

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

ARMY HISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

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Cover Image: A column of fleeing civilians passes U.S. infantrymen marching toward North Korean positions near the southern end of the Korean peninsula, 11 August 1950./Corbis®

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

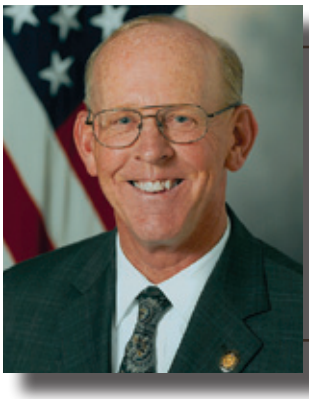
The articles in this issue discuss some painful experiences encountered by the U.S. Army in World War II and the Korean War. The issue also presents the text of an address by General George C. Marshall to a gathering of historians in 1939 admonishing them to write honestly and thoroughly about American military history so that the public will understand the harsh realities of war.

William C. Latham Jr.'s account of the suffering endured by a large group of U.S. and other Western prisoners of war and civilian internees at the hands of the *North Korean People's Army* in 1950 paints a stark picture of the brutality of a mid-twentieth-century military conflict. Surprised by the sudden invasion of South Korea by the initially dominant Soviet-trained forces of the North, the captured U.S. soldiers and civilian men, women, and children of various nations received brutal handling as they were marched north, away from gathering United Nations forces. Latham recounts in detail the deadly travail of this group of some seven hundred fifty prisoners and internees during a hundred-mile trek up the Yalu valley under the command of a North Korean officer known to the prisoners only as the Tiger.

In contrast to the Tiger's victims, the many soldiers of the 28th Infantry Division under the command of Maj. Gen. Norman D. Cota who were killed or seriously wounded in combat in western Germany's Hürtgen Forest in October 1944 suffered, in Thomas G. Bradbeer's view, primarily due to mistaken decisions made by the U.S. corps and army commanders to whom Cota reported. Bradbeer's article concludes that Cota too was at fault for failing to maintain a grasp of what his troops were encountering. Cota's capacity for leadership and brave conduct had been clearly demonstrated on the beaches and in the hedgerows of Normandy, but they proved insufficient for the demands of the Hürtgen.

Marshall's comments to his contemporary historians, which form the basis of the reflections in the Chief's Corner on the status of military history today, will remind practitioners of the strong connection between full and impartial portrayals of our nation's military actions and the country's ability to prepare for future conflict. The observations of this military statesman on the shortcomings he perceived in the writing of military history merit renewed attention in the twenty-first century.

Charles Hendricks
Managing Editor



The Chief's Corner

Dr. Jeff Clarke

George Catlett Marshall became chief of staff of the United States Army on 1 September 1939, the same day Nazi Germany launched its assault on Poland, beginning what would become the Second World War. Marshall had been a student of international affairs during the interwar years and was understandably alarmed by the widening conflicts in both Europe and Asia, so as the new chief he made U.S. military preparedness the theme of his first years in office. The topic also provided the foundation for his presentation at the fifty-fourth annual meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA) held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., on 28–30 December 1939, the text of which is reproduced on pages 44–46 of this issue of *Army History*. Although only recently promoted ahead of many more senior officers and still little known outside of military circles, he would become a national figure in the years that followed, and his concerns were to prove most prophetic.

The heart of Marshall's AHA message was a blistering attack on the state of American military history. Castigating U.S. historians for their uncritical treatment of the nation's past military experiences and for their propensity to exaggerate American battlefield successes and to neglect the country's many military shortcomings, Marshall declared that the results had been tragic for the United States. Such unbalanced accounts, he held, had encouraged a sense of complacency and bravado regarding the truly harsh realities of war and had contributed to the unpreparedness of the nation and its military forces in times of crisis. In 1939, that misunderstanding of the true lessons of history was yet again responsible for placing the nation in a situation where it might have to weather the trials of battle with little mental or materiel preparation. The public, he admonished, had to be educated about the realities and the horrors of war, tasks that necessitated "better histories and better teachers," as one reporter quoted the general.[1] Although Marshall primarily addressed secondary-school classroom instruction and texts, the image of the Army's chief of staff lecturing the senior members of a hallowed and powerful academic intellectual community regarding the basic professional standards of their trade is most striking.

The event itself was covered by many of the country's leading newspapers, including the *New York Times* and the *Daily News*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Washington Post*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. Most focused on the more colorful aspects of Marshall's talk, with the *Tribune* crediting the general with having "exploded an oratorical bomb in the laps of several hundred historians" and excoriated, in the reporter's words, the "slipshod teaching of the lessons of the past."[2] The article's author, syndicated reporter Walter Trohan, also noted the "extemporaneous" nature of the delivery, suggesting that Marshall may not have always adhered to the official version of the speech later reprinted in his papers, which, for example, rendered the above quote as "better school histories and a better technique for teaching history."[3] The *Monitor*, for its part, cited parallel presentations by Yale historian A. Whitney Griswold on the fallacies in Alfred Thayer Mahan's theories on sea power as demonstrated by recent events and by historian Alfred Vagts on the internal divisions of Germany's high command.[4] The media also took notice of the retort to Marshall by Democratic Senator Elbert D. Thomas of Utah, a member of the Senate Military Affairs Committee and a sometime professor of political science at the University of Utah, who termed it "dangerous" for teachers to engage in such unpatriotic activities—perhaps a bow to one interpretation of John Dewey's progressive educational philosophies popular at the time—and suggested that the Army focus its attention instead on its own school and training system. The comments of progressive historian Charles A. Beard on Marshall's points, as reported in the *Washington Post*, were equally unsupportive, and many other speakers at the gathering appeared more concerned with the conduct of U.S. neutrality policies than with the warnings of the new Army chief.[5] Still, the mere fact that the chief of staff had been asked to speak at the American Historical Association (under the joint sponsorship of the American Military Institute), something historian Josiah Bunting considers "inconceivable" today, says something for our academic forebears.[6]

What should we make of all this? Have we come a long way with regard to professional standards in the realm of military history? Obviously, current military history professionals, whether institutional or academic, have long strived to treat past events with an even hand in accord with the highest standards of the profession. From the bitter defeats on Bataan, at Kasserine, and along the

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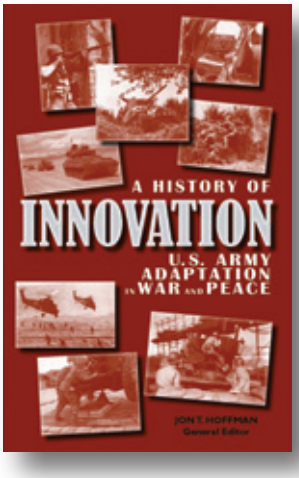
NEWSNOTES

Center of Military History Issues New Book on Army Innovation

The U.S. Army Center of Military History has published a collection of fourteen essays by Army historians on innovations developed by the U.S. Army in the twentieth century. *A History of Innovation: U.S. Army Adaptation in War and Peace*, edited by Jon T. Hoffman, presents brief descriptions of the adoption by the Army of more than a dozen new weapons, equipment, organizations, and techniques to address contemporary or anticipated military challenges. These include the invention of the M1 Garand rifle and the creation of an armored force organization, both in the first half of the century, and the development in Vietnam of a speed-shifter to redirect more rapidly the fire of heavy artillery pieces. Christopher R. Gabel's essay on the U.S. Army's tank destroyer force of World War II demonstrates that not all significant Army innovations ultimately proved successful. The editor contributes a conclusion that briefly explores recurrent themes illustrated by the book's essays on specific innovations. This 171-page book has been issued in paperback as CMH Pub 40–6–1. Hoffman is chief of the Center's Contemporary Studies Branch.

Army publication account holders may obtain this book from the Directorate of Logistics–Washington, Media Distribution Division, ATTN: JDHQSVPAS, 1655 Woodson Road, St. Louis, MO 63114-6128. Account holders may also place their orders at http://www.apd.army.mil. The general public may order the book for $19 from the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) via its Web site at http://bookstore.gpo.gov. GPO has now also announced the prices of two other recent publications from the Center of Military History that were described in the Winter 2010 issue of *Army History*. That office is selling *The Army Medical Department, 1917–1941*, by Mary C. Gillett, for $68 in hardcover and $54 in paperback and the pamphlet *The Panama Canal: An Army's Enterprise* for $12.



Combat Studies Institute Press Issues New Publications

The Combat Studies Institute (CSI) Press of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has issued a two-volume compilation of writings of General Donn A. Starry, two new titles in its Occasional Papers series, and a new edition of a staff ride handbook.

Press On! Selected Works of General Donn A. Starry offers over 1,300 printed pages of the writings and transcribed oral history interviews of the second commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, a man who held that position from 1977 to 1981. The materials were selected, annotated, and edited by retired armor officer and military historian Lewis Sorley, who also provides a brief biography of General Starry. The volumes present selections from Starry's articles, speeches, and correspondence grouped into twenty-three topical categories including doctrine, training, strategy, management, the Vietnam War, and military history. The second volume also includes substantial portions of interviews conducted with Starry between 1976 and 1995.

The Combat Studies Institute Press' occasional papers consider both contemporary and older issues in military history. The most recent titles in this series are *The US Army and the Media in the 20th Century* by Robert T. Davis II (Paper 31) and *From El Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: The Colombian Security Force Experience, 1998–2008,* by Robert D. Ramsey III (Paper 34). The former examines the U.S. Army's approach to the news media from the Spanish-American War to 2009. The latter explores the dramatic shift in momentum in the past decade in favor of government forces in Colombia's war with guerrilla groups and describes U.S. efforts to assist in the fight and to reduce human rights abuses. Both Davis and Ramsey are CSI staff historians.

The CSI Press has also issued a second, expanded edition of its *Staff Ride Handbook for the Overland Campaign, Virginia, 4 May to 15 June 1864: A Study in Operational-Level Command*, by Curtis S. King, William Glenn Robertson, and Steven E. Clay. The new edition adds material relating to the very end of the campaign.

Digital copies of each of these publications may be downloaded from http://cgsc.leavenworth.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/csi.asp. Military personnel and federal employees may request printed copies by following the instructions posted at http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CSI/PubRequest.asp.

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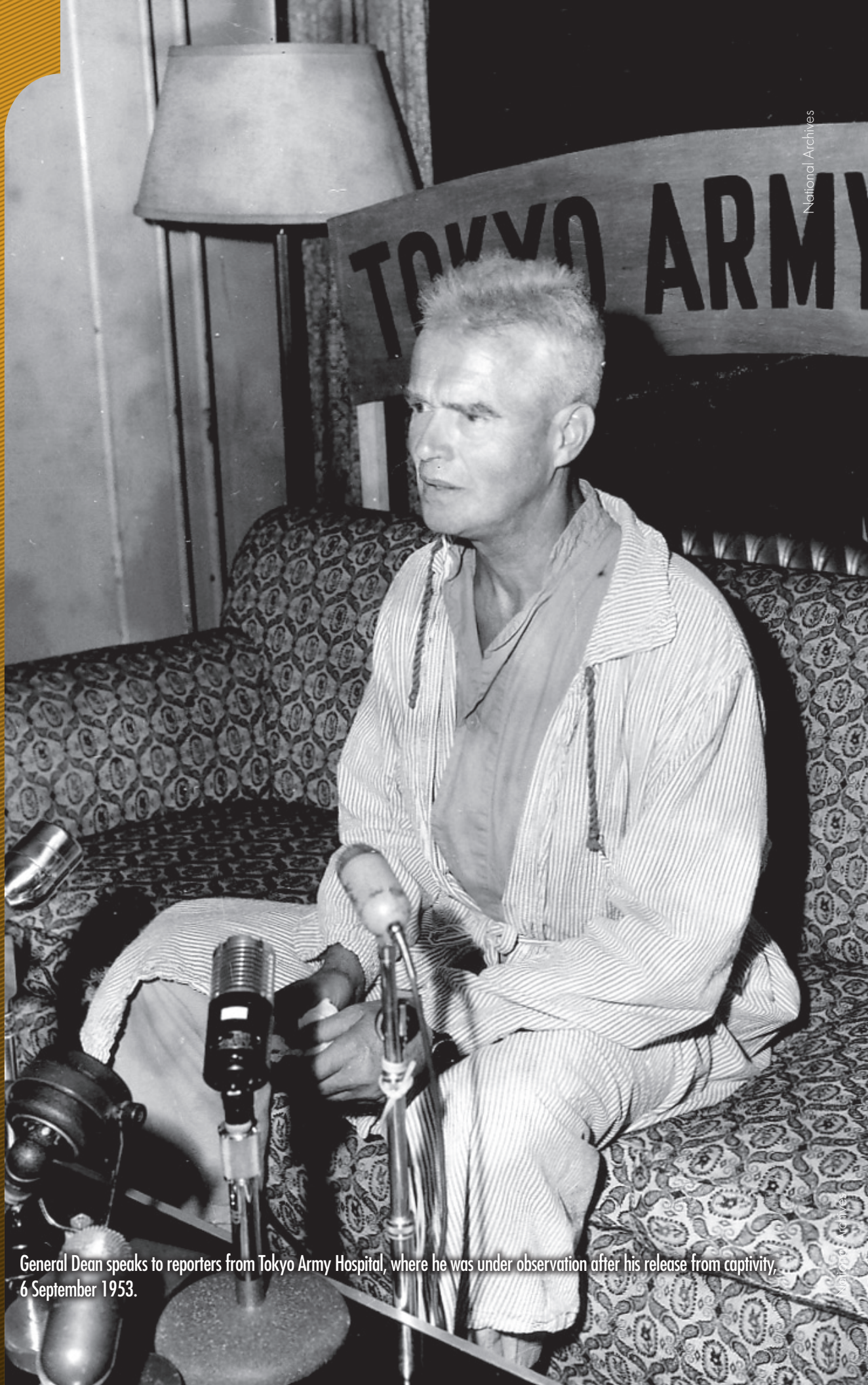
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Retired Lt. Col. William C. Latham Jr. is an assistant professor in the Department of Logistics and Resource Operations at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. As an Army aviation officer, he served in the Army's response to Hurricane Andrew and as a company commander in Operation Desert Storm in Iraq, where he flew CH–47 helicopters. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in English from Georgetown University and the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, respectively, and taught English at the U.S. Military Academy for seven years. He also served as special assistant to the academy superintendent.



National Archives

General Dean speaks to reporters from Tokyo Army Hospital, where he was under observation after his release from captivity, 6 September 1953.

Ordeal of the Tiger Survivors

By William C. Latham Jr.

By mid-October 1950, the Korean War seemed to be over. In the United States, *Time* magazine published an article titled "Last Phase," which dismissed the North Koreans as "outclassed" and declared that "the stage was set for the final battle" in Korea. Only a Soviet or Chinese intervention could save the Communists, wrote the author, but such a rescue now "seemed unlikely" because the best opportunities had already passed.[1]

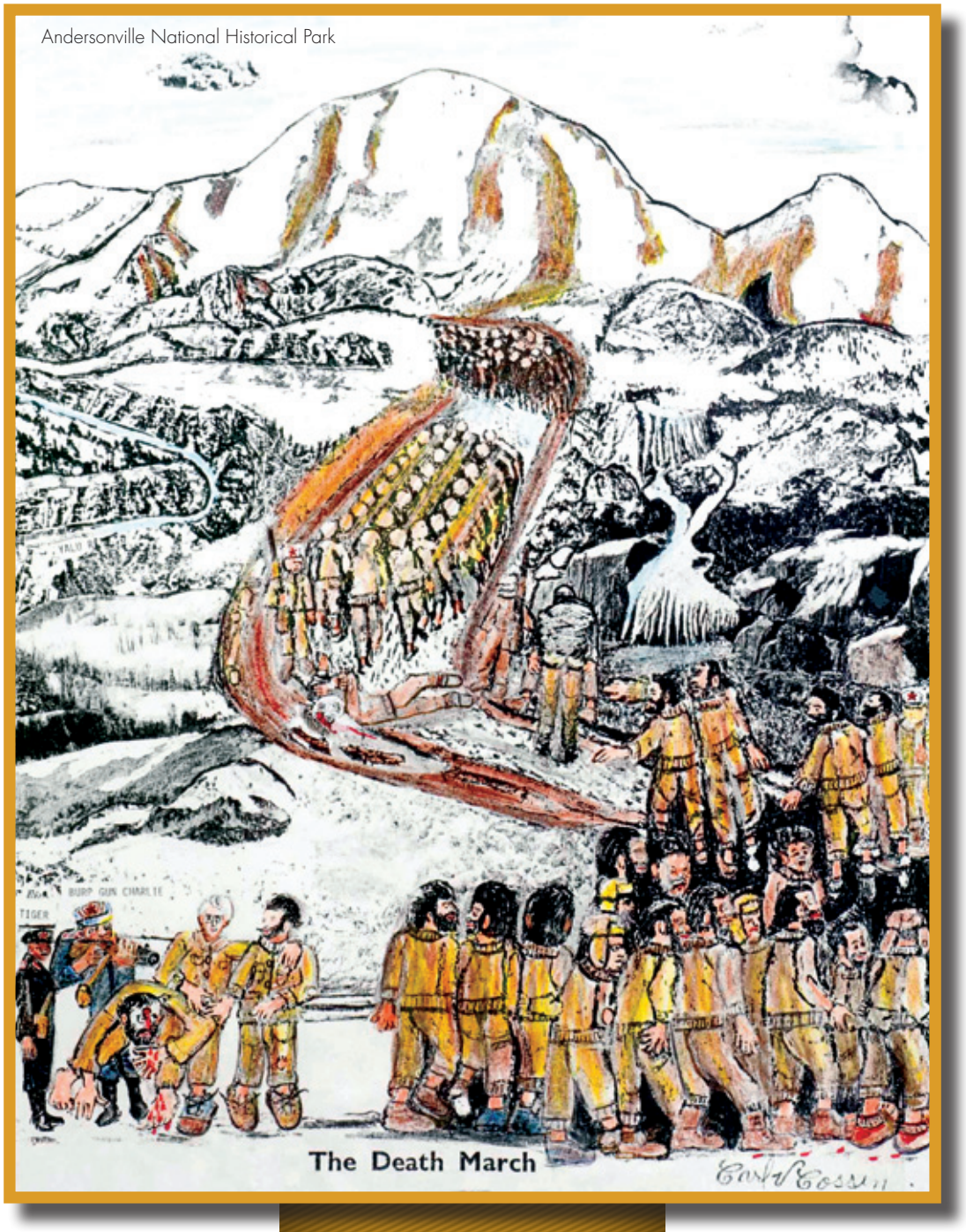
The conflict had begun less than four months earlier, in the predawn hours of 25 June. That morning, the heavily armed forces of Kim Il Sung's *North Korean People's Army*, trained and equipped by the Soviet Union, launched a blitzkrieg attack against the Republic of Korea, the pro-American regime of Syngman Rhee that governed south of the 38th Parallel. The invasion began with an intense artillery bombardment of the South Korean border outposts and was quickly followed by overwhelming infantry and armored spearheads that in most places easily routed the ill-trained South Korean defenders. By the end of the war's first week, the North Koreans had also captured the South Korean capital, Seoul, leading Rhee's government and millions of refugees to flee south.[2]

In Washington, D.C., however, President Harry S. Truman chose to resist the North Korean invasion with the might of the U.S. armed forces. He quickly directed General Douglas MacArthur, the commander of U.S. forces in Japan and throughout the Far East, to provide whatever help he could to the shattered South Korean military. At the United Nations, meanwhile, the Security Council, with the Soviet Union absent in protest of the organization's failure to seat the representatives of Mao Zedong's government, voted to condemn the invasion and to authorize military intervention. Other nations pledged to send troops, and MacArthur was named commander of United Nations forces, with the mission of repelling the invaders.[3]

From his headquarters in Tokyo, MacArthur responded enthusiastically to the mission, but events on the battlefield quickly revealed a series of American miscalculations. First, MacArthur and his staff overestimated the combat readiness of the four U.S. Army divisions then stationed in Japan. On paper, these formations posed a formidable threat, but budget cuts and the easy routine of occupation duty had severely impaired the ability of U.S. forces that just five years earlier had defeated the Japanese empire. Second, neither MacArthur nor his commanders appreciated the competence of the North Korean Army, which had repeatedly outfought and outmaneuvered its South Korean opponents during the first days of the war.[4]

Largely because of these miscalculations, early battles between Americans and North Koreans produced a disturbing series of calamities. Beginning with the destruction of a small U.S. task force (Task Force Smith) south of Seoul on 5 July, advancing North Korean forces, led by their hulking T34 tanks, brushed aside a series of U.S. defensive positions along the highway leading southeast from Seoul toward the port of Pusan. In their first three weeks of fighting, the Americans withdrew more than one hundred miles while losing several thousand killed, wounded, or missing in action. Many of the missing became prisoners of war, including a division commander, Maj. Gen. William F. Dean, who became separated from a small group of U.S. soldiers and survived behind enemy lines for five weeks before his capture.[5]

Despite orders to the contrary, many North Korean troops treated prisoners with casual brutality. Severely wounded Americans were often executed on the spot, and many other Americans were executed by their captors because



Sketch of the Tiger Death March by march survivor Cpl. Carl V. Cossin of Columbus, Ohio

they became inconvenient. Most of the survivors were marched, often barefoot, to Seoul, where the North Koreans had established a central collection point. Living in squalid conditions, the prisoners received meager rations and no medical treatment, while Communist officials coerced their victims to sign confessions and make propaganda broadcasts condemning the United Nations' intervention.[6]

At the end of July, the beleaguered U.S. and South Korean troops finally began to stem the North Korean tide. As men and materiel poured into South Korea, Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker's Eighth Army established a fragile defensive perimeter along a fifty-mile radius around the port city of Pusan, anchored on the Naktong River. Determined to capture Pusan and complete their conquest, the North Koreans launched a series of ill-conceived attacks against these forces but failed to break through. Walker, meanwhile, waged a brilliant defensive campaign, frequently employing his makeshift reserves as fire brigades to destroy penetrations along his thinly held lines.[7]

In mid-September, MacArthur launched a surprise amphibious assault at Inch'on. His X Corps, under the command of Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond, overcame a host of obstacles to land two divisions at this port city

on the west coast of the peninsula, one hundred miles behind the North Korean forces along the Naktong. With the bulk of the North Korean forces committed in the south, Almond quickly occupied the port and soon recaptured the South Korean capital of Seoul, thus severing North Korean lines of communication. To avoid encirclement, the North Korean forces soon began to withdraw from the Naktong valley, with Walker's forces in hot pursuit. As the North Koreans fled north, their formations disintegrated, and MacArthur's troops captured thousands of soldiers as they retreated toward the 38th Parallel.[8]

Hoping for the Best

The North Koreans, meanwhile, evacuated approximately seven hundred of their U.S. military prisoners to the north, sending them first to the North Korean capital of P'yongyang and then to the border town of Manp'o on the banks of the Yalu. In addition to captured U.S. soldiers, the prisoners included nearly one hundred Western civilians, among them diplomats, missionaries, businessmen, and entire families with small children, whom the North Koreans had arrested in the first weeks of the war. Conditions at Manp'o were Spartan but comparably humane. The starving prisoners received more and better food and even gained permission to bathe in the river. Sympathetic villagers passed the news of North Korean defeats in the south, and the prisoners began to discuss the possibility of their release.[9]

On 7 October, the prisoners at Manp'o learned they would be moving again. Having heard of MacArthur's progress after Inch'on, the civilian and military captives hoped for the best. After several false starts, the prisoners finally moved through a pouring rain to the village of Kosal-li, fifteen miles to the southwest along the Yalu. Although food and shelter were readily available at Kosal-li, six prisoners of war (POWs) died there of starvation and dysentery. With the arrival of United Nations forces becoming a daily possibility, the North Koreans began hedging their bets. Shortly after the prisoners' arrival in Kosal-li, the camp commandant assembled the civilians, lectured them on their benevolent treatment, and asked them to remember the good intentions of their captors when they returned home. Hopes of an imminent release grew even greater.[10]

Instead, after thirteen days at Kosal-li, the prisoners were moved again, this time marching south for twelve miles into the mountains and away from the river. The new destination was an abandoned mining camp, but the prisoners spent only a few days here. The autumn weather grew colder, and the prisoners eventually trudged back through a snowstorm to Kosal-li. They found the town now empty, its residents having fled. Before long, they marched back to Manp'o. On the way, prisoners noticed large numbers of Chinese troops moving along the roads, armed with rifles and burp guns but no heavy weapons. "None of this will bother the United States Army very much," observed one of the civilians. Another civilian, missionary Larry Zellers, concluded that the Korean villagers had fled in fear of these new intruders. At one village, many of the POWs received winter clothing, including hats, gloves, jackets, and pants. Seven U.S. soldiers, perhaps believing rescue was imminent, refused to continue the march toward Manp'o.[11]

The North Koreans, however, had little patience for such behavior. In a grim harbinger of events to come, guards executed all seven men after the POW column moved on. According to Maj. John J. Dunn, the senior U.S. military prisoner in the group, two other men "were shot enroute for straggling." When the column approached Manp'o, the prisoners found no billets available, probably due to the influx of Chinese troops. Both military and civilian prisoners spent the next week living in a cornfield. The weather grew colder, and prisoners huddled around small campfires and dug holes to shelter themselves from the bitter Manchurian winds. Rations grew increasingly sparse—a handful of corn twice a day—and five more POWs perished. Hungry prisoners traded the last of their tobacco with the residents of Manp'o for whatever additional food they could get.[12]

Both military and civilian prisoners spent the next week living in a cornfield. The weather grew colder, and prisoners huddled around small campfires and dug holes to shelter themselves

Let Them March till They Die

On the afternoon of 31 October, the North Korean soldiers who had supervised the prisoners since their departure from P'yongyang were replaced by a new detail, wearing the blue uniforms of the North Korean Security Police. The guards were led by an erratic, ill-tempered major, whom the POWs quickly dubbed "the Tiger." Lean and tall for a Korean, the Tiger announced through an interpreter that the prisoners would be making a long march by foot and that they would conduct the march in a military fashion. There were, however, more than forty severely ill prisoners among the group. The senior civilian, British Commissioner Herbert A. Lord of the Salvation Army, immediately protested that many of these would be incapable of maintaining such a pace. The Tiger responded, "Then let them march till they die. That is a military order."[13]

Over the preceding weeks, the prisoners had assembled a rudimentary collection of cooking utensils, including several kitchen knives. Guards now confiscated these "weapons," along with walking sticks and even Zellers' rolled sleeping mat. The prisoners were then divided into groups of forty to fifty individuals, with a U.S. officer given responsibility for each group. Meanwhile, sixteen of the weakest prisoners remained behind in the field. A light snow began falling as the column began shambling toward Manp'o, POWs in front, civilians bringing up the rear. Father Philip Crosbie, one of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the civilian group, later described the pathetic scene:

> As the men passed by, my gaze went sometimes to their faces, sometimes to their feet. Some of those feet were bare, and some were already bleeding. Some feet paced steadily, if wearily, on; but weaker men, dragging on the shoulders of their comrades, put ghastly, shuffling syncopation in the somber rhythm of the march.[14]

Maj. Ambrose Nugent, one of the senior military marchers, later received word that the sixteen Americans in the cornfield had been executed.[15]

A U.S. Army master sergeant leads religious services at Prisoner of War Camp 5 near the Yalu River in North Korea, Easter Sunday, 1952.

Forced to remove their boots, U.S. prisoners of war are assembled in Manp'o to hear "U.S. aggression" denounced.

On the outskirts of Manp'o, the column halted, and the prisoners waited in another field. After a two-hour delay, the march resumed, now at a faster pace. The Tiger had already announced that they would be marching sixteen miles that night. Father Crosbie later suggested that the delay must have disrupted the timetable, inspiring both the Tiger's rage and the murderous pace. It was now dark, but, as the prisoners trudged through Manp'o, they were spotted by another prisoner, General Dean. As the highest-ranking U.S. officer in captivity, he was heavily guarded, moved frequently, and kept in solitary confinement by his North Korean captors for the duration of the war. Although Dean caught only a glimpse from his quarters, he was sure the prisoners were Americans.[16]

The shivering prisoners continued along the main road as it left Manp'o and headed northeast, paralleling the Yalu River. Columns of Chinese soldiers occasionally passed by, moving through the darkness at a trot. Guards constantly heckled the prisoners with shouts of "Bali! Bali!"—"Hurry! Hurry!" Infants cried, and small children had to trot to keep pace with their mothers. Crosbie later blamed the developing tragedy on this merciless prodding:

> Most of those who died were killed by the gruelling pace. The length of the journey, the lack of sleep, the bad and inadequate food, were all contributing causes; but many, perhaps all, could have endured these hardships if they had not been continually hurried along during the hours given to travel. Many who could have walked the distance covered by the party on any one day, if they had been allowed to spread the journey over more hours of the day, were so weakened by the continual hurrying that at last they could not walk at all. This merciless pressure was especially weakening for the many who were suffering from severe dysentery, which seemed

> to be rife among the POWs. It was pitiful to see poor, emaciated lads who had fallen out, trying to regain their places in the lines, stumbling hurriedly and unsteadily along with a guard at their heels.

About seven miles beyond Manp'o, the column finally stopped for the night, and guards ordered the prisoners to get some rest in the frost-covered fields.[17]

At dawn, the guards roused their captives, served a quick breakfast, and resumed the march with such haste that some prisoners went unfed.[18] Some U.S. POWs had died during the night, and, according to Major Nugent, most of the prisoners were already struggling. "Two-thirds of the prisoners were carrying the other third. The order was that no one was to fall out. All men were exhausted and starved. The burden was too much and the pace too rapid."[19] But men did fall out and were left behind, at the instruction of the guards. After less than an hour, the prisoners were ordered to halt.[20]

The People's Justice

The Tiger had become enraged by the violation of his orders. The officers in charge of the sections from which men had fallen out were summoned to the head of the column. The Tiger decided to shoot them as an example for the other prisoners, but Dunn and Commissioner Lord persuaded him to spare their lives. The Tiger relented but announced that he would shoot the section leader who had lost the most men. From the group, Lt. Cordus H. Thornton of Longview, Texas, murmured quietly to Commissioner Lord, "Save me if you can, sir," and stepped forward.[21]

As Lord began to plead for Thornton's life, the Tiger wheeled on him in anger, threatening to shoot the commissioner as well. Thornton had been captured in July while leading a platoon of the 34th Infantry. In the past hour, five soldiers from his section had dropped out by the side of the road. Now, the Tiger demanded to know why these men had been allowed to fall out. Thornton answered, "Because, sir, they were dying."[22]

The Tiger next asked why Thornton had not directed other soldiers to carry the dying men. Thornton responded that such an order meant condemning the carriers to death from exhaustion. The Tiger replied, "In wartime the penalty for disobedience is death. You disobeyed orders. I will kill you. That is what would happen in the American Army also, is it not?"[23]

According to Zellers, who was seated by the road a few yards from this scene, Thornton answered, "In the American army, sir, I would have a trial."[24]

By now, a crowd of North Korean soldiers and villagers had assembled to watch. The Tiger now turned to them, asking what the penalty should be for disobeying orders. They responded unanimously, "Shoot him!"[25]

Turning back to Thornton, the Tiger told him he had had his trial and had received "the People's justice." Thornton answered: "In Texas, sir, we would call that a lynching."[26]

With tears in his own eyes, Commissioner Lord translated the response, and the Tiger ordered Thornton to turn his back on the column. As Thornton turned away, the Tiger removed his own overcoat and pointed to the rank insignia on his blue epaulets. As if to convince himself of his own righteousness, he told the prisoners, "You see, I have the authority to do this." He then stepped forward, aimed his pistol, and shot his victim in the back of the head.[27]

From the stunned onlookers, Sfc. Henry G. Leerkamp, who had served in the same outfit as Thornton, now moved forward and calmly began removing rocks with his bare hands. Seeing his efforts to bury the lieutenant, somebody threw him a shovel, and he began digging into the frozen soil. After several minutes, Leerkamp looked up at the prisoners and asked, "Won't some of you come down and help me?"[28]

The question dispelled the state of shock, and several prisoners assisted Leerkamp with the digging and then gently retrieved Thornton's body and carried it to the grave. When the burial detail finished its task, the prisoners reassembled in their ranks. Perhaps to hide the evidence of any further "justice," the Tiger now ordered guards to confiscate the soldiers' military identification tags.[29]

The Tiger replied, "In wartime the penalty for disobedience is death. You disobeyed orders. I will kill you."

The Suffering Continues

The column moved out, resuming its rapid pace. The guards' incessant verbal harassment now turned physical, as they used bayonets and rifle butts to punish the slower POWs. The Tiger, meanwhile, strode up and down the column's flanks, exhorting prisoners to move faster. Even Commissioner Lord was forced to participate in the herding, and Zeller later described the commissioner telling his group in a low voice that "this doesn't mean a thing," then bellowing the order to make haste. The column stopped outside a village in the early afternoon, and the guards requisitioned corn for the prisoners, some of whom had received no food or water during the morning's

ordeal. In due time, a detail returned with steaming buckets of boiled corn and began serving the starving prisoners. The serving moved too slowly to suit the Tiger, however, and he barked orders for the march to resume. The prisoners lined up on the road and marched east, leaving much of the food behind.[30]

With the strongest prisoners helping or carrying the remainder, the column covered about twenty miles on this day, finally stopping in the evening near a cluster of small farmhouses. There, the North Koreans allowed some of the civilians to sleep indoors. The POWs and the remainder of the civilians, however, spent the night out in the bitter cold, huddling behind the houses to escape the wind. The guards on duty built a small campfire, and freezing prisoners desperately tried to creep as close as possible to its warmth without irritating the guards.[31]

At dawn, the prisoners were fed another breakfast of boiled corn. Everyone had adequate time to eat, but Major Dunn found that several more POWs had died of exposure. Several other exhausted POWs had survived the night but were unable to move. The Tiger ordered those who could march no further to drop out, promising that they would be taken to the "People's Hospital." Ray Mellin, a young medic captured with Task Force Smith, recalled begging his comrades to stay with the column: "We were telling them 'Don't go, don't go'—but they went."[32]

They were never seen again. A British civilian, journalist Philip Deane, later wrote that Commissioner Lord overheard the Tiger subsequently telling the village headman, "As soon as we are gone, bury them without mounds."[33]

Again the prisoners lined up on the main road, and again the Tiger led them to the northeast, moving at a rapid clip. The cumulative effects of three months of captivity—exhaustion, malnutrition, and dysentery—began to take a physical toll, and prisoners grew so weak that many had to be carried by their fellow marchers. Some of these prisoners died while being transported, but the Tiger, perhaps fearing escape attempts, refused to abandon them. Commissioner Lord suggested that the Tiger allow either of the group's two physicians to examine and verify that a prisoner had died, in which case the body would be left behind. The Tiger dismissed the idea of medical examinations, instead directing Lord, "If you think a man is dead, notify one of my guards. He will shoot him through the heart to certify the death. Then you can leave his body by the side of the road." As the day wore on, Zellers passed several POWs sitting by the road, waiting for an oxcart to carry them the rest of the way. The marchers began to hear shots fired from the rear of the column.[34]

A Night Indoors

The prisoners walked more than twenty miles during this, the second full day of the death march. The column finally halted at a small schoolhouse, where the prisoners received another inadequate meal. During the march, Commissioner Lord had delicately conveyed the danger of forcing prisoners to sleep outdoors, and now the Tiger announced, "Tonight you will all sleep inside."[35]

As before, the diplomats and civilian families were lodged separately. Then, the remaining civilians were herded into a larger room, measuring approximately thirty feet by forty feet, followed by the POWs.[36] Father Crosbie described the ensuing melee:

> Exhausted men began pouring in, to sink wearily to the floor. They sat close together, but the room was soon filled to the doors, and there were still hundreds left outside. The guards shouted at the sitting men to crowd closer together, and the shivering men outside added their appeals. Tighter and tighter we were packed, till it was impossible for any more to find sitting-space. But more kept coming, to find standing-room now along the walls. When not another man could be squeezed in, the guards closed the doors.[37]

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Under orders from the guards to remain seated, men sat shoulder to shoulder, their knees tucked uncomfortably into their chests. Muscles began to cramp, while body heat and the smell of dysentery within the darkened room created a stifling atmosphere. As men shifted, their movement threw entire rows off-balance, and so the mass of bodies shifted left and right, from one painful position to another. After thirty

minutes, men began to scream. A guard opened the door and warned the prisoners to remain silent. A few minutes later, however, the bedlam resumed and the guard returned, warning that he would fire into the crowd. At this point, Major Dunn warned the men that anyone crying out would be thrown out into the cold and directed the other officers and sergeants to enforce the rule. According to Zellers, three or four of the prisoners were evicted, but the remainder spent the rest of the arduous night in relative silence. When the door opened at dawn, most men were unable to stand and had to crawl from the room in search of fresh air. Four men were found smothered to death.[38]

The Women's Ordeal

The third morning brought news from the Tiger: the women would be provided with transport. Nell Dyer, an Arkansas woman who had been teaching at the Methodist mission in Kaesong, was placed in charge of this group, and Commissioner Lord stayed behind with it to translate. The women included several elderly nuns. Some of the men in the civilian group asked to stay behind with the women. Guards angrily refused their request. Shortly after the main column departed, Dyer received word that no transport was available. Left with no assistance, the women set out after the men.[39]

After marching uphill for most of the morning, the main column finally rested at midday. During the break, the men in the civilian group anxiously searched the road for signs of the women. Finally, the exhausted women's party staggered into view, strung out along the road, while guards harried Dyer for her failure to keep her group together. Four members of this party were missing. Two elderly French nuns, Mother Béatrix and Mother Eugénie, had fallen behind almost immediately. Mother Béatrix, a French native who had spent fifty years serving the poor of Korea, finally sank down in the road and could continue no farther.

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Heavily guarded by North Korean soldiers, U.S. prisoners of war march through Seoul carrying banners made by their captors, summer 1950.

U.S. prisoners of war march through Communist-held Seoul in the summer of 1950 under a banner attacking U.S. intervention. The individuals in the front row include Major Nugent, slightly behind at left; Filipino American Larry Hidalgo, at center being assisted; Florentino Gonzales, second from right; and William Fleming, holding the banner pole. Those named survived captivity.

National Archives

Mother Eugénie refused to leave her colleague, but guards finally dragged her away, leaving the 76-year-old nun seated in the road amid hostile guards. With a guard prodding her, Mother Eugénie finally rejoined the main group two hours later.[40]

Behind her came Commissioner Lord and Madame Funderat, an elderly Russian widow. As the two drew nearer, the civilians saw that a rope had been fastened around their two waists, and Lord was thus pulling the woman along. When the march resumed, the commissioner was ordered to leave the woman behind with a guard. Father Crosbie last saw her hobbling along behind the column, with the guard's assistance. Like Mother Béatrix, however, Madame Funderat was never seen again.[41]

As the prisoners stumbled forward, their path began to slope gently downhill. Even so, the column began to disintegrate, as small groups fell behind. Ray Mellin recalls that Commissioner Lord walked back and forth between the groups, encouraging others to join him in reciting the Twenty-third Psalm. As the afternoon wore on, several of the POWs sat down by the road, despite the pleas of their comrades. Eventually, the marchers would hear the startling crack of rifle shots from somewhere behind them. After several miles, the column finally reached an abandoned mission. The civilians slept in the chapel, while the POWs slept in the adjoining school. Conditions were marginally less crowded.[42]

Bloody Footprints

Light snow began falling on the morning of the fourth day. To the northeast, the main road rose toward a series of mountains. Guards warned the prisoners that they would be starting early and marching rapidly in order to cross over the pass before snow blocked their path. The Tiger warned that prisoners would no longer be allowed to help each other and that those who fell out were to be left behind. The roads grew slippery, and prisoners feared slipping and breaking a leg. The prisoners' ill-clad feet left bloody footprints in the snow. Despite the Tiger's warning, Zellers continued to assist the struggling members of his party and thus made most of the journey well behind the rest of the column.[43]

Again and again, the horrified missionary encountered young American POWs seated in the middle of the road, accompanied by guards waiting for him to pass by. One of the victims begged passersby to knock him senseless with a rock. A young soldier sang "God Bless America," as tears streamed down his face. In another instance, a barefoot soldier was forced to abandon his comrade, and then, as the guard waited, went back to claim the doomed man's boots. Elsewhere, four exhausted soldiers carried a fifth man until their strength gave out. They dropped him in the road, but as Zellers approached, a senior officer, Maj. Newton W. Lantron, scooped up the young soldier and carried him forward. Other victims were less fortunate, and the executions continued. As before, the North Koreans erased the evidence of their murders, kicking the bodies of their victims over the roadside cliff.[44]

The snow stopped by the time Zellers neared the crest of the mountain, and the Tiger, visibly cheerful, agreed to provide transportation for some of the weakest civilians. As the column moved down the far side of the mountain road, the sun broke through the clouds. The prisoners reached the town of Chasŏng late in the afternoon, and there the Tiger allowed a pause, apparently pleased to have herded his prisoners through the mountain pass despite the snow. The accomplishment cost the lives of twenty-two more POWs.[45]

The prisoners resumed their march on the following afternoon,

Major Nugent (foreground) and other U.S. prisoners of war in North Korean captivity

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U.S. prisoners of war sit under North Korean guard behind the Seoul City Hall, with Soviet-manufactured military vehicles parked behind them, summer 1950.

5 November. The Tiger provided a dilapidated bus to carry a number of the civilians and five of the seriously ill soldiers. The pace slowed considerably, and the guards tempered their abuse. The march continued in this fashion for several more days, until on 8 November the column finally arrived at Chunggang, where march survivors were lodged in a drafty schoolhouse and nearby civilian homes. The death march had covered more than one hundred miles and had cost the lives of nearly that many prisoners.[46]

The Dying Continues

The dying, however, continued. The prisoners' appalling death rate during the march was eclipsed by the number of deaths after the march, as weakened survivors succumbed to malnutrition, inhumane treatment, and a lack of medical attention. This tragic pattern of suffering and death would be repeated several times during the winter of 1950–1951, when Communist forces captured several thousand United Nations troops and marched them north to permanent camps along the Yalu River.[47]

At Chunggang, the same guards who had executed so many prisoners during the death march continued to beat prisoners for the slightest offenses, and weary survivors now began to perish from a variety of ailments, most notably severe dysentery and pneumonia. Malnutrition continued due to the meager rations, which Capt. Alexander M. Boysen, the only physician in the group, estimated at four hundred grams of millet per day. The Tiger, meanwhile, insisted that the prisoners, both soldiers and civilians, conduct physical training each morning. The schoolhouse was not marked as a POW camp, and, on 11 November, United Nations aircraft strafed the compound.[48]

Later in November, the prisoners were moved into modest homes in a village a few miles from Chunggang. Here, the Tiger's morning exercises continued. The Koreans provided a medical team, but these doctors and nurses proved brutally inept, and their incompetence lost far more patients than they saved. The POWs' quarters were particularly crowded, filthy, and uncomfortable. Lice and dysentery tormented the prisoners on a daily basis, and they were severely punished by the guards when their bowels failed prior to reaching the latrines.[49]

As winter progressed, the temperatures dipped well below zero. Guards used the cold as a weapon, punishing misconduct by forcing prisoners outside, where they stood naked or had water poured on them. Boysen later estimated that the group lost as many as eight men a day during the winter. In a particularly brutal incident, five prisoners lit a stove full of wet wood inside their hut, but the ensuing smoke enraged the guard. He tossed the stove into the courtyard, then locked the Americans inside the unheated building for the remainder of the night, where they died of hypothermia. In the morning, Captain Boysen recovered their frozen corpses.[50]

In January, a more reasonable North Korean officer relieved the Tiger as camp commandant. Unlike his predecessor, the new commandant wore no sidearm and seemed genuinely concerned for the prisoners' welfare. He conducted inspections of the prisoners' living quarters and restrained some of the guards' worst behavior. Cold weather and shortages of food and medicine, however, continued to take their deadly toll. In late March, the surviving POWs moved again, occupying a former Japanese military compound at An-dong that proved more comfortable. A handful of other U.S. POWs trickled into camp, and as the snows melted and spring returned to the upper Yalu, morale improved.[51]

In the meantime, the war had continued at its bloody pace. In Washington, Truman and his advisers had ignored a series of Chinese warnings and authorized MacArthur to invade North Korea to destroy the remnants of the North Korean Army and to reunify the peninsula under democratic rule. Instead, in late November 1950, several hundred thousand Chinese troops ambushed and nearly destroyed MacArthur's advancing forces, capturing several thousand United Nations troops in the process. MacArthur's formations hastily retreated below the 38th Parallel, where a new Eighth Army commander, Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, rallied his forces and pushed the Chinese back to positions near the original border.

As the war dragged on, the Chinese gradually assumed control of nearly all prisoners in the north and established permanent camps in which to house them. In October 1951, the prisoners at An-dong moved again, this time to a newly constructed camp at Manp'o. A few weeks later, the group split up. The military prisoners were turned over to the Chinese Army and sent to established camps in the southwestern part of the Yalu River valley.[52] Communist treatment of prisoners, especially during the first year of the war, had often been brutal, but the

but these doctors and nurses proved brutally inept, and their incompetence lost far more patients than they saved

General Dean speaks with reporters at Munsan-ni, South Korea, on 4 September 1953, shortly after his release from imprisonment in North Korea.

Maj. Gen. Garrison H. Davidson presents the Legion of Merit to then-Lt. Col. John J. Dunn for his courageous leadership as a prisoner of war in North Korea from July 1950 to September 1953.

casualty rate among the Tiger's group proved exceptionally high. In October 1950, approximately 750 men, women, and children had marched out of a cornfield at Manp'o. By March 1951, the survivors of this group numbered only 330. By then, the Communists had belatedly recognized the propaganda value of keeping prisoners alive and had provided their captives with better food, clothing, and medicine. Conditions remained primitive for the duration of the war, but the death rate among prisoners dropped to nearly zero by the autumn of 1951. Still, when the survivors of the Tiger's death march finally reached permanent camps, their haggard appearance shocked fellow prisoners.[53]

A precise accounting of casualties has been difficult, both for this group of prisoners and for the entire cadre of U.S. service members who were captured or listed as missing in action during the war. Several U.S. prisoners kept lists of the deceased, often in defiance of their captors' restrictions, but these lists are incomplete and lack important details, such as the precise date and location of a prisoner's death. The group of U.S. military prisoners at Manp'o represented approximately 9 percent of the 7,140 U.S. service members officially identified as prisoners of war in Korea. Of that number, 2,701 men died in captivity. Another 8,055 U.S. service members, however, are still listed as missing in action from the Korean War, despite ongoing efforts by the Defense and State Departments to locate and identify their remains. The percentage of these men who died in enemy captivity remains impossible to calculate.[54]

The war in Korea dragged on for three years, as Communist and United Nations forces waged savage battles for nameless hilltops while conducting fruitless negotiations for a cease-fire. In the spring of 1953, however, the death of Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin and the inauguration of a new U.S. president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, paved the way for a cease-fire agreement. The cease-fire took effect at midnight on 25 July 1953, and both sides began repatriating prisoners of war a short while later. On 6 September 1953, the Communists completed the return of U.S. prisoners. Captain Boysen, Major Lantron, and Major Dunn were among the last soldiers released.[55]

Notes

This article is based on a chapter in the author's manuscript "A Cold Day in Hell: The American POW Experience in Korea," which Texas A&M University Press plans to publish in 2011.

1. "Last Phase," *Time* 56, no. 16 (16 October 1950), p. 26, posted at http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,813498,00.html.

2. Roy Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June–November 1950)*, United States Army in the Korean War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1961), pp. 7–18, 21–35.

3. Bevin Alexander, *Korea: The First War We Lost* (1986; rev. ed., New York: Hippocrene, 2000), pp. 33–35, 42–45.

4. Ibid., pp. 44–52; David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York: Hyperion, 2007), pp. 138–40.

5. Appleman's account of the July battles in *South to the Naktong*, pp. 49–227, provides the most detailed history of these encounters. See also Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950–1953* (New York: Anchor, 1989), pp. 89–170, and Donald Knox, *The Korean War, An Oral History: Pusan to Chosin* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), pp. 12–73.

6. Albert D. Biderman, *March to Calumny: The Story of American POW's in the Korean*

War (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 116–18; Raymond Lech, *Broken Soldiers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), pp. 9–21. Biderman writes that 1,036 U.S. soldiers died as victims of North Korean atrocities soon after capture and that several hundred more were executed in the weeks that followed, many of these after the Inch'on landing and the rapid North Korean retreat.

7. Alexander, *First War We Lost*, pp. 126–47.

8. Blair, *Forgotten War*, pp. 267–321; Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 488–604.

9. Larry Zellers, *In Enemy Hands: A Prisoner in North Korea* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), pp. 66–74.

10. Ibid., pp. 74–78; Philip Deane, *I Was a Captive in Korea* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1953), pp. 90–91; Rpt, 2d Lt Edward S. Coleman, 20 Apr 54, sub: Interrogation of Returned Prisoner of War Alexander M. Boysen, p. 12, folder B2, box 1, Entry 183, Operation Big Switch Interrogation Reports, Record Group (RG) 153, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General of the Army, National Archives at College Park, Md. (NACP) (hereinafter cited as Boysen interrogation). Kosal-li is also known as Kosan or Kosanjin.

11. Boysen interrogation, p. 12; Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 78–81, 97, quote, p. 81; Sworn affidavit, Lt Col John J. Dunn, Valley Forge, Pa., 12 Jan 1954, p. 3, folder D2, box 2, Entry 183, RG 153, NACP (hereinafter cited as Dunn affidavit); Philip Crosbie, *March till They Die* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1956), pp. 122–24.

12. Boysen interrogation, p. 12; Dunn affidavit, p. 4; Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 132. Major Dunn was promoted to lieutenant colonel effective 7 September 1950, after he had been captured. See *Official Army Register, 1 January 1951* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1951), 1: 190. As he and his fellow prisoners did not know about that promotion, Dunn is identified as a major in this account.

13. Crosbie, *March till They Die*, pp. 135–37, quote, p. 135; Dunn affidavit, p. 4.

14. Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 138, quote; Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 84–85.

15. Sworn affidavit, Maj Ambrose Nugent, Fort Sill, Okla., 15 Jan 1954, p. 3, folder N, box 4, Entry 183, RG 153, NACP (hereinafter cited as Nugent affidavit). In his affidavit, Dunn notes that he learned about the cornfield executions from North Korean officers several months later.

16. Crosbie, *March till They Die*, pp. 139–40; William F. Dean, *General Dean's Story, as Told to William L. Worden* (New York: Viking, 1954), p. 187; Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 87. Several survivors later confirmed that Dean had seen the large group of prisoners on 31 October, the night they left the cornfield.

17. Crosbie, *March till They Die*, pp. 139–40, quote; Deane, *I Was a Captive*, p. 110.

18. Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 140.

19. Nugent affidavit, p. 3, quote; Deane, *I Was a Captive*, p. 111.

20. Boysen interrogation, p. 13; Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 89–90.

21. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 89–90, quote, p. 90.

22. Deane, *I Was a Captive*, pp. 112–13, quote, p. 113.

23. Ibid., p. 113.

24. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 90.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., pp. 90–91, quote, p. 91; Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 142.

28. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 91–93, quote, p. 93; Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 144.

29. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 91–92.

30. Ibid., pp. 92, 97, quote, p. 92; Crosbie, *March till They Die*, pp. 140, 143–44.

31. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 97–98; Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 144.

32. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 99; Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 145; Interv, author with Ray Mellin, West Point, N.Y., Sep 2005, copy in the author's files, quote.

33. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 99–100; Deane, *I Was a Captive*, p. 114, quote; Dunn affidavit, p. 4; Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 145. These sources cite various numbers for men who died in the night and those who had survived but could not continue. Zellers, p. 99, reports the Tiger's order to "bury the 18," of whom he believed eight were still alive but were unable to walk.

34. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 100–102, quote p. 101.

35. Ibid., p. 103.

36. Ibid.; Boysen interrogation, p. 14.

37. Crosbie, *March till They Die*, pp. 147–48.

38. Ibid., pp. 103–06; Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 148; Lech, *Broken Soldiers*, p. 23.

39. Crosbie, *March till They Die*, pp. 148–49; Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 13. Dyer had been interned by the Japanese in the Philippines for 3½ years in World War II.

40. Crosbie, *March till They Die*, pp. 149–52.

41. Ibid., pp. 152–53; Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 107.

42. Mellin Interv, Sep 2005; Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 107–09.

43. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 110–12; Lech, *Broken Soldiers*, p. 23.

44. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 112–15.

45. Ibid., pp. 116–17.

46. Ibid., pp. 117–18; Crosbie, *March till They Die*, p. 163; Boysen interrogation, p. 14. Chunggang is also known as Chunggangjin.

47. Lewis H. Carlson, *Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War: An Oral History of Korean War POWs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), p. 274, note 3.

48. Boysen interrogation, p. 17; Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 119–21. Zellers, p. 130, gives an estimate of 600 grams per day.

49. Boysen interrogation, p. 15; Sworn affidavit, Lt Col Newton Lantron, Chandler, Ariz., 30 Nov 1953, p. 5, folder L, box 4, Entry 183, RG 153, NACP.

50. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 127; Boysen interrogation, p. 15; Sworn Statement, Maj Jesse V. Booker, U.S. Marine Corps, p. 3, box 1, Entry 183, RG 153, NACP.

51. Zellers, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 143–44, 154–58.

52. Ibid., p. 184.

53. Lech, *Broken Soldiers*, p. 26. See also Boysen interrogation, p. 22.

54. Carlson, *Remembered Prisoners*, p. 2.

55. Repatriation dates for Boysen, Lantron, and Dunn are identified on the Tiger Survivor Data Sheet provided to the author in April 2009 by Tim Casey, historian of the Tiger Survivors' Group.

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General Cota at his headquarters in Rott, Germany, 8 November 1944

General Cota and the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest

A Failure of Battle Command?

By Thomas G. Bradbeer

He was one of the best and brightest brigadier generals in the entire United States Army. His service as the chief of staff of the 1st Infantry Division in North Africa and his subsequent work with Commodore Lord Louis Mountbatten's Combined Operations Headquarters in Britain had made him the Army's expert on amphibious operations. His critical role in the planning for Operation Overlord (the Normandy assault) was a major reason for his selection to be the assistant commander of the 29th Infantry Division. He earned the U.S. Distinguished Service Cross and the British Distinguished Service Order for his decisive leadership at Omaha Beach on 6 June 1944. In consequence of his consistently superior performance, he was on 13 August 1944 assigned to command the 28th Infantry Division, which he would lead across France and Belgium to the German border and the Siegfried Line. On 4 September, he became a major general. He had justifiably earned the reputation as a "fighting general," but, when the Germans destroyed his division in November 1944 during the battle of the Hürtgen Forest, they destroyed his reputation as well. For Maj. Gen. Norman D. Cota, what went wrong and how did it happen?

Begun in September 1944, the battle of the Hürtgen Forest culminated in mid-February 1945 with the capture of several critical dams on the Roer River and its tributaries. Over a period of five months, the battle in the Hürtgen cost the U.S. Army more than thirty-four thousand casualties.[1] Largely unknown by Americans today, this battle was one of the bloodiest and most disastrous U.S. Army actions of the Second World War. Operation Market-Garden, with a final objective to capture a bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem, and the Germans' surprise attack in mid-December through the Ardennes both eclipsed the battle of the Hürtgen Forest's inauspicious beginning. The Battle of the Bulge interrupted the U.S. Army's campaign to capture the German-controlled Hürtgen Forest. The "Bulge" was a hard fought and well-earned Allied victory that overshadowed the debacle that had occurred less than twenty miles north of the Ardennes. While Operation Market-Garden and the Battle of the Bulge are two of the most-documented battles in history, ensuring their remembrance by future generations, far fewer books and articles have been written about the Hürtgen Forest battle, and most of them have appeared in the last two decades.[2]

Background of General Cota

Born on 30 May 1893 in Chelsea, Massachusetts, just outside Boston, Norman Daniel Cota was an industrious and adventurous youth. He quit his public high school at the age of fifteen, obtained a certificate from a private business college, worked two years as a secretary for a manufacturing firm, and saved enough money to attend the prestigious Worcester Academy, fifty miles west of Boston. While playing football for Worcester Academy (1910–1913), he earned the nickname "Dutch" that would stay with him for the rest of his life. Upon his graduation from Worcester, he obtained an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. His classmates included future World War II commanders Mark W. Clark, J. Lawton Collins, and Matthew B. Ridgway, while Dwight D. Eisenhower and Omar N. Bradley were two classes ahead.[3]

Cota as a cadet, 1917

U.S. Military Academy Library

Admiral Mountbatten chats with the lord mayor of London at a ceremony to greet the admiral's U.S. staff, 13 January 1943.

The United States' entry into the First World War caused Cota's cadre to graduate two months early in April 1917. Commissioned in the Infantry, he was assigned to Company A, 22d Infantry, stationed at Fort Jay on Governors Island in New York Harbor. Within one month, his superiors promoted him to first lieutenant and placed him in command of the company. His unit spent the rest of the war supervising a basic training course that sent its graduates directly to France. Within four months of his graduation from West Point, Cota was a captain and just over a year later he was promoted to major, after less than eighteen months on active duty.[4]

In August 1918, the Army assigned Cota to West Point where he served as a tactics instructor for a year and then as assistant quartermaster. In 1919, as part of the Army's demobilization, he was briefly reduced in rank to first lieutenant and then returned to captain. Married in November 1919 to Connie Alexander of Manhattan, New York, Cota saw his first child, Ann, born a year later; a son, Norman Daniel Cota Jr., followed in December 1921.[5]

Cota spent the years 1920 to 1924 in the Army's Finance Department. He returned to the Infantry in the latter year and attended the Infantry School's company officer course at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he reunited with Ridgway and Clark. Upon graduation he was assigned to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, where he commanded a company in the 35th Infantry. Subsequently, while serving as the regiment's plans and training officer, he came in contact with Maj. George S. Patton Jr., who was then the chief intelligence officer of the Hawaiian Division.[6]

After this tour, Cota spent the next three years attending Army schools—a year in the Infantry officer advanced course, where he was the honor graduate, and two years at the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas—before returning to the Infantry School in 1931 to teach in the Weapons Department under Col. Omar Bradley. In this assignment, Cota earned Bradley's respect and admiration.[7]

Cota was promoted to major in 1932 at the age of thirty-nine, having spent the previous thirteen years as a captain. He attended the Army War College in 1935–1936 and then had a two-year stint with the 26th Infantry at Plattsburg Barracks, New York, where he served initially as the regiment's supply officer and later as its plans and training officer. His next assignment was as an instructor at the Command and General Staff School. When the Second World War began, Cota, along with most of the officer corps, realized the United States would eventually become involved. In the fall of 1940, as a recently promoted lieutenant colonel, Cota left Kansas to assume the position of executive officer of the 16th Infantry, an element of the 1st Infantry Division (the "Big Red One"), at Fort Jay, New York. Four months later he became the division's assistant G–2 (Intelligence) when the unit moved to Fort Devens, Massachusetts. After only four months in that position, he was named the division's assistant G–3 (Operations), a position in which he primarily focused on preparing the division for an amphibious landing operation.[8]

Less than a week after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Cota was promoted to colonel. The 1st Infantry Division spent the winter and spring of 1942 preparing and training for combat, and in May it received the new commander who would give the organization its true war-fighting identity. Maj. Gen. Terry de la Mesa Allen, an Army legend for repeatedly demonstrating fearless courage during the First World War, assumed command of the Big Red One. Allen would be assisted by Brig. Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, who was the son of the late president and had earlier become the division's assistant commander. After conducting a search among the senior leaders in the division, Allen and Roosevelt conferred, and Allen selected Colonel Cota as the division's chief of staff. Aggressive and impul-

sive, Allen used a very personal and charismatic leadership style; Cota offset Allen with a steadfast emphasis on discipline, common sense, and adherence to regulations.[9] They would prove to be an excellent leadership team.

On 8 November 1942, the combat teams of the 1st Infantry Division landed on the beaches adjacent to Les Andalouses and Arzew, Algeria. Two days later, after limited fighting, the teams converged at and entered the city of Oran. Elements of the division moved into Tunisia in the second half of November, but the division headquarters was still in Oran when, in January 1943, Cota was selected as the chief of the American section of the Combined Operations Headquarters in London and promoted to brigadier general.[10]

Arriving in England, Cota worked directly for Lord Mountbatten, a proven war hero with a forceful personality. Mountbatten charged Cota with developing doctrine and training for U.S. amphibious operations. Cota was now able to put his preparations and experiences with the 1st Infantry Division to good use. Attending in June a conference sponsored by the Assault Training Center, which he was helping to organize, Cota had the opportunity to present his ideas. He posited three essential phases for a successful amphibious landing: secure the beachhead, exploit the landing, and maintain the beach; the last imperative would permit the safe transit of follow-on forces to expand the exploitation. Cota also briefed in detail the type and number of units required, in his view, to form effective assault divisions, which included the use of well-trained regimental combat teams and a ranger-type battalion in each regiment. He stressed that all beach landings should be made under cover of darkness, believing that daylight assaults would have little chance for success. Although some of his ideas for the training of assault divisions would be adopted, his proposal for nighttime assaults fell on deaf ears.[11]

National Archives

General Cota receives the British Distinguished Service Order medal from General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery in France, 7 July 1944.

Cota at Omaha Beach

With his wealth of knowledge on amphibious operations, Cota was in high demand by several division commanders whose units were preparing for the largest amphibious assault in history. In October 1943, the new commander of the 29th Infantry Division (the "Blue and Gray"), Maj. Gen. Charles Gerhardt, selected Cota to be the division's assistant commander. Gerhardt appreciated Cota's no-nonsense approach to training and, upon Cota's arrival at division headquarters, placed him in charge of all division training exercises in preparation for the forthcoming assault on Normandy.[12]

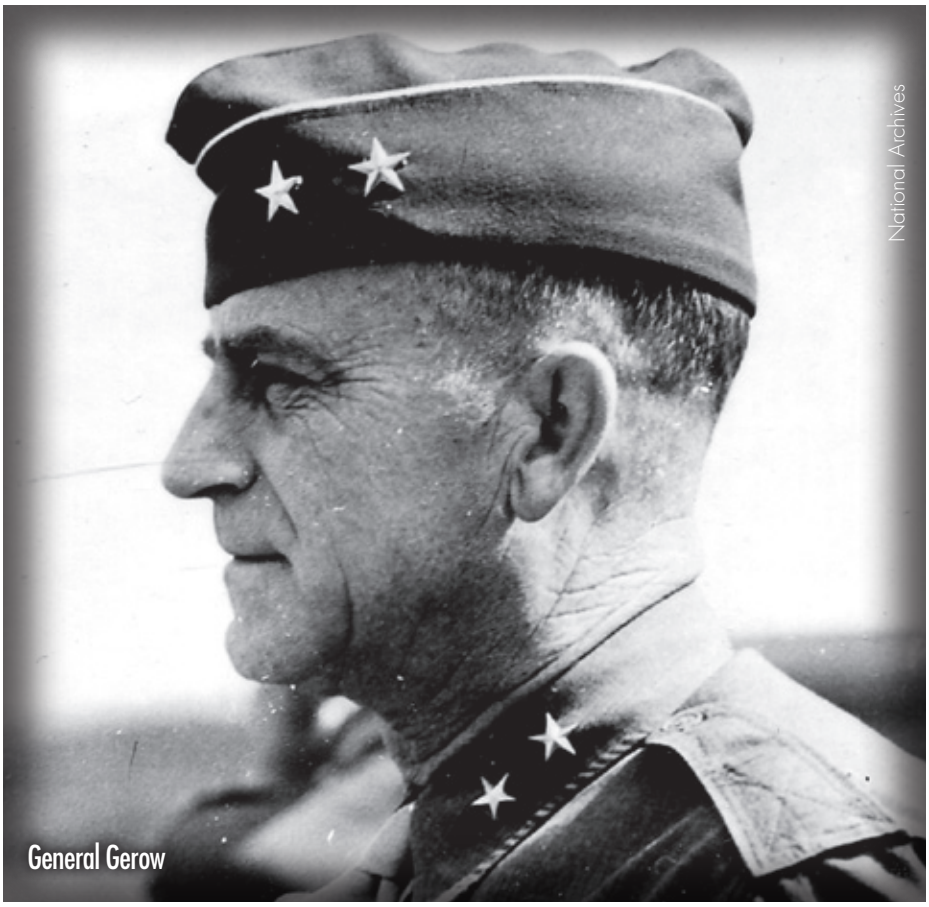
In April 1944, as the final plan for the assault on Normandy formalized, the 116th Infantry was selected as one of the first units to land on Omaha Beach, with the 115th Infantry to follow in the second wave. Both of these 29th Infantry Division units would initially be under the command of Maj. Gen. Clarence Huebner of the 1st Infantry Division. As the 29th rehearsed the assault plan, General Gerhardt realized he had to take measures to minimize the chaos and confusion that was sure to be rampant on the beachhead. To maintain command and control of the two 29th Division regiments in the early phases of the assault, he decided to form a provisional brigade and made Cota its commander. The organization was known as the Bastard Brigade. Cota had a staff of about twenty-five officers culled from the 116th Infantry and the headquarters of the 29th and 1st Infantry Divisions. The last week before embarkation he and his staff war-gamed a variety of contingencies that might arise once the units assaulted the beach.[13]

Cota landed at Omaha Beach at H plus 1 (0730) on 6 June 1944. After directing a group of engineers to use Bangalore torpedoes (pieces of pipe filled with explosives) to blow one of the first breeches in the German obstacle belt along the beach, he led a company of soldiers through the gap and onto the bluffs. By 0900 U.S. forces began flowing through the breech and off Omaha Beach. Cota next directed the successful assault on and capture of the nearby town of Vierville-sur-Mer on the bluffs overlooking the beach. With a smaller group of soldiers, he

then returned to the beach by the Vierville draw, demonstrating that this route, which was accessible to vehicles, was now open. He would spend the rest of the daylight hours of 6 June traversing the length of the 29th Division's sector of the beach, encouraging the American soldiers he encountered on his way, and giving direction to late-arriving members of his own staff. He also found, briefed, and coordinated with both the 29th and 1st Infantry Division commanders and their staffs. As his biographer Robert Miller wrote, D-Day for Cota "had been the culmination of a lifetime of military training and discipline."[14]

Cota became a legend for his combat leadership on D-Day and the days immediately following, proving both highly effective and totally fearless in the face of deadly enemy fire. His initiative, courage, and accomplishments earned him both the U.S Distinguished Service Cross and the British Distinguished Service Order. Cota would also be remembered for his famous exclamation of "Rangers! Lead the way!" exhorting the men of the 5th Ranger Battalion to leave the cover of the seawall and lead an increasing mass of soldiers through the Vierville breech. These words remain today, as they have for decades, the motto of the U.S. Army's ranger regiment.[15]

Over the course of the next few weeks Cota lived in the thick of the fighting and always forward in the front lines as the men of the 29th Infantry Division fought through the hedgerows of Normandy. He won the Silver Star for his actions at Isigny on 9 June and in the crossing of the Vire River and the capture of Montmartin three days later. On 17 July, after several unsuccessful attacks against the German defenses in and around St. Lô, General Gerhardt created an armored task force under General Cota, which on the following day attacked and captured the town and its critical road and bridge network. In the process Cota was wounded in the arm and had to spend the next two weeks in the hospital. For his daring leadership Cota received an Oak Leaf Cluster to pin to his Silver Star.[16]



General Gerow

Commanding the 28th Infantry Division

On 13 August 1944, the commander of the 12th Army Group, now Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, approved the decision of Maj. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, commander of the XIX Corps, to give Cota command of the struggling 28th Infantry Division after its newly assigned commander, Brig. Gen. James E. Wharton, was killed by a sniper during an initial visit to his division's forward elements. Cota had never before commanded a formation larger than an infantry company.[17]

The 28th Infantry Division was a Pennsylvania National Guard organization that had been brought into active federal service in 1940. The "Keystone Division" had deployed first to Wales, then to England, where its units spent seven months training before landing on Omaha Beach on 22 July. The division had been in combat for three weeks when a dissatisfied General Corlett relieved its commander, Maj. Gen. Lloyd D. Brown. Corlett considered the division's performance less than satisfactory, and he believed that Cota, with his reputation of strict discipline and leading from the front, would be able to provide mission focus and purpose to the men of the 28th.[18]

Cota's division was soon ordered to move almost ninety miles and join an attack by the XIX Corps' left flank into Le Neubourg and on to Elbeuf on the Seine River above Rouen in an attempt to trap retreating German forces. Though the division's movement was well executed, it was not able to trap large numbers of the enemy as General Bradley had hoped. Upon completion of this mission, the 28th Infantry Division was assigned to Maj. Gen. Leonard Gerow's V Corps.[19]

After parading through the recently captured city of Paris on 29 August, the 28th spent the next two weeks pursuing the retreating German Army. In ten days, the division covered an amazing 270 miles, then unheard of for an infantry division.[20] Waiting for it was the renowned Siegfried Line, a dense obstacle belt

that stretched the entire length of the German border opposite France, Luxembourg, and Belgium. It consisted of minefields, dense barbed wire, concrete pillboxes, and mile upon mile of "dragon's teeth."

During the first weeks of September, both the American and British senior commanders began to believe that the German ground forces were exhausted, dispirited, and disorganized. Many concluded that the war in Europe might be over by Christmas. Maj. William Sylvan, aide to Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges, recorded that the general went so far as to state "that given ten good days of weather he thought the war might well be over as far as organized resistance was concerned."[21] This overly optimistic view quickly spread down to the small-unit level. The Germans would prove this to be a major miscalculation on the part of the Allied strategic leaders.

The 28th attacked the Siegfried Line on 13 September in an effort to capture the town of Üttfeld, four miles inside the German frontier. Cota developed a plan of attack that used only one battalion from each of the two regiments—the 109th and 110th—currently serving with the division; the third regiment, the 112th, had been attached to the 5th Armored Division. Both attacks failed, and Cota relieved the 109th Infantry's commander, Col. William L. Blanton, when one of his battalions withdrew without permission.[22]

The division continued to attack, defeating several German counterattacks in the process. On 17 September, the 110th Infantry captured the high ground above Üttfeld. Preparing to envelop the town, Cota was notified by General Gerow to call off the attack. The V Corps could not expand the flanks of the narrow penetration that the 28th had achieved. Cota was disappointed, but he also realized that his regiments had suffered nearly fifteen hundred casualties in five days of fighting. It was from this attack that the Germans gave the 28th a nickname that would remain with it for the rest of the war. Mistaking the red keystone emblem worn on the left shoulder of each soldier's jacket for a bucket, the Germans termed the unit *der blutiger Eimer* or the "Bloody Bucket" division.[23]

On 24 September, Cota was promoted to major general and a week later his division was removed from the line and sent into corps reserve thirty miles to the north near Elsenborn, Belgium. The 112th Infantry returned from its attachment to the 5th Armored Division, and the 28th Division spent the next four weeks refitting and recuperating from its march across France and Luxembourg.

The division received more than fifteen hundred replacements during this period, and their training and incorporation were a major operation for Cota, his staff, and subordinate commanders. The vast majority of the individual replacements arrived with little or no infantry training. Veterans were leery of the new men, unknown quantities who might put them at risk. Cota knew that weeks of hard training and shared experience would be needed to build cohesion and develop the traits and skills the new acquisitions would require to help form combat-capable small units. Cota had been strongly opposed to the Army's replacement system for a long time. He had recommended that the replacement depots should also serve as training centers rather than just another step of the lengthy processing pipeline that pushed untrained soldiers from the United States to France and then to the front until they arrived at their designated units. The burden then fell on the battalions and companies to train the new men, a task they rarely were able to do, especially if they were conducting combat operations. Cota had also recommended that the replacements be organized and trained as squads in which they would develop the skills required to survive in combat, prior to arriving at the division replacement center. Neither of these recommendations was adopted.[24]

Cota reflected on two critical areas while his unit was in reserve. The first was his performance as division commander. Most troubling to him was the plan he had developed for the attack on the Siegfried Line. He was convinced that he had been overly cautious and that had he massed all six of his available battalions the division may have broken through on the first day when the Germans were less prepared. Instead the division had gained little ground and in a five-day struggle had suffered nearly fifteen hundred casualties, almost all of them within the infantry.[25]

He was also concerned about his relationships with both his corps commander, General Gerow, and the First Army commander, General Hodges. Gerow was a leader with little personality and a reputation for being overly controlling of his subordinate commanders, especially when planning operations. Hodges, a stoic, inarticulate, and unimpressive figure, delegated much of the command and control of the First Army to his chief of staff, Maj. Gen. William B. Kean. A stern and driven leader, Kean was not well liked by his staff. Some observers believed that this type of relationship between Hodges and Kean caused confusion as to who, in fact, was truly commanding the First Army. This division of leadership and command had far-reaching effects throughout the First Army. Hodges rarely visited his subordinate corps and division commanders. Instead, he routinely had them return to the rear area to his headquarters to brief him. He earned a reputation of being intolerant of any mistake and quick to relieve subordinate commanders when he suspected that they were lacking drive and initiative. With the coming mission to attack into the Hürtgen

General Kean, February 1945

General Collins, January 1945

Forest, Cota would have reason to be concerned about his relationships with his superiors.[26]

The Hürtgen Forest

The Hürtgenwald (Hürtgen Forest), which contained one of the largest wooded tracts in Germany in 1944, extended from the northern portion of the Ardennes region of Belgium and Luxembourg to the Eifel region of Germany. It was twenty miles long by ten miles wide, and its primary axis ran northeast to southwest from the forest's northern limit between the cities of Aachen and Düren, through Monschau, and into the Ardennes. The forest encompassed several ridges with steep hills that had been cleared of timber and many valleys that contained some of the most rugged forested terrain in northwestern Europe. Near the southern edge of the Hürtgen Forest lay the Kall River, in reality not much more than a stream, that rose near Monschau and made a deep swath diagonally through the forest before merging into the Roer River to the east. The latter river, located on the far eastern boundary of the forest, formed a much larger water obstacle. The Siegfried Line ran right through the middle of the forest, whose trees were so dense they impeded both foot and vehicular movement and at the same time prevented the sun from reaching the forest floor. The Germans had turned the forest into a labyrinth of well-camouflaged pillboxes with interlocking fields of fire, protected by multiple belts of barbed wire and dense minefields. The few roads and trails that bisected the forest were covered by artillery in depth.[27]

In early September General Eisenhower directed the Allied forces to continue attacking on a broad front with the intent to breech the German frontier and strike deep into Germany. General Hodges' First Army would conduct a head-on attack against the Siegfried Line, penetrate it, and then drive on to the Rhine. First Army's three corps totaled more than 256,000 men. Arrayed north-to-south on the Aachen front were the XIX Corps under General Corlett, the VII Corps under Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, and General Gerow's V Corps.[28]

Hodges was unwilling to bypass the potential stronghold that the Hürtgen Forest posed for the Germans. His experiences as a veteran of the Meuse-Argonne campaign in the First World War may have biased him as he reflected on the bloody battles in and around the Argonne Forest. In 1918 the Germans had used the Argonne as a staging area from which they threatened the left flank of the American offensive. That common experience caused several senior U.S. commanders to believe that the Hürtgen posed a similar tactical problem. Hodges ordered the VII Corps to eliminate this threat.[29]

The battle of the Hürtgen Forest began on 12 September 1944 when elements of the 3d Armored Division, VII Corps, entered the village of Rötgen. The advance into the forest soon stalled due to the stiffening German defense, so the 3d Armored Division instead pushed north toward Stolberg. On 29 September, the battle-tested 9th Infantry Division was given the mission to attack through the forest to seize the crossroads village of Schmidt and thus secure the right flank of VII Corps. By 16 October, however, the division had advanced less than two miles into the Hürtgen and had suffered 4,500 casualties.[30] By mid-October, U.S. commanders no longer believed that the war would be over by Christmas.

On 21 October, Hodges was informed that his First Army would make the main effort in an offensive that was to begin in ten days. The objective was Cologne and the Rhine River. Hodges desired to assign VII Corps to be the spearhead for the First Army, but he first had to free it from its Hürtgen Forest responsibilities. By redrawing corps boundaries, Hodges assigned V Corps the mission to attack into the Hürtgen Forest and capture the town of Schmidt.[31]

Of the four infantry and one armored divisions assigned to V Corps, only one had spent the last month in reserve at a rest camp: the 28th Infan-

try Division. General Gerow notified Cota on 21 October to move his division north to relieve the 9th Infantry Division. Cota established his division command post in the village of Rott on 25 October and began coordination with the V Corps staff for future operations as his units began to occupy the 9th Division's positions north of Lammersdorf.[32]

When Cota received the operation order for the attack, he was perplexed and none too happy. In his mind, the plan was far too direct and detailed, leaving little for him, his staff, and his regimental commanders to do except execute basically the same failed plan that had been given to the 9th Infantry Division. Hodges had dictated that the 28th was to capture Vossenack and the tree line facing the village of Hürtgen. Gerow had directed that an entire regiment would assault the village of Hürtgen to the north, a second regiment would attack and capture Schmidt in the center, and a third regiment would attack southeast from Raffelsbrand. Cota disagreed with the plan. It allowed no room for initiative. It violated many of the nine principles of war, most especially objective and mass. Furthermore, with the attack scheduled for 31 October and the VII Corps attack not scheduled to begin until 5 November, the 28th would be the only unit in the entire 12th Army Group on the offensive along its 150-mile front. The Germans would be able to mass against his separate regiments. He raised his concerns with Gerow and stated that instead of a division attack against a single objective (Schmidt), he was being directed to conduct three separate regimental attacks in diverging directions over some of the worst terrain in western Europe.[33]

Cota's arguments fell on deaf ears. Gerow tried to placate his stubborn division commander by telling him that he would reinforce his nine infantry battalions with a tank battalion; two tank destroyer battalions, one self-propelled and the other towed; three combat engineer battalions; and a chemical mortar battalion. The 28th Division Artillery would also have eight battalions and seven separate batteries from V and VII Corps Artillery reinforcing the division's assigned artillery.[34]

When the division's order was issued to the subordinate regiments, it directed the 109th Infantry, under the command of Lt. Col. Daniel B. Strickler, a machine gun company commander in the 28th in the First World War, to attack north along the forest's main western ridge and seize the village of Hürtgen. This supporting effort was directed by both the First Army and V Corps commanders as they feared the Germans would counterattack through the village into the left flank of the 28th as they had done several weeks before against the 9th Infantry Division. Those earlier counterattacks had brought to a halt the 9th Division's forward movement.[35]

The 110th Infantry, commanded by Col. Theodore A. Seely, was also to lead a supporting attack. It was to move south and capture the villages of Simonskall and Steckenborn to prevent any German attacks from that direction. Two battalions would be used; the third battalion was to serve as the division reserve.

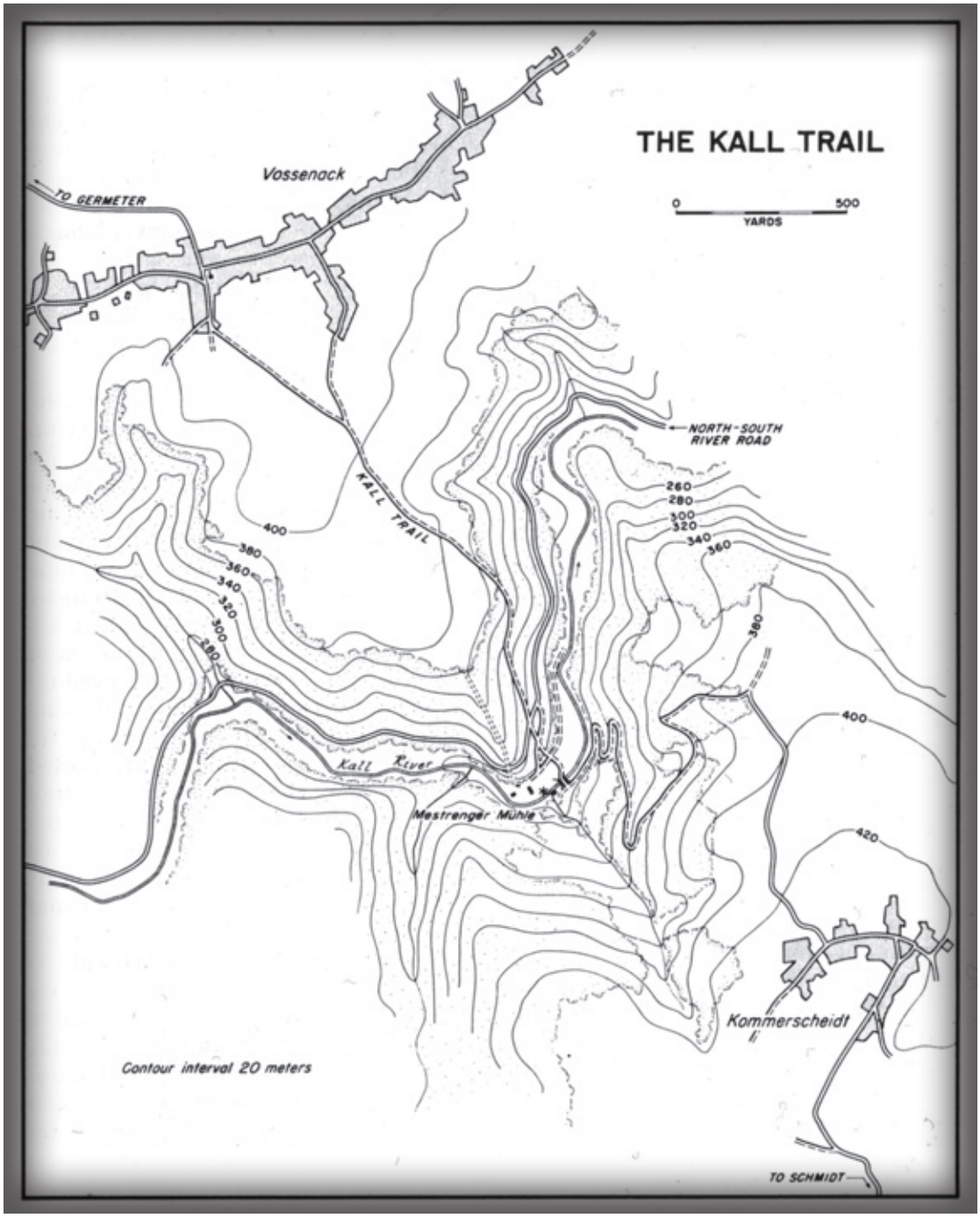
The 112th Infantry was to provide the main effort. It was commanded by Lt. Col. Carl L. Peterson, another veteran of the First World War, who had spent his entire career in the 28th. His regiment was to attack in the center of the division sector, capture the village of Vossenack, cross the Kall River gorge, and then capture Schmidt and its road network. The 112th would have to traverse more than three miles of extremely difficult, wooded terrain to reach its objective. Cota would have preferred to have had at least two regiments attack Schmidt, but he was not given that option.[36]

National Archives

General Hodges, February 1945

Final Preparations

In the week prior to the assault into the Hürtgen, Cota made three decisions that would have far-reaching effects on his division's assault into the Hürtgen. The first was that neither he nor his staff would direct the division's units to patrol into the forest. Operational questions persisted: What were the enemy's dispositions and strengths? Where were the obstacle belts and the reinforced pillboxes?

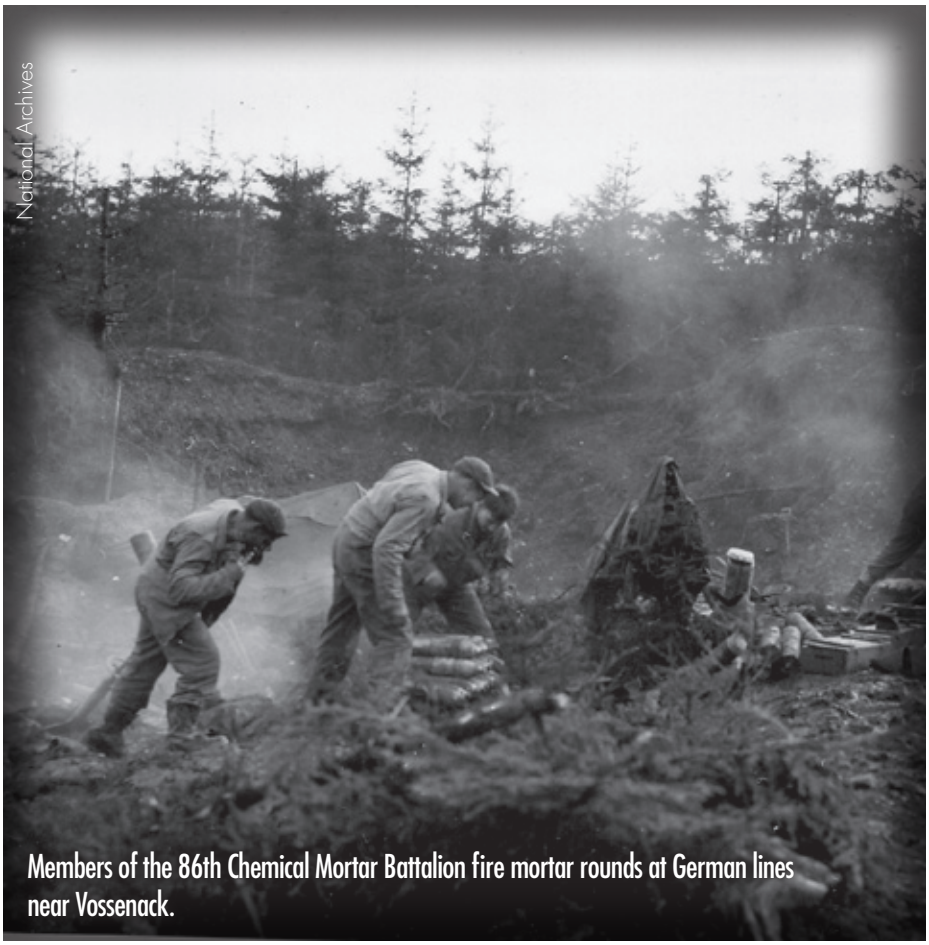


Patrolling, even if not all patrols were successful, would still have answered many of the questions that the division commander had about the enemy. Corps intelligence had identified two German divisions defending east of Schmidt, the *275th* and the *89th Infantry Divisions.* What intelligence did not identify was that a third division was also in that vicinity, the *272d Volksgrenadier Division,* which was preparing to relieve the *89th* when Cota's division attacked. All three of these German divisions were understrength, and each consisted of a mixture of both experienced and newly reorganized units. There were indeed old men and boys in the three German divisions, but there were some very experienced front-line combat units mixed in as well, and all of them were now defending their homeland against the American invaders. Thus, unbeknownst to Cota, the Germans would have three divisions with which to stop the one advancing U.S. division.[37]

The second decision was tied to the first. Cota approved the extremely narrow Kall trail to serve as the division's main supply route. The trail started near the village of Vossenack, led down a steep gorge, crossed the Kall River, and then progressed uphill to the village of Kommerscheidt, ending only a mile from Schmidt. Aerial reconnaissance could not determine the trail's condition due to the dense forest covering. Ground patrols would have provided much

valuable information, both about the enemy and the trail. Cota did assign three battalions of engineers to work on the Kall trail and improve the track across the gorge, but his lack of real intelligence would prove costly, especially to the main effort, that of the 112th Infantry.[38]

The third decision—not to use armor to support the infantry battalions and companies—had a major detrimental impact on the execution and outcome of the battle. Believing that the forest was too dense to allow access and that the road network was not sufficient to support tanks, Cota kept all but two of his tank companies and all of his tank destroyer units in the rear to augment his division artillery. Had Cota discussed this with the commander of the 9th Infantry Division, he would have learned that tanks could operate in many areas of the forest, and, with training and prior coordination, they could provide valuable support to the infantry. The 9th had assigned a tank company to each infantry regiment, with a platoon supporting each battalion. Communications problems between the two arms in the dense woods had been solved by having the infantry platoon leader ride on the back of the lead tank, while controlling his unit by radio. The 9th also learned that by using small infantry-tank teams the infantry could provide security to the tanks while the tanks provided the firepower and mobility to keep the attack moving. In addition, the 9th learned that when minefields and barbed-wire obstacles held up the infantry, the soldiers would normally go to ground and dig in. If tanks were supporting them, the soldiers would press the attack. Had Cota known all of this, he might have followed the 9th Division's hard-learned example. Instead he attached only Companies A and C, 707th Tank Battalion, to the 112th Infantry, his main effort. He would rely on his artillery and five fighter-bomber groups from the IX Tactical Air Command to be his major combat multipliers.[39]



Members of the 86th Chemical Mortar Battalion fire mortar rounds at German lines near Vossenack.

The 28th Attacks into the Hürtgen

Rain and heavy fog delayed the 28th Division's attack into the area. It was an ominous sign, foreboding the worsening weather conditions that would have a major impact on the upcoming battle. In a rare visit to one of his frontline units, General Hodges met with Cota and his staff on 1 November. After directing Cota to begin the attack the next day, regardless of the weather, Hodges returned to his headquarters where he told his aide de camp that the 28th Infantry Division's plan was excellent: "They are feinting to the north in hopes of fooling the Boche into the belief that this is their main effort, and then whacking him with everything in the direction of the town of Schmidt."[40]

At 0800 Thursday, 2 November, V and VII Corps Artillery, in support of the 28th Division Artillery, initiated a sixty-minute preparation into the Hürtgen Forest. They fired more than 4,000 rounds while the 28th Division Artillery fired some 7,300 rounds onto known and suspected enemy positions.[41]

As the last shells impacted, the three regiments of the 28th climbed out of their foxholes and advanced north, east, and south toward their objectives. The 109th Infantry attacking northward encountered a large minefield south of Wittscheidt on the Germeter-Hürtgen road. The three infantry battalions became intermixed as German artillery located north of the village of Hürtgen and on the Brandenberg-Bergstein ridge, pounded the advancing U.S. infantry. German tanks then advanced south through the village and pushed the Americans back. The German defenses that had been dug along the Weisser Weh valley proved impassable, and within twenty-four hours the 109th would itself dig in after suffering heavy casualties. Unable to advance without sustaining even more casualties, the 109th would spend the next five days occupying positions to the south and west of Hürtgen before being relieved by the 12th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division.[42]

Smoke rises from Vossenack in the distance as German artillery strikes the town, 5 December 1944.

What had the 109th achieved? The 1st Battalion had captured part of its objective but had failed to seize the crossroads that was a critical link in the Germans' supply route in the area. The 2d Battalion had occupied the bend in the Germeter-Hürtgen road but could never secure the high ground south of the village. The 3d Battalion never even approached its objective, having impaled itself in a minefield that no one in the regiment even knew existed until the battalion stumbled into it. With 1,275 killed, wounded, and missing in five days of combat, more than half of the regiment's assigned personnel had become casualties.[43]

To the south, the 110th Infantry was even less successful. The 2d and 3d Battalions met strong opposition from well-entrenched German units who forced them back to their original start positions. Thick minefields, the impassibility of mud-covered roads, and dense woods made forward movement almost impossible. The 110th would attack several more times over the course of the next ten days, but each attack failed. When the unit was finally relieved on 13 November, every officer in the regiment's rifle companies was either dead or wounded, and one battalion had only fifty-seven men left.[44]

In the center, the 2d Battalion, 112th Infantry, with an attached tank company from the 707th Tank Battalion, attacked east through Germeter and quickly captured the tiny and lightly defended village of Vossenack, which was about one city block wide and two thousand yards in length. Once the village was secured, the tank-infantry team occupied the ridge beyond the town by early afternoon. The 1st and 3d Battalions, 112th Infantry, attacked from Richelskaul into the woods below the Vossenack ridge but could not reach the Kall River trail due to intense German small-arms fire.[45]

Receiving reports at his command post from his regimental commanders at the front, Cota believed it was too early to be overly concerned with the lack of success on the first day. The weather had negated the use of air support for most of the day and the dense minefields near Hürtgen and Simonskall had proved troubling; he hoped the next day's attacks would be more successful.

Indeed, the next day did prove to be much better for the 28th Infantry Division. Colonel Peterson, the 112th commander, decided to push his 1st and 3d Battalions, with the latter in the lead, along the Vossenack ridge, now firmly in U.S. hands, to and beyond the Kall trail. After descending to and fording the Kall River, the infantrymen climbed the muddy and narrow trail until they entered Kommerscheidt, encountering only light resistance en route. By 1300 they had captured the village. Leaving the 1st Battalion to hold Kommerscheidt, the 3d Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Albert M. Flood, pushed forward to overcome a small and very surprised German force and capture Schmidt. Cota ordered Peterson to send the 1st Battalion forward to link up with the 3d Battalion and establish a much stronger defense, as he expected a typical German counterattack in response to the loss of key terrain. Colonel Peterson, however, recommended that a defense in depth vice placing two-thirds of the regiment forward on the Kall trail was more practicable. Cota agreed to this recommendation, and when the day ended the 112th had a battalion each in Vossenack, Kommerscheidt and Schmidt. Had Cota visited Schmidt, he would have realized the predicament in which Peterson had placed his units. Enclosed within a perimeter that formed a rough square of which each side was almost nine hundred yards long, Schmidt was too large an area for one battalion to defend properly. Had Cota seen the positions, he likely would not have reversed his original decision.[46]

Wet, from crossing the Kall River, and tired, with little sleep in the last seventy-two hours, the men of the 3d Battalion failed to dig proper entrenchments. When sixty antitank mines arrived at midnight, they were emplaced on top of the three hard-surfaced roads leading into Schmidt instead of being dug in. Even worse, no patrols were sent out to locate the enemy's positions nearby. No attempt was made to determine what the enemy might be planning to do. Had the 112th Infantry done any patrolling, it

would have found enemy units less than a mile east of Schmidt preparing to counterattack at first light.[47]

Back at Cota's command post "the atmosphere at division headquarters in Rott was jubilant. Success had come far more easily than Cota or any of his staff had expected."[48] Messages of congratulation poured in from the other corps and divisions along the 12th Army Group front. If Cota had reservations about the attack before the operation, they faded away when he received word that Schmidt had been captured. In his own words he felt like "a little Napoleon."[49] Had he known how precarious the situation was in Schmidt and along the Kall trail, neither Cota nor his staff would have been ready to celebrate quite so soon.

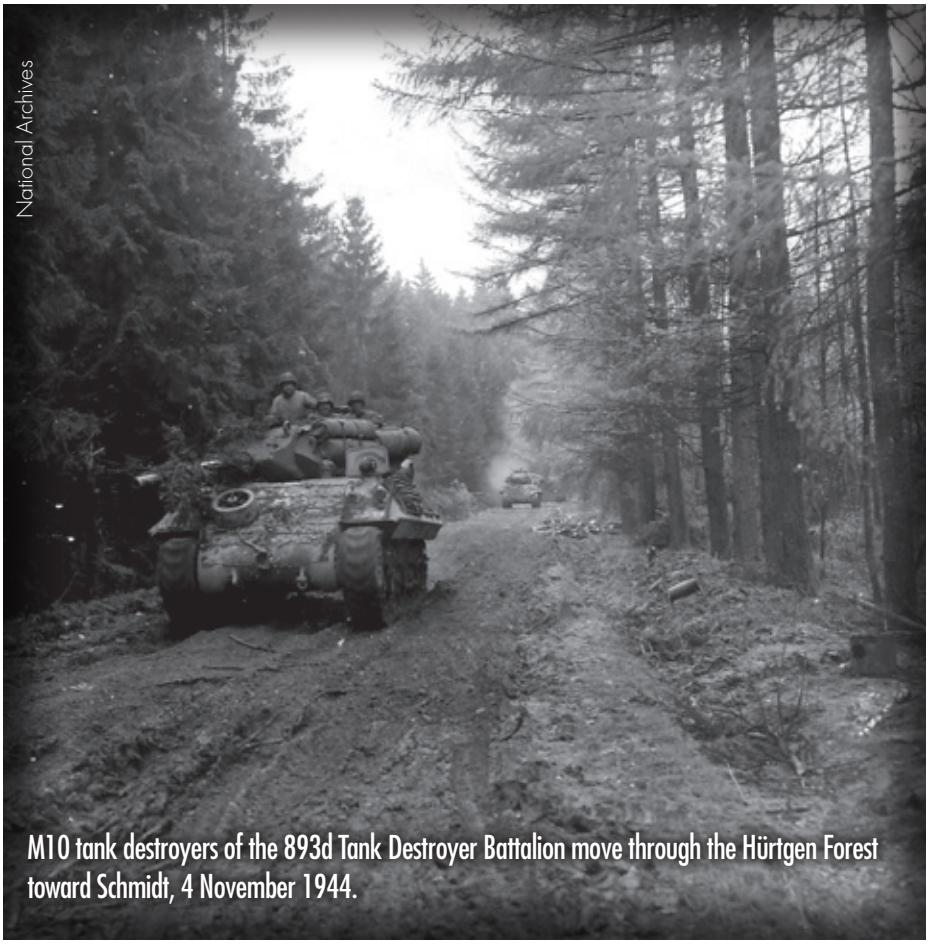
Cota could not have known, when his regiments began the attack on 2 November, that senior German commanders and staffs of the German *Army Group B*, the *Seventh Army*, and some of its subordinate corps and divisions, including the *LXXIV Corps* facing the 28th, were sequestered in a Cologne castle conducting a war game that included a theoretical American attack into the Hürtgen. When *Army Group B*'s commander, Field Marshal Walter Model, received word during this session that several U.S. regiments had attacked into the forest and were moving toward the village of Hürtgen, he directed the commander of the *LXXIV Corps* to return to his headquarters. The war game would continue, but Model now used actual reports from the front vice a fictional script. When Model learned that Vossenack had been captured, he directed an infantry unit from the *116th Panzer Division* to move into the sector. This force opposed the 109th's attack south of Hürtgen on 3 November.[50]

To make matters more difficult for Cota and his division, the weather was worsening, preventing the continuous air cover the 28th expected for its operations. German artillery, dug in along the Brandenberg-Bergstein ridge, had been extremely effective and caused many casualties, especially to the 109th Infantry. The enemy artillery also impacted the 28th Division's communications by repeatedly cutting phone lines connecting battalion, regiment, and division headquarters. U.S. artillery had failed to destroy the German artillery batteries and observation posts on the ridge.[51]

Company A, 707th Tank Battalion, commanded by Capt. Bruce M. Hostrup, left Vossenack late in the evening of 3 November to advance across the Kall. Less than a quarter of the way from the start line to the bottom of the gorge, the right shoulder of the trail consisted of a large rock outcropping. To the left there was a sharp drop-off into the gorge. At the narrowest part of the trail, Hostrup's tank began to slide in the thick mud and nearly went over the edge to certain death below. The company commander slowly reversed his course, convinced that the trail would not support tanks in its present condition. Directed to work through the night to improve the trail to accommodate tanks, the men of the 20th Engineer Combat Battalion made slow progress and not until early in the morning of 4 November did three U.S. tankers manage to maneuver their vehicles across the Kall River and advance to Kommerscheidt.[52]

With Schmidt captured and believing the 112th was in a viable and supportable defense in depth, Cota focused on his flanks. Viewing the road network in and around Steckenborn as vital to his ability to reinforce Schmidt, Cota decided to commit his division reserve—the 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry—to the south. The battalion set off after dawn on 4 November and within an hour became bogged down by a line of pillboxes not far from Raffelsbrand. Not only had Cota committed his reserve early in the battle to a supporting effort, he failed to identify another reserve force, although he had several tank destroyer and combat engineer battalions available that could have served in that role.[53]

Cota did receive some good news just after daybreak on 4 November, when he was informed that a tank platoon under the command of 1st Lt. Raymond E. Fleig had crossed the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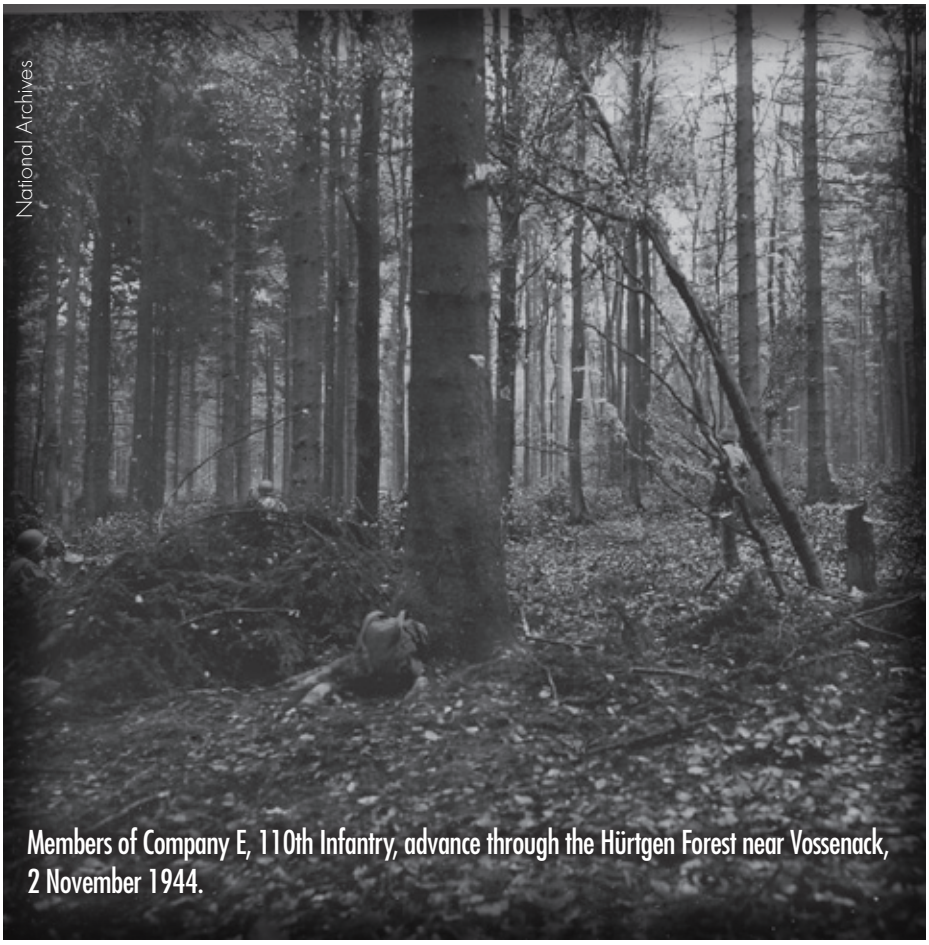
M10 tank destroyers of the 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion move through the Hürtgen Forest toward Schmidt, 4 November 1944.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Members of Company E, 110th Infantry, advance through the Hürtgen Forest near Vossenack, 2 November 1944.

Kall trail and was en route to Kommerscheidt. Much later he was given the bad news: the Kall trail was blocked by five disabled Sherman tanks. One had struck a mine, another had lunged part way off the trail, and three had thrown tracks. The trail had to be closed to all vehicular traffic until engineers could remove the damaged tanks and improve the trouble spots. It would remain blocked until the early morning hours of 5 November. There would be worse news for the division commander at the end of the day.[54]

At 0700, as Fleig led his three tanks to Kommerscheidt, he could hear the sounds of German artillery beginning to pound the village of Schmidt. For thirty minutes German shells rained on Flood's battalion there. Minutes later, members of the 3d Battalion observed a large formation of dismounted German infantry, supported by five to ten Mark IV and Mark V Panther tanks, advancing on Schmidt from the northeast. From the southwest, another German force advanced from Strauch. Tanks also approached Schmidt from the southeast.[55]

The German tanks drove around the easily identified antitank mines lying on top of the roads and fired their main guns into the few fighting positions dug by the men of the 3d Battalion, 112th Infantry. U.S. soldiers, unable to stop the German tanks and the killing of their comrades all around them, began to flee their positions. Some, including Colonel Flood, who was in no position to stop the rout, retreated to Kommerscheidt. At least one company fled into the woods southwest of the village, a German-controlled area where most of the unit's members would be captured in the next few days.[56]

Ninety minutes after the German counterattack began, the U.S. artillery finally struck back, but it was already too late. By 1130 the Germans had recaptured Schmidt, and the 3d Battalion, 112th Infantry, no longer existed as a cohesive unit. In his command post at Vossenack, the regimental commander, Colonel Peterson, learned at 0900 only that his Company L was retreating from Schmidt. Sometime between 0900 and 1000 Cota too received word of the attack on Schmidt, but he also was unaware of its magnitude. He directed his Assistant G–3, Lt. Col. Benjamin J. Trapani, to go to Schmidt and report to him what was happening. Trapani, however, failed in his effort to traverse the Kall trail. By now Cota had effectively lost control of the battle. His order that the 3d Battalion continue its attacks southwest of Schmidt toward Strauch and Steckenborn reached a hapless Colonel Flood in Kommerscheidt as his battalion's position in Schmidt was collapsing, demonstrating how unaware Cota had become of the true state of affairs.[57]

In the early afternoon, Cota received updated information leading him to believe that the Germans had recaptured the village. He directed his assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. George A. Davis, to go to the front with Colonel Trapani regardless of obstacles. He needed information to make informed decisions, and they would serve as his eyes and ears. Cota then turned his attention to his main supply route and directed the 1171st Engineer Combat Group commander, Col. Edmund K. Daley, to inform him what was happening on the Kall trail. Two hours later Daley notified Cota that five disabled tanks had blocked the trail. Cota then directed Daley and his engineers to clear the trail by first light the next day, and, if necessary, to push the damaged tanks off the trail and into the gorge. The trail had to be opened if the 112th Infantry was to be resupplied and reinforced. Cota knew that future success for his division depended on the viability of the main supply route.[58]

Nine miles east of Cota's command post, the Germans were not satisfied with just recapturing Schmidt. At 1400 they continued their attack by sending at least eight Mark IV tanks from the *16th Panzer Regiment*, one or more Panther tanks, and two hundred German infantry from the *1056th Infantry Regiment* toward

Kommerscheidt. The German tanks engaged in a close-in battle with the recently arrived Sherman tanks led by Lieutenant Fleig. Fleig's crew destroyed or disabled three enemy tanks, including a Panther, and a fourth tank was destroyed by one of his platoon's other crews. With improving weather, American P–47 fighters arrived and destroyed a fifth tank. The Germans then withdrew.[59]

It was after dark when General Davis contacted Cota via radio. He had plenty of bad news to report. Schmidt had been recaptured by a combination of German armor and infantry units. The 3d Battalion had suffered massive casualties and was no longer combat effective. Its commander was a nonbattle casualty, and his staff had been captured. The 1st Battalion in Kommerscheidt, with the assistance of three tanks, had repulsed a combined tank-infantry assault but expected another attack in the morning. Davis also confirmed that the Kall trail was blocked by disabled tanks.[60]

With this information Cota conducted an assessment of his division. In the north the 109th had failed to capture the village of Hürtgen but was holding its own. To the south the 110th, having received its third battalion, the division reserve, had captured the small hamlet of Simonskall but was still nearly two miles from its objective of Steckenborn. In the center, the 112th's 3d Battalion had been virtually destroyed and had lost Schmidt. The 1st Battalion was holding Kommerscheidt while the 2d Battalion held Vossenack. He also knew he had been out of touch with his regimental commanders for most of the day and yet his staff was still sending reports to corps headquarters that troop morale was high, losses were low, and most battalions were still attacking toward their objectives.[61]

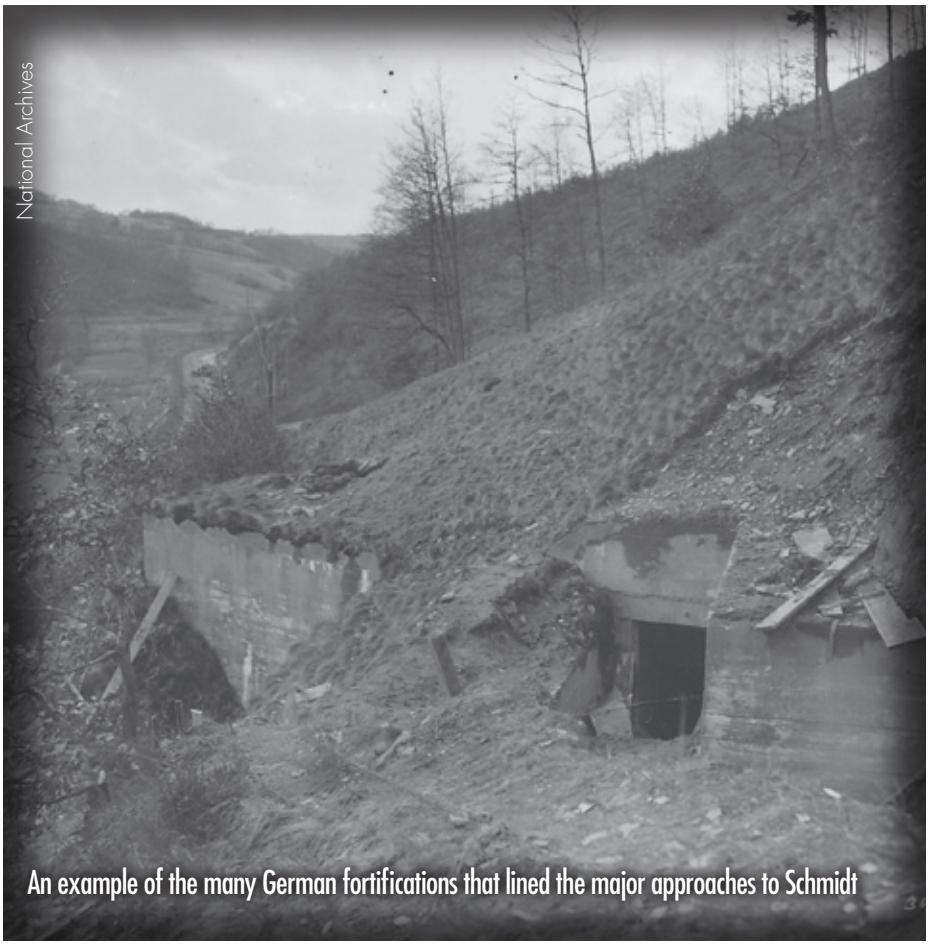
On Sunday morning, 5 November, shortly after first light, nine self-propelled tank destroyers and Captain Hostrup's six remaining tanks crossed the now reopened Kall trail gorge and made their way into Kommerscheidt. The engineers had cleared the trail just before dawn. What would have taken only a few hours had the engineers been prepared to sacrifice the disabled tanks and had they not been distracted by artillery bombardments had instead taken almost twenty-four hours of backbreaking work by both the engineers and tank crews.[62]

General Gerow arrived at Cota's headquarters early that same morning and received an update on the division's activities over the last twelve hours. Gerow must have been disappointed to learn that the Germans had recaptured Schmidt. Cota evidently promised to rectify the situation.[63]

When Gerow departed Rott, Cota contacted Colonel Peterson, who was now located with the 1st Battalion in Kommerscheidt. He directed him over the radio to take the 1st Battalion and recapture Schmidt. About the time Peterson received this order the Germans began their third attack on Kommerscheidt in two days. The attack failed due to the stubborn defense put up by the infantrymen of the 1st Battalion, some of Captain Hostrup's tanks, and the newly arrived self-propelled tank destroyers, aided by timely support from the P–47 fighters from the IX Tactical Air Command.[64]

Any thoughts of the 1st Battalion retaking Schmidt were totally unrealistic. As it was, the 112th was barely managing to hold onto Kommerscheidt. The division commander's failure to recognize this fact leads inexorably to the question of his location on the battlefield. The 28th Division's attack into the Hürtgen Forest was now entering its fourth day, and Cota had spent almost all of his time within the confines of his command post. This was very unlike the Dutch Cota who was the hero of Omaha Beach and St. Lô, the general who had earned the reputation of being a fighting general and who had consistently led from the front from Normandy to the Siegfried Line.

Cota usually made his decisions after he had visualized the tactical problem and made his assessment. To do this he would go up front with his lead elements, to the point of contact or close



An example of the many German fortifications that lined the major approaches to Schmidt

to it, but so far in his division's fight in the Hürtgen Forest, he had remained at his division command post, nine miles from where the men in his battalions where fighting and dying.

Around 1030 on 5 November, General Gerow returned to Cota's command post. With him were the First Army commander, General Hodges; his chief of staff, General Kean; and the VII Corps commander, General Collins. Cota must have been perplexed to see Collins. His corps was to have begun its attack that morning. Hodges informed Cota that he had postponed the VII Corps attack and wanted Cota to explain how his division had allowed the Germans to recapture Schmidt. Cota assured Hodges and his retinue that a plan was being drafted to retake Schmidt the following day. Cota could not have been happy that for the past four days his division had been the only Allied division attacking into Germany along the 150-mile Western front. Worse still was the fact the VII Corps attack had now been postponed indefinitely until the weather improved. Cota realized the Germans would continue to be able to concentrate their forces on the lone enemy division trying to take Schmidt.

Task Force Ripple

In the afternoon of 5 November, Cota decided that the 112th Infantry would need assistance if it was to recapture Schmidt, so he formed Task Force Ripple under the command of the 707th Tank Battalion commander, Lt. Col. Richard W. Ripple. The task force consisted of the 3d Battalion, 110th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. William Tait; Company C, 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion, and a platoon of Company B of the same battalion; and Companies A and D, 707th Tank Battalion. The 3d Battalion, 110th Infantry, was at less than 40 percent strength after taking heavy casualties in four days of fighting near Simonskall. It is hard to fathom how Cota, having received evidence that the Germans were reinforcing their units in and around Schmidt with more tanks and infantry, could have thought that an ad hoc formation consisting of an exhausted battalion of infantry, two understrength companies of tanks, and thirteen tank destroyers would, with the remnants of the 1st and 3d Battalions, 112th Infantry, be able to recapture the village.[65]

By 1200 that day Cota had already relieved Colonel Flood, whose 3d Battalion, 112th Infantry, had for the most part been destroyed in Schmidt the day before. One wonders if Hodges, who was renowned for relieving subordinates, had any influence on Cota's decision. Maj. Robert Hazlett, the 1st Battalion commander, took effective control of what was left of the 3d Battalion, when the 3d Battalion's new commander, Maj. Robert C. Christensen, decided to accept his orders.[66]

Along the Kall trail the situation went from good to bad to worse in just a few hours during the night of 5–6 November. German units began to infiltrate to and then sever the trail, thus cutting off the division's supply route to Kommerscheidt. Prior to the initial attack on 2 November, Cota's engineer, Colonel Daley, had assigned his engineer group's subordinate 20th Engineer Combat Battalion the mission to provide security along the trail, but it alone could not protect the trail. Had the division commander directed Daley to brief him on how that unit was handling its security mission, the confusion that occurred might have been avoided. Instead, only one squad of engineers guarded the stone bridge crossing the river, while a company was positioned around the trail at its entry into the forest near the woods southeast of Vossenack. These were insufficient. Only after dawn on 6 November did the engineer group commander learn that the Germans had gained control of the trail in several places and were preventing supplies from reaching the units in Kommerscheidt.[67]

Colonel Ripple linked up with his infantry support just before daylight on 6 November. As they moved along through Vossenack toward the Kall trail, they learned that the Germans had taken control of that route. Ripple ordered his men to make their way instead down a firebreak that paralleled the trail. Minutes later, after much exertion, Ripple and his three hundred infantrymen entered the woods, and a meeting engagement occurred with the reconnaissance battalion of the *116th Panzer Regiment*. Ripple and his men fought through the enemy formation as they moved down amid the forest, crossed the gorge to the far side, and then made their way to Kommerscheidt, losing two officers and fifteen enlisted men en route. Twelve hours later the engineers would report that Ripple's attack had cleared the trail of Germans, and it was open again.[68]

When Ripple's force arrived in the village they were exhausted. As Ripple, Tait, and his subordinate commanders were conducting a leader's reconnaissance before the start of the attack, German snipers wounded Tait and three other officers from his battalion. Colonel Peterson met with Ripple and both agreed there was no chance of success given the condition of the men. Peterson canceled the attack and ordered the infantry battalion to dig in along the tree line behind Kommerscheidt.[69]

While the Germans were focusing their attention on the Americans in Kommerscheidt, they had not forgotten about those who had occupied Vossenack. Lt. Col. Theodore S. Hatzfeld's 2d Battalion, 112th Infantry, occupied open, exposed positions along the Vossenack ridge, less than a mile from the German artillery batteries concentrated on the Brandenberg-Bergstein ridge. Artillery had pounded Hatzfeld's battalion steadily for three days and in the process had inflicted many casualties. While Task Force Ripple was encountering the enemy reconnaissance battalion along the Kall trail, however, the German artillery was suspiciously quiet, leading the men of Hatzfeld's battalion to fear an imminent ground attack. When intense small-arms fire then broke the early morning stillness, word spread through the U.S. positions that German infantrymen were attacking through a gap between two companies of the 2d Battalion. The cumulative effect of the earlier artillery and more recent small-arms fire shattered the

nerves of a group of soldiers, and as one soldier left his position he was followed by several more, then a squad left its positions, and more and more men began to flee.[70]

Within minutes a mass of soldiers abandoned their fighting positions and streamed toward the rear. Some officers and noncommissioned officers tried, without success, to stop the rout. Chaos ensued. Several company commanders and platoon leaders, seeing men on their flanks withdrawing, ordered their formations to withdraw. Initially, the tanks and tank destroyers supporting the 2d Battalion remained in place, but, having lost their infantry support, their operators eventually started their engines and withdrew as well. When the German artillery again pounded the 2d Battalion's positions, it caused even more casualties with men in the open. Capt. John Pruden, who had assumed command of the 2d Battalion the previous day when Colonel Hatzfeld broke down, attempted to halt the fleeing men. He and his small command group stopped nearly seventy men and formed a new defensive line at the battalion command post, just west of the village church. American artillery began to shell the German positions, but several rounds fell short, landing near the command post, and they killed or wounded several of Pruden's group.[71] When the 28th Division's G–3 recorded this incident, he wrote, "2d Battalion received very heavy and concentrated artillery fire, withdrew to reorganize and then regained their original positions."[72] The reality was the 2d Battalion had been routed and was no longer a cohesive combat unit. Now, two of the three battalions of the 112th Infantry, Cota's main effort, were combat ineffective.

General Davis returned to Vossenack after dark and met with Lt. Col. Carl J. Isley, commander of the 146th Engineer Battalion. He told Isley his battalion's mission was to remain in Vossenack and defend the main supply route to Kommerscheidt. A combined force of infantry, engineers, and tank destroyers then held most of the village, but the Germans controlled the eastern portion and within hours they would renew their efforts to capture the remainder. During the night of 6 November there was continuous fighting in and around the church in Vossenack. At one point, German infantry occupied the tower and basement of the church, while U.S. engineers held the main floor.[73]

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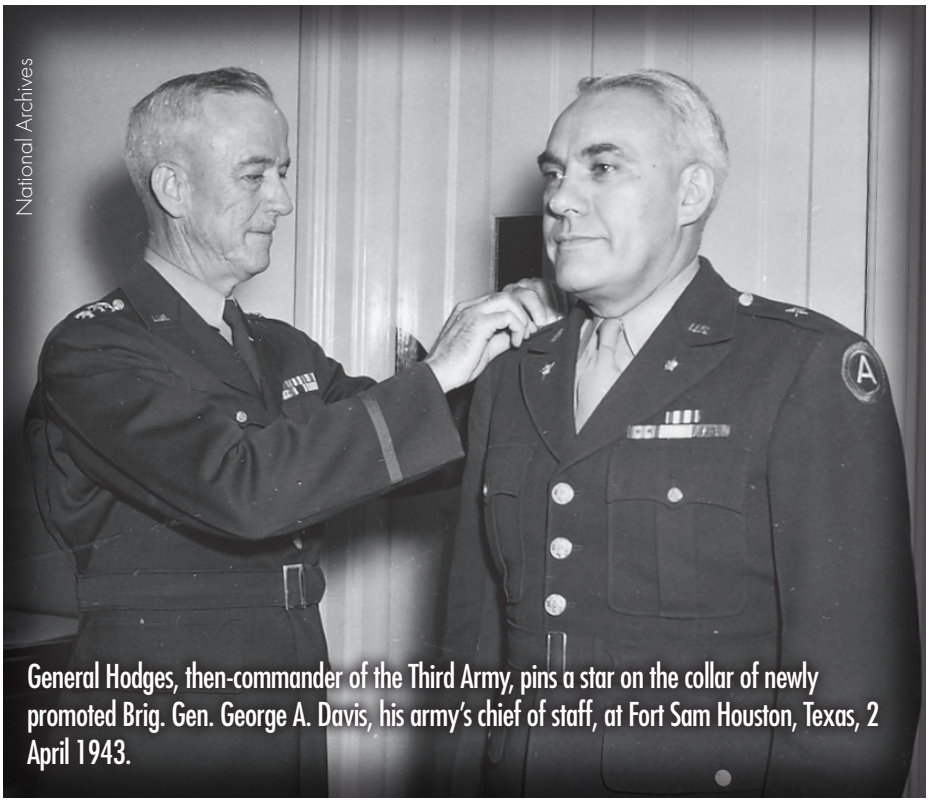
A U.S. Army M29 cargo carrier pulls a jeep out of the mud near Zweifall, Germany, in the Hürtgen Forest, 22 November 1944.

Early in the afternoon of Tuesday, 7 November, General Cota left his division command post in his jeep and made his only recorded visit to the forward positions of his divisional units during the Vossenack-Kommerscheidt-Schmidt battle. Cota reached Vossenack shortly after 1400 and met with Captain Pruden and Colonel Isley. He informed them that he was working to get reinforcements into Vossenack to relieve Pruden's infantry that night. The engineers would remain. General Cota spent thirty minutes at the Vossenack command post. Soldiers observed the division commander and felt better knowing he was with them. He was well liked within the division and had earned the trust of his men. Not one artillery shell landed in Vossenack the entire time that Cota was in the village, an uncommon lull. Five minutes after Cota departed for his command post, the German artillery fire began once more, and a shell landed in the exact spot Cota's jeep had occupied only minutes before.[74]

General Cota had notified the V Corps commander on 6 November about the events taking place in Vossenack. He had no reserve, but two engineer battalions were reinforcing the infantry in the village. If the Germans captured Vossenack and then moved toward Germeter, Cota warned, they could effectively cut the 28th in half. General Gerow responded by directing the commander of the 4th Infantry Division to send a regiment to the Hürtgen area to relieve the 109th Infantry that night. When notified he would be aided by the 12th Infantry from the 4th Infantry Division, Cota planned, with Gerow's consent, to keep the 1st Battalion of the 109th in Germeter and to move its 2d Battalion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General Hodges, then-commander of the Third Army, pins a star on the collar of newly promoted Brig. Gen. George A. Davis, his army's chief of staff, at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, 2 April 1943.

into Vossenack to relieve the remnants of the 112th, to push the German forces out of the village, and to continue on to recapture the ridge. The 3d Battalion of the 109th would take up positions on the southern slope of the Vossenack ridge, from where they would endeavor to protect the main supply route along the Kall trail.[75]

Task Force Davis

The next morning, 7 November, proved to be the decisive day for the 28th Infantry Division in its battle in the Hürtgen Forest. Realizing Task Force Ripple would not be able to recapture Schmidt, Cota met with his assistant division commander and directed the formation of Task Force Davis under his leadership with the sole mission of attacking and recapturing Schmidt. The new task force would consist of some elements of the unsuccessful Task Force Ripple and of the 1st Battalion, 109th Infantry, which had been replaced by elements of the 12th Infantry the night before. After the remaining combat effectives in the battalion had been given a hot meal and issued gloves and overcoats, the unit was inundated with two hundred new replacements. The other elements of Task Force Davis would include the 1st and 3d Battalions, 112th Infantry; the 3d Battalion, 110th Infantry; Companies A and C, 707th Tank Battalion; and Companies B and C, 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion. Most of these units had been assigned to the ineffectual Task Force Ripple.[76]

Once again the formation looked good on paper but every unit in Task Force Davis had suffered heavy losses over the last five days of fighting. Only the 1st Battalion, 109th Infantry, had received replacements, and, as they had been integrated at the last moment, these added little to its effectiveness. What neither Cota nor Davis recognized, but should have, was that the battalion was in total disarray. The battalion staff had been decimated; all had become casualties, except for one officer. The four line companies were at little more than 50 percent strength. The 1st and 3d Battalions, 112th Infantry, were equally in no condition to launch a counterattack on Schmidt. This was the main reason Colonel Peterson had canceled the proposed attack by Task Force Ripple the day before. The armored units were in just as bad shape. Only two M10 tank destroyers were still operational in Kommerscheidt and the new Shermans assigned to the task force would have to be pulled off the Vossenack ridge. With the condition of the Kall trail, there was no guarantee they would even be able to reach Kommerscheidt.[77]

General Davis pushed, prodded, and yelled, but too little avail. There was no way his task force would be able to maneuver and fight through Vossenack and Kommerscheidt, traversing the Kall valley on the way, and then recapture Schmidt. As Cecil Currey wrote in his book *Follow Me and Die: The Destruction of an American Division in World War II*, "the concept was unrealistic from the beginning, refusing to take existing conditions into account—a desperate effort by two divisional generals under pressure from Corps and Army superiors to accomplish an impossible task."[78] The attack planned for Task Force Davis was postponed nearly twenty-four hours when the 3d Battalion, 112th Infantry, became lost in the forest and could not provide the necessary security for the Kall trail. When General Davis and Col. Gustin M. Nelson, who would become the commander of the 112th Infantry, found the missing battalion on 8 November, they brought it to the Kall River. Only after Company L, 109th Infantry, crossed the river and was battered by the German units there did Davis cancel the attack.[79]

While Cota and Davis were planning Task Force Davis, the 146th Engineer Battalion, supported by tanks from the 70th Tank Battalion, advanced behind an intense artillery barrage, fighting house to house to clear the *156th Panzer Grenadier Regiment*, an element of the *116th Panzer Division*, out of Vossenack. In nearly eight hours of intense street fighting on 7 November, the Germans were driven from the town, except for part of the eastern outskirts, leaving behind more than a hundred fifty killed and wounded.[80]

In Kommerscheidt, the Americans huddled in their foxholes while a cold rain fell. A fierce artillery barrage swept through the village for more than an hour, setting many houses on fire and stunning many of the U.S.

defenders with its intensity. Then, through the mist, at least one and possibly two German infantry battalions, supported by at least fifteen tanks, appeared moving down the road from Schmidt. An intense tank battle ensued in which the Germans had six tanks destroyed and the Americans lost two Shermans and three tank destroyers. German infantry, supported by perhaps ten tanks, stormed into the village and began to overrun the U.S. fighting positions, inflicting many casualties. First individually and then as groups, the Americans began to pull back. Unlike the panic-stricken routs at Schmidt and Vossenack, this was an organized withdrawal back to their reserve positions in the tree line behind the village.[81]

Told he had received an order to report to the division command post, Peterson now turned his command over to Colonel Ripple and made his way back down the Kall trail. In doing so he was wounded twice and had to cross the bitterly cold river several times to evade the attackers. Some engineers found the wounded Peterson and took him to an aid station on a stretcher. When a battered Peterson finally reached the command post, Cota believed the regimental commander had abandoned his men in the field. Probably because of a lack of sleep and food, and most especially the enormous stress he was under from the misfortunes of the last few days' events, the division commander collapsed to the floor.[82]

Moments later Cota revived. He asked why Peterson was not in Kommerscheidt with his men. Peterson explained he had received a transcribed radio message instructing him to return and brief the division commander on the situation. Cota knew of no such message. Cota, however, had already decided to relieve Peterson of his command, and he was evacuated.[83]

Colonel Ripple, now in command of the U.S. forces in Kommerscheidt, had only two tank destroyers and three tanks operational. (Commanding one of them was the indefatigable Lieutenant Fleig). The five armored vehicles provided support while the infantry pulled back, and then they too withdrew into the trees. Two of the tanks were immobilized in the process. Cota was then notified that the 112th had lost Kommerscheidt and had occupied a defensive line northwest of the village.[84]

Cota and Davis met late in the day of 7 November and discussed the situation. Kommerscheidt was in German hands, and the enemy was still attempting to push the engineers out of Vossenack. Maj. James C. Ford Jr., commander of the 1st Battalion, 109th Infantry, had been killed that afternoon in Vossenack. Cota and Davis were both informed that German units had again interdicted the Kall trail and inflicted heavy casualties on the engineer units attempting to secure and maintain it. Davis agreed with his division commander when Cota recommended he pull all units forward of the Kall River back across it.[85]

Cota realized any hopes of recapturing Schmidt were gone. Now he needed to save his division, or what was left of it. He contacted the corps commander and requested that he be allowed to pull his forward elements back to a defensive line west of the Kall River. Gerow relayed the request to General Hodges. In a highly unorthodox move, Hodges then contacted General Davis to get his assessment of the situation. Davis had served as chief of staff of Third Army when Hodges had commanded the organization in Texas in 1943, and Davis had earned his commander's respect. But Hodges evidently did not have full confidence in Gerow and Cota. At 2310 hours, after General Hodges had also discussed the situation with General Gerow, the corps commander called Cota and told him that Hodges "was very dissatisfied with [the] way things are going—All we seem to be doing is lose ground." Hodges did, however, authorize Cota to pull his forward elements back beyond the Kall. Cota received this authorization with several conditions; the 28th must hold its positions on the southern slope of the Vossenack ridge and reinforce the 12th Infantry's attack around the town of Hürtgen. Cota gave the latter mission to three companies of the 1st Battalion, 109th Infantry, since that battalion had suffered the fewest casualties in the division to that point. Nevertheless, the companies had a combined strength of only 190 men. For them the battle would churn on until 19 November, when they too would be relieved.[86]

On Wednesday, 8 November, a commander's conference was convened at

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A battle-scarred vista in the Hürtgen Forest, 14 December 1944

the 28th Division's command post at Rott. Generals Eisenhower, Bradley, Hodges, Kean, and Gerow had come to the front to inspect the conditions, and, because the 28th was the only division along the entire 12th Army Group front engaged with the enemy, they stopped to see Cota. Eisenhower greeted Cota saying, "Well Dutch, it looks like you've got a bloody nose." Cota's reaction has not been recorded, but one can only imagine what he was thinking after receiving this comment from the supreme Allied commander. His division was in the process of fighting a vicious battle on the most restrictive terrain he had ever faced and in the worst weather conditions he and his unit had ever experienced.[87]

Eisenhower and Bradley did not stay long, probably sensing that the First Army commander wanted to talk to Cota alone. They would have been right. For the second time in less than twenty-four hours, Hodges informed Cota that he was "extremely disappointed" in his performance.[88] Even worse, in front of the corps commander, Hodges told Cota that he had lost control of his division and had done little to rectify the situation. Gerow stood by and did not intervene. As Hodges left, he took Gerow aside and suggested to him that he should consider relieving Cota; Gerow did not act on this advice.[89]

That evening, Cota called all of his regimental and battalion commanders to a briefing at the division command post. He directed that a minefield be established east of Vossenack to separate the U.S. and German forces. General Davis spoke up and stated the engineers who were serving as infantry could emplace the minefield during daylight. The next day they began the task of laying 5,000 mines while protected by the 2d Battalion, 109th Infantry. As Cota and his commanders were conducting their meeting at Rott, German engineers blew up the stone bridge over the Kall River, cutting the division's former main supply route.[90]

General Eisenhower meets with General Cota at his headquarters in Rott, 8 November 1944.

For all intents and purposes, the 28th Infantry Division's battle in the Hürtgen Forest ended that day. Offensive operations were over, but for the next week the division would attempt to consolidate its positions west of the Kall and to gain accountability of the hundreds of missing soldiers who were scattered throughout the division sector. After nightfall on 8 November, the U.S. troops still in Kommerscheidt pulled back across the Kall River under the new commander of the 112th Infantry, Colonel Nelson, an experienced officer who had recently arrived from the 5th Armored Division. More than 2,200 soldiers from the regiment had attacked across this river since 2 November. Six days later just over 300 men returned.[91]

The fighting may have been over for the men of the 28th, but the pain and suffering would continue. As Robert Miller wrote in his biography of Cota, "The weather conditions got even worse as the temperature dropped, and heavy snow began to cover the forest floor. A combination of cold and wet weather brought on an epidemic of trench foot. . . . The fighting may have lessened, but for the soldiers in the Forest, there was only increasing wretchedness, misery, and despair."[92]

Between 14 and 19 November, the 8th Infantry Division replaced the 28th Division, and Cota's organization was sent forty miles southwest to occupy a quiet sector in Luxembourg, where it would begin the process of refitting and retraining. When the 28th was pulled out of the Hürtgen, it was also reassigned from General Gerow's V Corps to the VIII Corps under Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton. A shell of its former self, the division with its attachments had suffered some 6,184 casualties. The 112th Infantry, which made the division's main effort in the attack to capture Schmidt, had 2,093 casualties out of a total strength of some 3,100 men. Of these, 167 were listed as killed, 431 as missing (almost all of whom were later confirmed as killed in action), 719 wounded, 232 captured, and another 544 as nonbattle casualties, a category that included combat exhaustion. There were also heavy casualties in the two armored units that supported the infantry. The 707th Tank Battalion lost thirty-one of its fifty M4 Sherman tanks and the 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion lost sixteen of its twenty-four M10 tank destroyers. Among the division's senior infantry officers, the commander of one of its three regiments had been wounded, while two battalion commanders suffered from combat fatigue and had to be replaced during the battle, a third was badly wounded

by a sniper, and a fourth was killed in action. At the time of the 28th Infantry Division's relief, four majors and a captain were commanding infantry battalions. The division had a staggering 40 percent casualty rate, with even higher percentages in the infantry regiments.[93]

After the 28th was pulled out of the Hürtgen Forest, the V Corps commander directed his staff to conduct a study to analyze why the division had failed. Their findings found little fault with the overall plan and concluded that the tactical planning had been sound under the circumstances.[94] This was not surprising since the V Corps commander and his staff had directed how the 28th Division would assault the Hürtgen Forest. The V Corps operation had three primary goals: to protect the southern flank of VII Corps, to provide additional maneuver space and supply routes to the VII Corps for its planned 5 November attack, and to draw enemy reserves away from VII Corps prior to its attack. In accomplishing the third goal, the 28th suffered enormous casualties and was virtually destroyed.

The staff study attributed the defeat of the 28th Division to the bad weather that hampered both maneuver and air support throughout the 28th's attack and subsequent combat operations, the inadequate and unprotected main supply route, insufficient reserves, an inability to neutralize the Brandenberg-Bergstein ridge, and the broad frontage and divergent missions assigned to the division.[95] Not emphasized in the report was the glaring fact that thirteen U.S. artillery battalions from V Corps and the 28th Division had failed to suppress, neutralize, or destroy their German counterparts.[96] The VII Corps commander, General Collins, believed that this was the major reason for the 28th's failure in the Hürtgen: "My personal judgment was that the reason for not taking Schmidt was they didn't use their artillery fire as well as it could have been used."[97]

The U.S. artillery supporting Cota's division did in fact fire an enormous quantity of shells—before the initial infantry attack on 2 November, the artillery fired 34,000 rounds in less than sixty minutes—but there were also several critical periods when they fired very little.[98] During the German counterattack that recaptured Schmidt on 4 November, U.S. artillery did not fire until ninety minutes after the fight began. The poor radio and wire communications between the infantry, their forward observers, and the artillery headquarters coordinating the fire support was found to have broken down at several critical periods of the battle. The German artillery along the Brandenberg-Bergstein ridge proved to be the major combat multiplier for the German defenders and many of the men of the Bloody Bucket division argued in interviews conducted after the battle that the intensity of enemy artillery fire was the reason for the loss of Schmidt.[99] General Gerow believed that the division artillery commander failed to coordinate and synchronize his artillery support properly with the maneuver commander, Cota, and that like Cota, he lost control of his assets early in the battle.[100]

In the weeks after the battle, Cota analyzed what he could have done better to have shaped his division for success. His efforts to command and control the division had not been what he would have liked. With his three regiments attacking in three different directions, communication had been poor at best. The terrain, both the numerous valleys and thick fir trees, especially in and around the Kall trail, had severely impacted radio transmissions, impeding the forward units' efforts to keep their higher headquarters informed of what they were encountering at Schmidt and Kommerscheidt. Throughout the first week of the battle Cota had spent the majority of his time in the division command post. From there he was able to supervise a staff he had inherited from a division commander who had been relieved. But even his presence in the command post and the guidance he provided to his staff officers, he came to realize, had done little to improve their performance. Much of the confusion at headquarters was caused by the chaos of battle, but that did not excuse the numerous inaccurate reports sent to V Corps and First Army. Cota must have also questioned himself as to his location during the battle. By spending most of the battle at his command post, he was unable to visualize, direct, or assess what was taking place along the Kall trail, at Schmidt, Kommerscheidt, or Vossenack. This reduced his ability to influence the events taking place there.

Where should the division commander locate himself during a battle? Army doctrine, then and now, states the commander should place himself where he can best influence the operation's progress. At the division level, that is normally the division's command post, where the focus is on obtaining up-to-date information to assist the commander in making decisions and planning operations. That said, the commander cannot isolate himself from events. To visualize, assess, and lead, the commander must go forward to where he can meet with subordinate commanders and soldiers face to face. The commander must build his command-and-control systems so he can position himself wherever he can best command without losing the situational understanding that enables him to respond to opportunities and changing circumstances.[101]

Why did Cota only visit the front lines once in the first five days of the battle? While one cannot know whether his presence forward with the main effort would have changed the outcome of the battle for Schmidt, had he gone to Schmidt after its capture on the second day of the battle, he undoubtedly would not have tolerated his soldiers' failure to dig in or to bury the mines instead of placing them clearly in sight on top of the roads leading into the village. Cota would have demanded more emphasis on coordinating artillery support to the 3d Battalion, 112th Infantry, had he received a briefing in Schmidt from the battalion's commander, Colonel Flood, about how he was going to use artillery and air support to assist him when the Germans inevitably counterattacked after losing the village and its key road network.

General Cota accepts a home-baked cookie from Sgt. Joseph B. Bunch as he chats with members of his division in France, 9 February 1945.

After the battle, Cota realized he needed to make some changes to his staff. The fighting in the Hürtgen had identified "certain weak links in the training of the Division, both tactical and command and staff," Cota concluded.[102] He started by replacing his chief of staff, Col. Charles H. Valentine. He and Valentine had not bonded into the team he thought they needed to be. Cota was disappointed that their relationship was nothing like the one he and Terry Allen had built in the 1st Infantry Division.[103] Cota knew that some of General Hodges' and Gerow's displeasure with him had been over the confused state of affairs within his command post and especially his operations section. When the Germans had counterattacked and recaptured Schmidt, it took nearly half a day before the division staff realized what had happened, and Cota himself was in the dark for most of that time. Thus he replaced his G–3, Col. Thomas E. Briggs, a Pennsylvania National Guard officer. Surprisingly, the division artillery commander, Brig. Gen. Basil H. Perry, remained in command, even though both the V and VII Corps commanders believed that Perry's failure to adequately coordinate and synchronize the fire support for the division had played a major role in the division's failure. Perry was a West Point classmate of Cota and a fellow New Englander, and he evidently retained Cota's confidence.[104]

Cota recruited or received several excellent regimental and battalion commanders to replace those he lost during the battle; one was Lt. Col. James E. Rudder, who had led the 2d Ranger Battalion ashore on D-Day against Pointe du Hoe. He would train and build the 109th Infantry into one of the best regiments in the European theater. In February 1945, when General Davis was transferred to Seventh Army headquarters, Cota selected as his new assistant division commander the popular Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Sebree, who had led the troops of the Americal Division on Guadalcanal.[105]

Both Generals Hodges and Gerow must bear much of the responsibility for the plan that had the 28th attacking in three different directions into the Hürtgen. Gerow dictated three objectives to Cota: a regiment must secure a line of departure north of Germeter to enable a future attack to the northeast; a regiment must attack south to capture Steckenborn and Strauch and the roads in that area that would provide a better logistical network; and a regiment must capture Schmidt. The first two were supporting efforts, and yet two-thirds of Cota's infantry had to make them, leaving only one regiment to attack and capture the division's main objective. Assigning another unit from the corps, perhaps the 12th Infantry of the 4th Infantry Division, to attack and capture the village of Hürtgen and giving the 4th Cavalry Group the task of capturing the Rollesbroich-Steckenborn-Strauch road network in the south would have made more tactical sense. Without these other assignments, Cota could have attacked Schmidt with three regiments instead of three battalions. One regiment could have attacked Vossenack while the other two would have crossed the Kall trail to capture first Kommerscheidt and then Schmidt. More importantly, forces of this size would have been better able to hold the three villages from counterattack and to protect the Kall trail from interdiction. Had V Corps shaped the battle in this way and then given Cota simply the mission to capture Schmidt, allowing him and his staff leeway to write the order, the outcome might have been vastly different.

Instead, by attacking in three directions simultaneously, Cota's regiments were isolated and thus could neither communicate with nor support one another. Once his division had captured Schmidt, Cota did not have the strength to hold it. By directing that Cota split his forces, his superiors robbed him of unity of command. Indeed, under the corps commander's plan, at least five of the nine principles of war were violated: objective, mass, maneuver, unity of command, and simplicity.[106] Cota pointed most of this out to Gerow before the attack was launched, but his arguments were ignored.

Had Hodges committed the VII Corps to attack in at least rough synchrony with Cota's division, that move would have taken some pressure off the 28th, as the Germans would have been forced to disperse their forces in response. Hodges was also well aware that German artillery was dominating the 28th, but he failed to appreciate the casualties the division was suffering and their impact on the division's ability to continue fighting. On 8 November, Major Sylvan wrote,

> Reports from the 28th indicate that never has enemy artillery along our front been so heavy, but the General insists that the battalions cannot be properly deployed or dug-in. He said that no matter how heavy enemy artillery was, casualties would not be high nor would ground be lost. He is rather worried tonight over the general situation since full employment of his other divisions in the drive towards the Rhine rested to a certain extent upon the success of the 28th and it is possible that there may be some personnel changes made.[107]

Hodges was looking to cast blame away from him, and he focused on his two subordinate commanders, Gerow and Cota.

Thanks in part to Gerow's and Cota's battlefield performance prior to the Hürtgen Forest, Gerow would continue to lead V Corps until January 1945, when he would assume command of the Fifteenth Army, and Cota would remain in command of the 28th Division until the war ended. Cota, having learned much from his experience in the Hürtgen, soon reinvigorated both the division's staff and its regimental leadership. Newly acquired field-grade officers with much operational experience, including Col. Jesse L. Gibney and Colonel Rudder, greatly assisted Cota in rebuilding the division into a combat effective unit in a short period of time.[108]

The 28th Division suffered very heavy losses once more during the opening phase of the German attack through the Ardennes from 16 to 19 December, but Cota managed to rally the remnants of the division near Neufchâteau, Belgium. On 24 December, he met with Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr., who informed him that the 28th had been transferred to his Third Army and that he, known as Old Blood and Guts to his troops, was more than happy to have the Bloody Bucket division in his army.[109]

In late January and early February 1945, the division assisted the Seventh Army in the elimination of the Colmar Pocket in northeastern France between the Vosges Mountains and the Rhine. Moving subsequently to the Cologne area along the Rhine, Cota and the 28th were assigned to the Fifteenth Army and given occupation duties even before the war in Europe had concluded. At the end of July, the division redeployed by ship. It landed at Boston harbor four days before the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. A week later, the war in the Pacific was over. The 28th assembled at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, where the unit was inactivated on 13 December 1945. Cota had hoped to remain on active duty and be promoted to lieutenant general. With the war over and the Army already going through an enormous drawdown, he was ordered to take a physical. At age fifty-two, he was found to have an irregular heartbeat and a mild form of diabetes and was directed to retire. After the war, he became heavily involved in civil-defense work for the city of Philadelphia and was extremely active in veterans affairs. He died on 4 October 1971 at the age of seventy-eight in Wichita, Kansas. He was buried beside his wife Connie at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.[110]

Today, except for within the 28th Infantry Division, the hero of Omaha Beach and St. Lô is largely forgotten. The fighting general, whose division fought from Normandy to the Rhine, can teach us much about organizational stewardship and leadership in combat. Though his division suffered heavy casualties during two weeks of the most difficult combat conditions imaginable, it was rebuilt to continue fighting until final victory was achieved. Maj. Gen. Norman "Dutch" Cota should be remembered for his heroic leadership, the example he set for others to emulate, and the lessons that can be learned when things do not go right in combat.

Notes

1. Gerald Astor, *The Bloody Forest, Battle for the Huertgen: September 1944–January 1945* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 2000), pp. 355–56, provides this chronology and casualty total. Charles B. MacDonald, *The Siegfried Line Campaign*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1963), pp. 492–93, says that "for all practical purposes" the battle ended in December 1944 after 23,000 men of the U.S. First Army were killed, wounded, captured, or declared missing, with another 8,000 succumbing to combat exhaustion and the elements.

2. Of the dozen or so books written specifically on the Battle of the Huertgen Forest, the four most valuable are Charles B. MacDonald and Sidney T. Mathews, *Three Battles: Arnaville, Altuzzo, and Schmidt*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1952); Charles B. MacDonald, *The Battle of the Huertgen Forest* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1963); Edward G. Miller, *A Dark and Bloody Ground: The Huertgen Forest and the Roer River Dams, 1944–1945* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 1995); and Astor, *Bloody Forest*. The best book on the 28th Infantry Division in the Hürtgen Forest is Cecil B. Currey, *Follow Me and Die: The Destruction of an American Division in World War II* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984).

3. Robert A. Miller, *Division Commander: A Biography of Major General Norman D. Cota* (Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Company, 1989), pp. 12–19.

4. Ibid., pp. 20–21.

5. Ibid., pp. 21–25; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy*, 9 vols., 3d ed. (Boston, 1891–1950), 6: 1892, 7: 1203.

6. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 24–30.

7. Ibid., pp. 30–33; Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 7: 1204, 8: 333.

8. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 33–38.

9. Ibid., pp. 40, 72–73; Thomas W. Dixon, "Terry Allen," *Army* 28 (April 1978): 58–59; Bryce F. Denno, "Allen and Huebner: Contrast in Command," *Army* 34 (June 1984): 64–65; James Scott Wheeler, *The Big Red One: America's Legendary 1st Infantry Division from World War I to Desert Storm* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), pp. 136–37.

10. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 50–56; Wheeler, *Big Red One*, pp. 141–63.

11. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 62–64; Stephen C. McGeorge, "Seeing the Battlefield: Brigadier General Norman D. Cota's 'Bastard Brigade' at Omaha Beach," *Studies in Battle Command, By the Faculty, Combat Studies Institute* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army

Command and General Staff College, 1995), pp. 106–08.

12. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 72–73; Joseph Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead: The 29th Infantry Division in Normandy* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1989), pp. 52–53.

13. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 77–78; Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead*, pp. 121–22.

14. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 1–11, quote, p. 11; Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead*, pp. 133, 135–38; Gordon Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1951), pp. 318, 324.

15. Joseph Balkoski, *Omaha Beach* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2004), p. 197; Henry S. Glassman, *"Lead the Way, Rangers": A History of the Fifth Ranger Battalion* (Munich, Germany: F. Bruckmann, 1945).

16. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 81–90; Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1961), pp. 166–72.

17. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 92–93; Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 511.

18. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 92–95.

19. Ibid., pp. 97–98; Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, pp. 579–80, 622.

20. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 99–100.

21. Astor, *Bloody Forest*, p. 3.

22. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 102–04.

23. Ibid., pp. 103–05; MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, pp. 45–49; Edward G. Miller and David T. Zabecki, "Tank Battle in Kommerscheidt," *World War II* 15 (November 2000): 43.

24. Miller, *Division Commander,* p. 106.

25. Ibid., p. 107.

26. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, p. 51; Daniel P. Bolger, "Zero Defects: Command Climate in First Army, 1944–45," *Military Review* 71 (May 1991): 70–73.

27. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, p. 4; Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, pp. 12–13; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 47–49; Karel Margry, "The Battle of the Hürtgen Forest," *After the Battle* 18, no. 71 (August 1991): 1–35. The last is a most helpful guide to the area where the fighting took place.

28. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, pp. 27–28; Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, pp. 9–10.

29. Miller, *Division Commander,* pp. 112–13; Bolger, "Zero Defects," pp. 69–71.

30. Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944–1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), p. 366.

31. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, pp. 87–89; Miller, *Division Commander,* pp. 112–14.

32. Miller, *Division Commander,* p. 113.

33. Michael D. Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944–1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), p. 180; MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, pp. 89–90; Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 114.

34. Miller, *Division Commander,* p. 117; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, p. 366.

35. Miller, *Division Commander,* p. 116; Department of Defense, Office of Public Information, News Branch, Biography of Daniel Bursk Strickler, Dec 1955, in General Officer Biographical files, Historical Resources Branch, U.S. Army Center of Military History. Strickler would command the 28th Infantry Division from December 1947 to December 1952. He also served as lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania from 1947 to 1951. He retired from the Army in 1957 as a lieutenant general. See also Richard Severo, "Lieut. Gen. Daniel Strickler, 95, Veteran of Three Wars, Is Dead," *New York Times*, 30 June 1992.

36. Miller, *Division Commander,* pp. 116–17.

37. MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, pp. 352–53; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 76–77.

38. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, p. 91.

39. Ibid., pp. 92–93; Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, p. 178; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 64, 109. On 31 October 1944, the 9th Infantry Division published a five-page paper titled "Notes on Woods Fighting." Lessons learned included the following: "It is strongly recommended that units . . . be given previous training in this type of fighting. . . . Woods fighting is radically different from ordinary operations, and a knowledge of its basic requirements will save lives and insure success. Night Operations were . . . physically impossible. Never send replacements to a company in the heat of battle. . . . Replacements should not be sent forward during hours when enemy barrages are likely." See Rpt of Operations, 9th Inf Div, Oct 1944, Annex 3, Lessons Learned, Record Group (RG) 407, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives, College Park, Md. (NACP).

40. Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 118.

41. Astor, *Bloody Forest*, p. 106.

42. Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, p. 182.

43. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, p. 41.

44. Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, p. 182.

45. Ibid.; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 104–09; Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 119.

46. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, p. 99; MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, pp. 350–51; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 110–14; Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 119.

47. MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, p. 351.

48. Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 119.

49. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest,* p. 102.

50. Ibid.

51. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 118–20.

52. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest,* p. 101; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 120–24.

53. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest,* pp. 98–99, 103; Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, p. 182.

54. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest,* p. 104; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 124–27.

55. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 127–29.

56. Ibid., pp. 130–32; Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, pp. 69–70.

57. Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, pp. 70–71; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 130–33.

58. Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, pp. 72–73; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 126, 131.

59. Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, pp. 71–72; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, p. 134.

60. Interv, Cota with Capt William J. Fox, 13 Dec 1944, Combat Interviews, 28th Infantry Division, Hürtgen Forest Campaign; HQ, V Corps, Summary of the Operations of 28th Infantry Division for the Period 2–15 November 1944, 18 Nov 1944, both in RG 407, NACP.

61. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, p. 107.

62. Ibid., pp. 108–09.

63. Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 124; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, p. 143.

64. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, pp. 107–09; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 152–54; Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, p. 73.

65. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 155–56, 183–85.

66. Ibid., p. 154; Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, p. 77.

67. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 156–60.

68. Ibid., pp. 183–85.

69. Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground,* p. 74.

70. Ibid., pp. 78–79.

71. Ibid., pp. 79–80.

72. 28th Inf Div G–3 Jnl, 2–9 Nov 1944; 28th Inf Div G–3 Periodic Rpt, 6 Nov 1944, quote, both in RG 407, NACP.

73. Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, pp. 81–82.

74. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 198–99.

75. Ibid., p. 199; MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, p. 366.

76. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, p. 201.

77. Ibid., pp. 201, 210–11.

78. Ibid., p. 211.

79. MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, pp. 368, 370.

80. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, pp. 115–16; MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, p. 366.

81. MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, pp. 368–69.

82. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, p. 118; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 215–16. After the war was over Cota was given a physical and was found to have both an irregular heartbeat and a mild case of diabetes. See Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 188. One wonders if these ailments might have played a role in his collapse in his command post. In *On To Berlin* (New York: Viking Press, 1978), retired General James Gavin mentions that "Cota fainted" (p. 268) when he saw Colonel Peterson. As commander of the 82d Airborne Division, Gavin led his troopers through the Hürtgen during the last two weeks of the battle in February 1945. Gavin was extremely critical of the plan to attack into the Hürtgen. His famous comment that the Hürtgen Forest "had been our Passchendaele" (ibid.), comparing the battle to the needless slaughter of British troops amid the mud at the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917, was a testament to the poor planning of the attack and the ferocity of the battle.

83. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 216–17.

84. MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, pp. 118–19; MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, p. 369.

85. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 220–21; Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, p. 88.

86. Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, p. 83; Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 128, 130; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 221–22, 225, quote, p. 221; Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, p. 368.

87. Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 129, quote; Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, pp. 223–24.

88. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, p. 224. Major Sylvan, General Hodges's aide, wrote in his diary that "Hodges drew General Cota aside for a short sharp conference on the lack of progress made by the 28th Division. General's chief complaint seemed to be that the division headquarters had no precise knowledge of the location of their units and were doing nothing to obtain it. . . . General Hodges, needless to say, is extremely disappointed over the 28th Division's showing and his feelings are shared by [Brig.] General [Truman C.] Thorson [assistant chief of staff, G–3, First Army] and General Kean, both of whom served a long time with this division." See William C. Sylvan and Francis G. Smith Jr., *Normandy to Victory: The War Diary of General Courtney H. Hodges and the First U.S. Army*, ed. John T. Greenwood (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), p. 168. In 1942–1943 Kean had served as the chief of staff of the 28th Infantry Division and Thorson had commanded one of its infantry regiments.

89. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, p. 225.

90. Ibid., p. 237.

91. Ibid., pp. 230–36; MacDonald, *Siegfried Line Campaign*, p. 371.

92. Miller, *Division Commander,* p. 130.

93. Ibid.; MacDonald, *Battle of the Huertgen Forest*, p. 120; Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, p. 90.

94. MacDonald and Mathews, *Three Battles*, p. 416.

95. Ibid.

96. MacDonald, *Three Battles*, pp. 418–19, identifies the thirteen battalions.

97. Astor, *Bloody Forest*, p. 147.

98. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, p. 25.

99. HQ, V Corps, Summary of the Operations of 28th Infantry Division for the Period 2–15 November 1944.

100. Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, p. 91.

101. War Department, Field Manual (FM) 100–5, Field Service Regulations: Operations, 22 May 1941, Chapter 4: The Exercise of Command. One paragraph in this chapter states, "After providing for the issuance of orders, the commander places himself where he can best control the course of action and exert his leadership. His command post affords the advantage of established signal communications. When opportunity offers and when his presence at the command post is not urgently required, he visits his subordinate commanders and his troops in order to inspire confidence and to assure himself that his orders are understood and properly executed" (p. 29). For current doctrine, see Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 6–0, Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces, 11 Aug 2003, pp. 4-25–4-27.

102. Miller, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, p. 91.

103. Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 131.

104. Ibid., pp. 165–66; Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 9: 223.

105. Ibid.; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p. 322; John Miller Jr., *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1949), p. 217; Msg, Col William O. Hickok (Ret.), 28th Inf Div historian, to author, 21 Feb 2005, author's files.

106. Currey, *Follow Me and Die*, p. 263.

107. Sylvan and Smith, *Normandy to Victory*, p. 167.

108. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 131–32. The Fifteenth Army would primarily oversee occupation duties in Germany. See Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1973), p. 46.

109. Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 138–51.

110. Ibid., pp. 156–93; Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1993), pp. 533–60.

Speech to the American Historical Association

George C. Marshall

28 December 1939

The fifty-fourth annual meeting of the American Historical Association, held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., on 28–30 December 1939, drew 1,072 registered participants, making it the second largest gathering of the association to that date. The session entitled "Land Power and Sea Power," cosponsored by the American Historical Association and the six-year-old American Military Institute, was one of six concurrent panels held on the morning of 28 December. It would be among the best attended of the meeting's forty-six sessions, luncheon conferences, and dinners. The panel's junior sponsor reported that more than a thousand people were present at the session, which was convened in the hotel's ballroom.[1]

General George C. Marshall, who had been chief of staff of the Army since July (holding the position in an acting capacity until he assumed the title in September), joined Alfred Vagts of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, and A. Whitney Griswold of Yale University in delivering papers at this session. In a talk entitled "National Organization for War," Marshall told historians that they were not adequately informing the public about the military history of the United States and that this failure had adversely affected U.S. military preparedness. Marshall's speech received considerable attention from the press, but its text did not appear in print until 1986 when Johns Hopkins University Press released the second volume of the Marshall papers edited by Larry I. Bland.[2]

Marshall's copanelists were noteworthy scholars. Vagts, who held a doctorate from the University of Hamburg, was a German refugee who had authored *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten in der Weltpolitik* (New York: Macmillan, 1935) and *A History of Militarism: Romance and Realities of a Profession* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1937). He spoke of the imperialistic goals of German naval leaders in the early twentieth century and compared them with what he believed had been the more modest objectives of the Junkers who dominated the German Army's senior leadership. Griswold, then a junior professor of government and international relations at Yale, was the author of *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938). He would serve as president of Yale University from 1950 to 1963. Griswold argued that, compared with the era studied by Alfred Thayer Mahan, U.S. naval power was now better suited to the defense of North America and less prepared for the pursuit of overseas military objectives. The papers delivered by Vagts and Griswold were promptly published by the *Journal of the American Military Institute*.[3] General Marshall's presentation, however, was not.

U.S. Army

General Marshall, June 1938

In addition to providing his thoughts on the importance of a balanced and critical examination of military history, Marshall also commented on the nation's military and naval preparedness and judged the Navy much more ready than was the Army for war. The Associated Press' report on his speech quoted in its first paragraph his observation that "the army machine is probably less than 25 per cent ready for immediate action" and turned to his comments on improving the teaching of history only three paragraphs later.[4] On the other hand, Walter Trohan of the Chicago Tribune Press Service led his report by focusing on Marshall's explosive allegation that historians' overly rosy view of American military history had led to military unpreparedness and "colossal wastefulness in past wars."[5]

Senator Elbert D. Thomas of Utah, one of three commentators that the program's organizer, archivist Wayne C. Grover, had arranged for the panel, drew Trohan's attention by replying to Marshall that, as the reporter paraphrased, "it would be dangerous for persons in public life, including teachers, to call attention to unpatriotic and blundering soldiers and the nation's inefficiency in war." A summary of the session prepared by one of the sponsoring organizations observed that Senator Thomas "said that the obligation to teach realistically and honestly rests upon the professional soldier as well as upon the civilian scholar." Trohan reported that Marshall did not reply to the senator. The War Department, however, accepted the responsibility to teach accurate military history when it organized the Historical Division, Special Staff, in 1945 and charged it with preparing a detailed history of the U.S. Army in World War II.[6]

The panel's other commentators, whose reported remarks were directed to the other presenters, were Edward M. Earle, who would later edit the classic work *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), and retired Navy Capt. William D. Puleston, author of *Mahan*: *The Life and Work of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939). Retired Brig. Gen. Oliver L. Spaulding, who had led the Historical Section of the Army War College for nearly nine years, chaired the session, but any comments he may have made were not recorded.[7]

General Marshall's willingness to present his views on the shortcomings of military history writing and instruction to this intellectually sophisticated audience indicates the importance he placed on enabling the American people to understand the true nature of the military challenges that the nation had experienced. The text of his presentation follows.

National Organization for War

The character of the organization of nations for war appears to be determined largely by their state of civilization, their geography, and their politics. From a military point of view, the state of civilization of the dominant nations approximates the same level; all use similar weapons, organize their forces in corresponding units, and man and equip their armies in much the same manner. Their military set-up differs principally in the extent of organization and in the degree of readiness of the major forces, and these differences appear to be dictated principally by geographical and political considerations.

The influences of geography are numerous and usually obvious. Invading forces, for example, prefer open frontiers and avoid ocean barriers. The possibility of conflicting interests between nations diminishes as the distance between them increases. This country is fortunate in its geographical position, and if the Atlantic Ocean has not guaranteed complete immunity from wars with European powers, it has made such wars so difficult of management as to be approached with caution and reluctance, and it does make sudden attack on us seem unlikely. The influence of distance has been modified by the airplane, along with increased speeds on land and water, but these changes have not as yet materially affected our unusually favorable situation.

If these views regarding the effect of civilization and geography on the organization of this country for war are accepted, then we must turn to political considerations to find the dominating influence in this vital matter. In our democracy where the government is truly an agent of the popular will, military policy is dependent on public opinion, and our organization for war will be good or bad as the public is well informed or poorly informed regarding the factors that bear on the subject.

Public appreciation of international affairs is of course important to a sound view regarding military policy, and the radio and press are doing a remarkable job of keeping the public informed. School children today are probably more fully informed on current international developments than were many high government officials of thirty years ago. But even more important are the lessons of history. Therefore, it is to the historian, to you gentlemen, that we must turn for the most essential service in determining the public policy relating to national defense.

Popular knowledge of history, I believe, is largely based on information derived from school text-books, and unfortunately these sources often tell only a portion of the truth with regard to our war experiences. Historians have been inclined to record the victories and gloss over the mistakes and wasteful sacrifices. Cause and effect have been, to an important extent, ignored. Few Americans learn that we enrolled nearly 400,000 men in the Revolutionary War to defeat an enemy that numbered less than 45,000, or that we employed half a million in 1812 against an opponent whose strength never exceeded 16,000 at any one place, and fewer still have learned why these overwhelming numbers were so ineffective. The War between the States pointed numerous lessons for our future protection, yet seldom has a nation entered a war so completely unprepared, and yet so boastfully, as did the United States in 1898. Veterans of the World War often seem to overlook the fact that almost a year and a half elapsed after the declaration of war before we could bring a field army into being and even then its weapons, ammunition and other materiel were provided by our Allies. And many of them seem unaware of the fact that the partially trained state of our troops proved a costly and tragic business despite the eventual success.

What the casual student does learn is that we have won all our wars and he is, therefore, justified in assuming that since we have defeated the enemies of the past we shall continue to defeat the enemies of the future. The comfortable belief in our invincibility has been reflected legislatively in the inadequate military organization of past years, resulting in stupendous expenditures in each emergency, invariably followed by a parsimonious attitude, if not the complete neglect of ordinary military necessities. In addition to the perils of war there is the issue of huge war debts with their aftermath of bitter years of heavy taxes. I think it apparent that much of this misfortune in the life of our democracy could have been avoided by the influence of a better informed public on the decisions of the Congress.

Personally I am convinced that the colossal wastefulness of our war organization in the past, and the near tragedies to which it has led us, have been due primarily to the character of our school text-books and the ineffective manner in which history has been taught in the public schools of this country. In other words, I am saying that if we are to have a sound organization for war we must first have better school histories and a better technique for teaching history.

I have had no opportunity for research in preparation for this discussion but I have found in a brief survey of some of the present school text-books on American history that there has been a great improvement since the days of my early schooling, and a material improvement since the period, a few years after the close of the World War, when I became officially interested in this question. I should confess that I was particularly impressed with Dr. Albert Bushnell Hart's volume, but I have no data as to the extent to which it is used in the schools of this country.

I might attempt a philosophical discussion this morning regarding the proper organization of this country for war, or, to put it more tactfully, for the national defense; but however convincing this might be, the effect would be negligible—or at least but momentary. The members of a Congress, wise on heels of a war, will legislate with serious purpose to avoid a repetition of the crises, the plights and frights of their recent experience; but what is done is usually undone, the military arrangements emasculated, the old story of unpreparedness continued on into the next chapter of repetitions, because of the pressure of public opinion.

To maintain a sound organization the public must understand the general requirements for the defense of this particular country—the requirements for the maintenance of peace as we soldiers believe, before Congress can be expected, year in and year out, to provide the necessary legislation with due regard both for the economics of the situation and for the essential requirements for an adequate Army and Navy, with the necessary industrial organization behind them. When the high-school student knows exactly what happened, and most important of all, why it happened, then our most serious military problem will be solved. Potentially the strongest nation on earth, we will become the strongest and at a much smaller cost than has been paid for our mistaken course in the past. The historian, the school history and its teacher are the important factors in the solution of the problem I am discussing so superficially this morning.

History as a science has many specialties. The military historian is a specialist. Normally he is not concerned in the preparation of school text-books. Furthermore, military history, since it deals with wars, is unpopular, and probably more so today than at any other time. Yet I believe it is very important that the true facts, the causes and consequences that make our military history, should be matters of common knowledge. War is a deadly disease, which today afflicts hundreds of millions of people. It exists; therefore, there must be a reason for its existence. We should do everything in our power to isolate the disease, protect ourselves against it, and to discover the specific which will destroy it. A complete knowledge of the disease is essential before we can hope to find a cure. Daily we see attacks on war and tabulations regarding its cost, but rarely do we find a careful effort being made to analyze the various factors in order to determine the nature of war; to audit the accounts as it were, and to see to whom or to what each item of the staggering total is really chargeable.

As to the character of the organization for war suitable and acceptable to this country, I might say that certain definite policies have been developed through the years, and given a degree of permanence in the general amendments to the National Defense Act, of June 1920:

1st A small Regular Army as the keystone of our land defense program. It should provide the small force that might be immediately required for the security of the interests of this country, and supply and training standards and the training staff for the development of a citizen army.

2nd A territorial force, the National Guard, voluntarily maintained by the State governments in cooperation with the Federal Government, to supplement the small standing Army for the first phase of the defense of the country in the event of war.

3rd A democratic system for developing a Reserve of trained officer material—the ROTC and the CMTC, and a practical plan for the prompt procurement of man-power to fill up the ranks of the Regular Establishment and the National Guard, and later to provide the necessary replacements and the men for the new units which will be required.

4th A reserve of non-commercial munitions.

5th A practical set-up for the prompt mobilization of the industrial resources of the nation, to provide, with the least practicable delay, the munitions that are required.

And lastly, an adequate reserve of the raw materials essential for war purposes, which are not available in this country.

The foregoing policies have been generally accepted by the public and are a part of the organic law. Properly administered and developed, they provide a democratic basis for the national defense suitable to our form of government and to our particular international situation.

In the development of these policies two factors dominate the thought of the War Department. The first pertains to economic considerations. Everything in this country is expensive, in keeping with the high standards of living demanded by our people. Therefore, the military

establishment is very expensive, and its maintenance on a sound basis is always endangered by the natural demand of the people for economy in government. This demand concentrates first on the Army and Navy immediately following a period of war, gradually grows more insistent in time of peace, and finally becomes politically compulsory with a depression in business. The War Department, therefore, concentrates earnestly on the problem of how best to maintain an adequate standard of national defense for a minimum of expenditure.

The time factor is the other dominant consideration which influences the planning of the Department. It is related to all our preparations—the production of materiel, the training of troops, of pilots and of mechanics, the organization of new units, and the mobilization of a war Army. The Navy in peace is 75% fully prepared. The Army machine is probably less than 25% ready for immediate action. Our problem, therefore, involves the development of a war force after the emergency has arrived. The time factor dominates the situation to a degree not approximated in any other great country. For this reason in particular the problem of a suitable war organization for the United States is one of the many complications, and the influence of a well-informed public is of profound importance.

Notes

Charles Hendricks, *Army History*'s managing editor, wrote the introduction to Marshall's speech and the notes.

1. "Educating Clio," *American Historical Review* 45 (April 1940): 505, 529; "Professional News," *Journal of the American Military Institute* 3 (Winter 1939): 237.

2. The text of Marshall's speech at this meeting is printed in *Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, 5 vols. to date (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981–), 2: 123–27.

3. "Educating Clio," pp. 529–30; Alfred Vagts, "Land and Sea Power in the Second German Reich," *Journal of the American Military Institute* 3 (Winter 1939): 210–21; A. Whitney Griswold, "The Influence of History upon Sea Power: A Comment on American Naval Policy, *Journal of the American Military Institute* 4 (Spring 1940): 1–7.

4. "Army Is 25% Ready, Marshall Declares," *New York Times*, 29 December 1939, p. 2.

5. Walter Trohan, "Army Head Hits Historians for Wasteful Wars," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 December 1939, p. 3, quote; "Army's Chief Hits Histories," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 December 1939, p. 4.

6. Trohan, "Army Head Hits Historians," first quote; "Educating Clio," pp. 530–31; "Professional News," p. 238, second quote; Stetson Conn, *Historical Work in the United States Army* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1980), pp. 79–126. Grover would serve as archivist of the United States from 1948 to 1965.

7. "Professional News," pp. 237–38; "Educating Clio," pp. 529–30; War Department biography sheet, Oliver Lyman Spaulding, 31 May 1944, Oliver L. Spaulding file, General Officer Biographical files, Historical Resources Branch, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

The Chief's Corner

Dr. Jeff Clarke

Continued from page 3

frigid mountains of the North Korean border with China to the triumphal drives along the roads to Rome, Berlin, and other enemy capitals and from the tragedies of My Lai and the abuses at Abu Ghraib to the countless refugee operations throughout the United States and abroad, American military historians have faithfully documented and professionally examined the high and low points of our martial adventures and those of other nations as well. That said, all indications are that political and social agendas still influence the larger historical, intellectual, and academic communities, both inside and outside of our federal institutions. Such concerns too often continue to trump professional standards, both of our trade and that of others, often obscuring the "lessons of history" or whatever we seek to learn from the past. How is it, for example, that roughly the same generation of military leaders that led us so successfully through the first Gulf War in 1991 orchestrated a second one only a dozen years later with such abysmal results? And how is it that the painfully acquired and carefully recorded skills that the Army gained in counterinsurgency warfare from its Vietnam experiences in the 1960s and 1970s had to be totally relearned for the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan at such great cost? From the frequency of psychiatric casualties in each war we have fought to the costly overruns experienced by every advanced weapon system that we have developed, the legal and moral difficulties that we have repeatedly faced when dealing with nontraditional prisoners of war, and our habitual reluctance to think through our military strategies to their desired political ends, we often appear, as a nation, to ignore the experiences of the past. Indeed, Marshall's words on preparedness and, more so, on the need to study military history dispassionately live on, reminding us that there is always much work to be done and many rows to hoe, whether the intellectual soil of our military and political leadership be rich or poor, shallow or deep.

Notes

1. Walter Trohan, "Army Head Hits Historians for Wasteful Wars," *Chicago Tribune*, 29 December 1939, p. 3.

2. Ibid.

3. *Papers of George Catlett Marshall,* ed. Larry I. Bland, 5 vols. to date (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981–), 2: 123–27, quote, p. 124.

4. "Nation's Savants Explore Social and Political Issues," *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 December 1939, p. 2.

5. "Beard Replies to Gen. Marshall on History Texts," *Washington Post*, 30 December 1939, p. 4.

6. Josiah Bunting III, "Why Military History?" *Academic Questions* 21 (Fall 2008): 13.

NEWSNOTES

Continued from page 5

In Memoriam
George S. Pappas
(1919–2010)

Col. George S. Pappas, a noted Army historian and historical administrator, died in January 2010 at the age of ninety. The author of significant books on Army educational institutions, he was the founder of the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. That organization has since expanded into the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center.

Pappas enlisted in the 6th Coast Artillery in June 1939 and graduated from the U.S. Military Academy five years later. An air defense artillery officer, he commanded an antiaircraft artillery gun battery and a missile battalion. He served in 1957–1959 as an aide de camp to General Earle E. Partridge, the first commander in chief of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), the combined U.S.-Canadian organization headquartered in Colorado Springs charged with the defense of the North American continent. He subsequently held staff positions with the U.S. Army Air Defense Command, NORAD's U.S. Army component command, also in Colorado Springs.

Pappas was first tapped for historical work for the Army in 1951–1952, when he served on the seven-member U.S. Military Academy sesquicentennial staff. After attending the Army War College in 1965–1966, Pappas was assigned to write a history of that institution. The result was his 337-page *Prudens Futuri: The U.S. Army War College, 1901–1967* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College Alumni Association, 1967). He later authored an account of the first century of his alma mater, *To the Point: The United States Military Academy, 1802–1902* (New York: Praeger, 1993).

Pappas is best remembered for creating adjacent to the Army War College the organization that would come to house the Army's largest collection of historical books, photographs, and manuscripts. Pappas combined his historical collection efforts with a bevy of related initiatives that have continued to today: the broad-based veterans survey and senior officer oral history programs, the "Perspectives in Military History" public lecture series, the offering of an elective course in military history at the Army War College, and the establishment of a visiting professorship of military history. He also initiated the publication of a substantial series of military history bibliographies, personally contributing a two-volume unit-history bibliography, and established the Omar Bradley Museum. Pappas remained director of the Military History Research Collection until his retirement from the Army in 1974. Moving to California, he then helped found Presidio Press, a publisher of selective books on military history, and served as its first president.

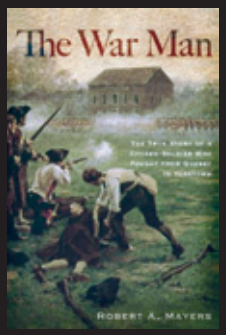
The military history community mourns his passing.

U.S. Army

Left to right, General Omar N. Bradley, General William C. Westmoreland, and Col. George S. Pappas at the opening of the Omar Bradley Museum, 8 May 1970

BOOKREVIEWS

The War Man: The True Story of a Citizen-Soldier Who Fought from Quebec to Yorktown



By Robert A. Mayers
Westholme Publishing, 2009
Pp. xi, 295. $26

Review by Gregory J. W. Urwin

Inspired by the runaway success of *John Adams*, David McCullough's 2001 best seller, major American publishers have been turning out a steady stream of biographies on the men who helped win this nation's independence. These books are invariably devoted to prominent U.S. politicians or leading officers in the Continental Army or Navy. In *The War Man*, however, Robert A. Mayers breaks from the pack by describing the life and experiences of a common Continental soldier, Cpl. John Allison of the New York Line.

At first glance, Corporal Allison seems an odd choice for a book-length treatment. Like most enlisted continentals, he left no diary, letters, or memoirs recounting his service to the cause of liberty. Robert Mayers counts Allison among his ancestors, however, and that gave him a special incentive to pursue this project. Making a creative use of muster rolls, pay accounts, pension records, orderly books from the regiments to which Allison belonged, and other sources, Mayers succeeded in teasing out enough facts to reconstruct the movements, battles, and other experiences of one of our Revolution's rank and file.

John Allison was born on 12 May 1754. He grew up in Haverstraw, New York, on the estate of his father, a militia officer during the French and Indian War. Shortly after the start of the War of Independence, Allison signified his support for the Patriot cause and on 20 July 1775 enlisted as a private in the 3d New York Regiment. Allison and the 1,500 men belonging to New York's four regiments received orders to participate in the invasion of Canada. Allison saw his first action that fall during the successful siege of the British outpost at St. Johns, and he forged on to assist with the capture of Montreal. It appears he fell ill and advanced no further than Montreal, missing the disastrous American attack on Quebec on 31 December 1775. Allison's enlistment expired that same day, and he returned home.

A civilian once more, Allison took a wife sometime in 1776, but he demonstrated his continuing devotion to the cause by serving in the 2d Regiment of Orange County Militia. Allison proved he was no summer soldier or sunshine Patriot by rejoining the Continental Army after the British scored one of their greatest triumphs by capturing nearby New York City. On 12 February 1777, he enlisted as a corporal in the 5th New York Regiment. Allison thought he had signed up for three years, but Continental authorities would later insist that he was bound to serve for the duration, which made him a "war man."

Corporal Allison's war would be an eventful one. He narrowly avoided death or capture when the British lunged up the Hudson River from New York to attack and capture Forts Clinton and Montgomery on 6 October 1777. In the summer of 1779, he marched deep into the western part of his home state to chastise Britain's Iroquois allies. He endured the harsh winter of 1779–1780 in Jockey Hollow near Morristown, New Jersey. A consolidation of the depleted New York Line saw Corporal Allison and his comrades from the 4th and 5th New York regiments merged into the 2d New York Regiment. Allison trudged south in August 1781 with his new outfit in the epic march led by General George Washington and France's Lt. Gen. Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, to close the trap on British Lt. Gen. Charles, Earl Cornwallis, at Yorktown. A year later, Allison and the New York brigade went into the Continental Army's last cantonment, where they watched the war wind down. On 8 June 1783, Allison received a conditional discharge, and his service came to an end.

During the war years, Corporal Allison passed through Haverstraw frequently enough to father three children. He doubled the size of his brood by 1792 and moved fifty miles into western Orange County in 1800. Ever the Patriot, he and three of his sons joined the local militia during the War of 1812. Despite the fact that he qualified for a veteran's pension in 1818 and again in 1821, Allison fell into financial difficulty and lost his farm in March 1822. The old veteran died landless on 22 January 1828, with an estate valued at less than $40. He had lived for seventy-four years.

Robert Mayers, a former combat officer in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, deserves praise for highlighting the life of one of the thousands of common soldiers whose services and sacrifices turned the dream of an independent United States into a reality. In the final

months of the Revolutionary War, ungrateful civilians—viewing continentals like Allison as a drain on the treasury and fearing that they might stage a military coup—sent them home with only vague promises that they would receive the back pay the country owed them. Allison was not the only veteran to end up destitute and forgotten.

The War Man could have been an even finer tribute to the Continental soldier had its author immersed himself more thoroughly in the better historical literature on the War of Independence and the men who fought it. The text contains factual errors, and both the author and his editors can be faulted for missing some glaring inconsistencies. Mayers makes the mistake of equating militia with Minutemen and a "well fixed musket or fusee" (both smoothbore weapons) with a "flintlock rifle." He fails to grasp that the composition of the Continental Army's rank and file in 1775 and 1776—when enlistment terms ran for a year or less—changed markedly in 1777, when men joined for three years or the duration. Mayers also finds it impossible to decide if the British garrison at St. Johns numbered 253 or 700 men or if the distance from Williamsburg, Virginia, to Yorktown is eleven miles or six.

The flaws that mar *The War Man* do not completely negate Mayers' achievements. Readers well versed in the War of Independence can still find much to learn from these pages. It is hoped that other historians will be inspired to follow in Mayers' footsteps and tell us more about the underappreciated and much-abused men who constituted the republic's first standing army. There would have been no republic without steadfast heroes like John Allison.

Dr. Gregory J. W. Urwin is a professor of history and associate director of the Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy at Temple University in Philadelphia. He has written extensively on the Civil War and World War II and is now at work on a social history of British Lt. Gen. Charles, Earl Cornwallis' 1781 Virginia campaign.

Year of the Hangman: George Washington's Campaign Against the Iroquois

By Glenn F. Williams
Westholme Publishing, 2005
Pp. xi, 355. $28

Review by Seanegan Sculley

For many students of the American Revolution the year 1777 stands out as the most important from a military perspective. It was in this year that the British suffered their first major defeat, compelling the French government to commit more than just rhetoric toward the American cause. British commanders had divided their forces in competing attempts to capture both the rebel political center in Philadelphia and a major transportation link between New England and the rest of the colonies along the Hudson River. With the defeat and capture of Lt. Gen. John Burgoyne's forces at Saratoga, Lt. Gen. Sir William Howe was forced to abandon the Patriot's capital, while Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Clinton withdrew from West Point to New York City. The end result was a clear improvement of fortunes for General George Washington and the American independence movement. While this series of events is well-known to many who study the war, another change occurred that had the potential to drain Washington's forces in the Northern Department and perhaps allow the British to achieve the objective they had so recently lost. Glenn Williams illustrates this operational change in his book *Year of the Hangman: George Washington's Campaign Against the Iroquois*, a military history of the frontier battles fought in the Northwest between Loyalist-Indian forces allied to the king and militia-Indian warriors sympathetic to the rebellion.

According to Williams, 1777 was significant not only for the more conventional failures of the British but for their success with the League of the Iroquois. During this time, Col. John Butler and Capt. Joseph Brant convinced many warriors of the Six Nations that their best hope for retaining their lands was to actively support the British Army in its attempts to end the rebellion and return the rule of the colonies to King George III. In 1778, Mohawks, Senecas, and others of the league invaded frontier settlements in New York, forcing many from the state's militia to stay in the region and away from the Continental Army. These attacks placed pressure on the Continental Congress to divert conventional forces away from their other duties and distracted Washington from his main objective, containing the British Army on Manhattan Island.

In response to this threat on his western flank, Washington devised a campaign, led by Maj. Gen. John Sullivan, to target Iroquois towns from the Ohio Valley to Detroit. The objective was to force the Indians to remain in the region, preoccupied with defense of their families and crops and incapable of committing raids into New York. In 1779, General Sullivan led a mixture of continentals and militia who did just that, burning cornfields and longhouses from Tioga, New York, westward to the main Seneca town of Genesee in a swath of destruction 136 miles long. Unable to reinforce Major Butler and Captain Brant, British commanders lost the initiative in the West and, more importantly, lost the support of many Iroquois warriors. The result was a breakdown of the Friendship Chain and the fracturing of the league.

Williams argues this campaign had several important consequences. By successfully targeting the supply centers of the Iroquois, Washington secured the frontier and freed his forces to focus on their primary adversaries, the British, in New York and farther south. The native allies of the British in the Northwest, lacking food and supplies for the winter of 1779–1780, were forced to sue for peace with the Americans and many

chose to join forces with Washington. Those who decided to remain faithful to the British fled their traditional lands for Canada, and the rift between Iroquois tribes remained for the duration of the war and beyond. Finally, no more attempts were made to link British forces in Canada with those in the American theater. Williams claims that Sullivan's campaign allowed the Continental Army to concentrate its efforts in the South, where Lt. Gen. Charles, Earl Cornwallis, and the British Parliament had decided they had the best chance for success.

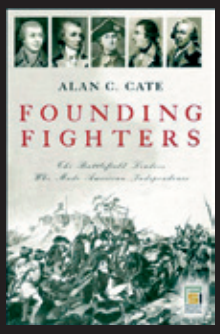
It would appear, however, that Williams ends his narrative a year or two early. While he acknowledges in his last two paragraphs that fighting persisted along the frontier after 1779, he fails to investigate the extent to which Butler's Rangers and their Seneca-Mohawk allies managed to raid into New York in 1780 and 1781, destroying crops and killing civilians. In fact, the New York frontier became uninhabitable for many Patriots as pro-British Seneca and Mohawk warriors killed as many as one hundred fifty settlers and threatened to attack Schenectady. This continued ability of the Iroquois and Loyalist rangers to wage unconventional warfare following Sullivan's campaign does not negate Williams' argument; it simply complicates it. The omission of events following 1779 should have been addressed, however, and seems at odds with Williams' detailed treatment of all events prior.

Year of the Hangman is a military history in the more traditional sense. Its focus is largely on battles waged and the logistical problems of fighting on the colonial frontier. In fact, its strongest characteristic is the detailed explanation of supply problems and transportation obstacles faced by those campaigning in the region. There is a brief description of both the League of the Iroquois and the inner workings of native politics. Some attention is given to how the Indian agents worked for both the British and the Americans to illustrate why many of the league chose to fight for the British against their American neighbors. The majority of the work is, however, a narrative of the smaller battles along the frontier to support the claim that perhaps Saratoga was not the sole event which turned the tide of the war in the North. In this regard, Williams has broadened our understanding of the era, which links him to current military historiography, arguably led by John Grenier's *The First Way of War* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), which has concentrated on unconventional warfare in North America to depict a distinctly American style of warfare in the eighteenth century.

While this would seem to place both historians in the same camp, Williams does not agree with Grenier's position that Sullivan's campaign was an extension of an American way of war. Rather, he places Patriot forces in a more Vietnamesque light; conventional forces are conducting economic warfare against an insurgency that was supported by British special forces. From this perspective, combined with his attention to logistical limitations, Williams would perhaps sympathize more with Guy Chet and others who argue that warfare had become more Europeanized in North America, and so these fights along the frontier required an adaptation of conventional forces to meet a special circumstance. In the construction of his argument, Williams combines the elements of academic argument with the minutiae of battlefield analysis that will appeal to many but not all. For some historians of the era, *Year of the Hangman* may be a bit short on analysis and long on combat details. For many, however, this work will be an exciting read in a theater of the war little discussed but important nonetheless.

Maj. Seanegan Sculley is an Armor officer in the U.S. Army and taught colonial American history at the United States Military Academy. He received his master's in history at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and is currently working on his Ph.D.

Founding Fighters: The Battlefield Leaders Who Made American Independence



By Alan C. Cate
Praeger Security International, 2006
Pp. xiv, 249. $49.95

Review by Gary M. Bowman

Founding Fighters is a series of biographical sketches of fifteen military leaders of the American Revolution. The sketches are grouped together thematically into six chapters: "Redcoats to Rebel Fighters," "Self-Educated Fighters," "Ambitious Fighters," "Partisan Fighters," "Frontier Fighters," and "Born Fighters." The sketches are concise, well written, and furnish essential information about their subjects. This might be expected from someone with the author's background. Alan C. Cate teaches history at the University School in Hunting Valley, Ohio, and previously taught history at West Point before retiring from the Army. He also has published numerous articles on American military history.

Founding Fighters has many strengths. The introduction provides a summary of the course of the war, which gives context to the biographies. A strength of the biographies is that they establish a sense of the relationships between the subjects. For example, Cate emphasizes the cooperation between Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee and Francis Marion in the Carolinas, and he points out that Nathanael Greene was a patron of Henry Knox's bookshop in Boston before the war and that Charles Lee and Horatio Gates were neighbors.

Another virtue of Cate's focus on individuals rather than chronology is the exploration of regional campaigns and interests, which many chronological histories of the war treat only briefly, if at all. Ethan Allen's exploits, for instance, were motivated more by his desire to gain the New Hampshire Grants' independence from New York than to obtain independence from Britain. George Rogers Clark's incredible feats were more important to the prosperity and protection of Kentucky than to the larger revolutionary cause.

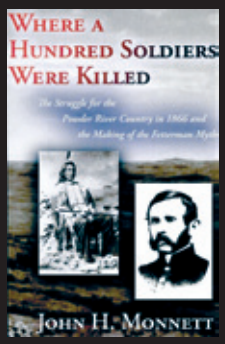
This work, however, has some minor drawbacks. There are no maps in the book, and more importantly, there are no illustrations. While reading about each subject, the reader is left to wonder what the man looked like.

The book does not fill a void in the literature on the American Revolution and therefore offers little new to the specialist. Rather, it supplements other books of the same type, such as George Athan Billias' *George Washington's Generals and Opponents* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), a collection of biographical essays. For the general reader, though, the book provides a good introduction to the lives of important figures of the Revolutionary War.

John Buchanan's review of *Founding Fighters* in the *Journal of Military History* (April 2007, pp. 521–24) criticized Cate for repeating several "misconceptions." For example, Cate mentions the myth that Daniel Boone and Daniel Morgan were related (p. 183), and he states that Washington intended Greene to be his successor (pp. 96–97), although there is no evidence to support that inference. These are valid criticisms, and they demonstrate that Cate's book is the repackaging of previous sources into short biographical essays rather than the product of original research. Nevertheless, though marred by annoying typographical and minor factual errors, the book is a satisfying and entertaining collection of stories about interesting and important characters.

Col. Gary M. Bowman, U.S. Army Reserve, is the deputy commander (Individual Mobilization Augmentee [IMA]) of the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He is a graduate of Virginia Military Institute in Lexington and earned his J.D. and Ph.D. at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. He has served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. In civilian life, he is a lawyer in Roanoke, Virginia.

Where a Hundred Soldiers Were Killed: The Struggle for the Powder River Country in 1866 and the Making of the Fetterman Myth



By John H. Monnett
University of New Mexico Press, 2008
Pp. xxxiv, 316. $29.95

Review by Geoffrey Hunt

On 21 December 1866, in the Powder River country of northern Wyoming, a mixed body of Northern Cheyennes, Northern Arapahos, and Lakotas annihilated an entire United States Army force of infantry and cavalry led by Capt. William J. Fetterman. Casualty records for the Native Americans are somewhat imprecise, but Fetterman's fatalities totaled 76 enlisted men, 3 officers, and 2 civilians. Coverage of that battle in published works has long suffered when compared to other such devastating events. Until Lt. Col. George Custer's defeat at the Greasy Grass on 25 June 1876, the Fetterman fight featured the Army's greatest loss of life in a single engagement against the Indians west of the Mississippi River. Inevitably, the importance of the Fetterman battle has been obscured in the shadow of Custer's more famous defeat. On the other hand, for those interested in ordnance and how it affects tactics, Fetterman's defeat has often been contrasted with the twin Powder River engagements of the Hayfield fight and Wagon Box fight, on 1 and 2 August 1867, respectively, as an example of the effectiveness of breech-loading muskets over muzzle-loaders. The Fetterman defeat, however, deserves consideration within its own context of the Powder River war, separate from broader themes of technology or heroic "last stands." John Monnett provides that analysis in *Where a Hundred Soldiers Were Killed: The Struggle for the Powder River Country in 1866 and the Making of the Fetterman Myth.*

Monnett breaks from precedent by doing his best to incorporate both military and civilian accounts of the conflict, as well as those of Indian participants. He effectively combines the various viewpoints, carefully weighing conflicting or confusing accounts and integrating such disparate sources as archaeological evidence, post returns, oral histories, and the contemporary tribal pictorial records called "winter counts." In the process, Monnett creates as complete an account of the Fetterman fight as is likely to emerge. Each chapter opens with a stanza from John Neihardt's epic poem "The Twilight of the Sioux: The Song of the Indian Wars—The Song of the Messiah." The reader knows disaster is coming, but the author inexorably moves forward step-by-step to the actual battle and beyond, laying out the evidence and consequences in compelling detail.

In this account, the Lakotas struggled for control of the Powder River basin and, in the immediate aftermath of their long and bloody conquest, wrested control from the Crows. At the same time, hard winters and hunting thinned the large bison herds of the northern plains, depleting the game in the Powder River country. When ranchers and farmers used the Powder River road to the Montana gold fields

to introduce cattle herds and draft animals that further competed for resources, the Lakotas were not about to give up their hard-won new lands by default. Raids against the intruders were met in 1866 by leading elements of Col. Henry Carrington's 18th Infantry Regiment that had ventured north from Fort Reno to establish new posts, Forts Phil Kearny and C. F. Smith. Virtually the only stockaded western forts meeting the Hollywood version of such, their garrisons endured steady low-grade harassment by the Lakotas and Cheyennes from the outset.

The story is a familiar one to students of the Army in the West. The cast includes Colonel Carrington and his wife Margaret, Captain Fetterman, and 2d Lt. George Grummond and his young wife Frances. Sent out by Carrington to relieve the wood detail under attack, Fetterman was enjoined by the colonel not to cross Lodge Trail Ridge to the west. The overconfident captain, famous for his "Give me eighty men and I'll ride through the whole Sioux nation!" proclamation, disobeyed orders and led that exact number to their deaths, including the unfortunate Lieutenant Grummond. In the aftermath, Carrington was reassigned, his wife died of tuberculosis in 1870, and the colonel then married the young widow Frances Grummond. The entire disaster was due to the impetuousness of Captain Fetterman.

It is a lovely story, preserving the legacies of the living, discounting the tactical abilities of the Indian leaders, and placing all blame on the dead officer. Monnett neatly dissects the myth and replaces it with a deliberate and reasoned account that tells quite a different tale. William Fetterman was a seasoned and careful officer, a reputation he established in the Civil War and further demonstrated in an action against the Indians on 6 December 1866. In that action, it was Lieutenant Grummond, not Fetterman, who disobeyed orders and fell into a decoy ambush from which he narrowly escaped. On 21 December, Fetterman led his command against what he believed was the usual force of perhaps two hundred raiders, unaware that he was encountering ten times that number. Once engaged, the soldiers "fought hard" by Indian accounts, with the advanced cavalry attempting to rally the infantry—some even succeeded, judging by spent rounds recovered from the battlefield. As for the "Give me eighty men" quote, no one heard it that day, no one had heard it before, and, in fact, no one reported it at all until 1904, when it appeared in the sensational *Indian Fights and Fighters* (New York, 1909) by Cyrus Townshend Brady, thirty-eight years after the event (p. 232).

Monnett asserts that Bvt. Maj. Gen. Philip St. George Cooke, Carrington's immediate superior, disliked him and failed to support him in his mission on the Powder River, without citing any particular evidence to suggest such dislike. At the Sanborn Commission in 1867, convened to investigate the Fetterman disaster, Cooke and Carrington blamed each other, and, in the event, both lost their commands. The Army, and the general, blocked Carrington's account for twenty years, and Carrington turned to the court of popular opinion instead. Margaret Carrington published an account of her life at Fort Phil Kearny in *Ab-sa-ra-ka: Home of the Crows (*Philadelphia*,* 1868*)*. In it, she characterized Fetterman as a brave officer, led to disobedience by the arrogance of Capt. Frederick Brown, who died with Fetterman. In Monnett's analysis, Victorian sensibilities would not allow Margaret to impugn the conduct of Lieutenant Grummond, the dead husband of her friend Frances. After Margaret's death and Henry Carrington's 1871 marriage to Grummond's widow, the new Mrs. Carrington continued to protect the reputation of her late husband and Colonel Carrington at the expense of William Fetterman, and chivalry prevented any Fetterman supporters from correcting the slander.

At one level, the Fetterman defeat, like the Custer defeat, had to be due to arrogance and incompetence, in the light of Victorian analysis. It was inconceivable that Indian leaders had simply out-generaled U.S. Army officers. Authors will cheerfully debate the Custer debacle for centuries to come, but it is pretty clear that Fetterman led his men expecting to meet perhaps 200 opponents and instead was ambushed by 1,800 to 2,000, no small feat given the treeless terrain of the battlefield. Mari Sandoz asserted in 1942 that Crazy Horse orchestrated the winning strategy (p. 216), but Monnett points out the lack of any clear evidence from Indians for his particular role on that day. The name the Army associated with the entire Powder River war was Red Cloud. According to Red Cloud the fight required more power and influence than he may have possessed. While no Indian eyewitness places Crazy Horse at the Fetterman fight, Red Cloud himself and several other accounts place Red Cloud there. At any rate, it was Black Shield's Miniconjou Sioux who sprang the trap, not Red Cloud's and Crazy Horse's Oglalas (p. 123).

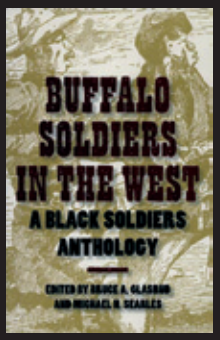
The author falls into a trap of his own in his persistent characterization of the soldiers' Model 1863 rifle-muskets as "obsolete" (pp. 34, 132, and 152, among others). Compared to their not-yet-deployed breech-loading replacements that proved so effective at the Hayfield and Wagon Box fights, the muzzle-loaders could perhaps be seen as obsolete, firing three shots per minute instead of the breech-loaders' twelve. Those rifle-muskets had been sufficient, though, to suppress the Army of Northern Virginia without anyone complaining of obsolescence, and Fetterman's opponents were armed with bows and a very few muzzle-loaders. Writers focus on the muzzle-loaders only in reference to the breech-loaders used to such effect the following year; they might as well complain that Fetterman lacked M16 assault rifles. In Monnett's account, Fetterman, with or without reliable support from his subordinate officers, did his best in a difficult situation and simply could not overcome the enormous odds arrayed against him by skilled tacticians.

In recounting this oft-told tale, albeit with some important twists, John Monnett observes that "in the twenty-first century both Indian and non-Indian peoples are now seeking answers to questions as to what constitutes a shared history" (p. 209).

His work goes a long way toward assembling a clear narrative of a pivotal event in the clash of cultures on the Powder River in 1866 and offers a partial model for that shared history in the American West.

Dr. Geoffrey Hunt is a historian and chair of social sciences at the Community College of Aurora in Colorado. He received his Ph.D. in history at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Buffalo Soldiers in the West: A Black Soldiers Anthology



Edited by Bruce A. Glasrud
and Michael N. Searles
Texas A&M University Press, 2007
Pp. 319. $19.95

Review by Roger D. Cunningham

Over the past twenty years, interest in black military history during the nineteenth century has increased greatly. Scores of articles and books about the United States Colored Troops units that fought in the Civil War and the regiments of black infantry and cavalry that served in the postwar Regular Army (the "Buffalo Soldiers") have been published. To this body of work is now added *Buffalo Soldiers in the West*, an anthology of seventeen articles that were originally published in journals between 1971 and 1999. It is the first anthology on the black regulars to be published and is edited by Bruce A. Glasrud, who recently retired from the faculty of Sul Ross University, in Alpine, Texas, and Michael N. Searles, who teaches history at Augusta State University in Georgia.

One of the book's more interesting essays is by Alan K. Lamm, a professor of history at Mount Olive College in North Carolina. Dr. Lamm's essay, "Buffalo Soldier Chaplains of the Old West," discusses the first five African American chaplains that were appointed to the black regiments. When the latter units were created in 1866, they were the only ones in the Army authorized to have their own chaplains. These chaplains, who were initially white, were expected to teach the largely illiterate soldiers how to read and write. The first African American chaplain was Henry Vinton Plummer, who served in the 9th Cavalry from 1884 until 1894, when he was dismissed from the Army. In 1894, while stationed at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, Plummer was court-martialed for conduct unbecoming an officer. After joining several sergeants in toasting the promotion of one of the men, Plummer visited one of their quarters while the noncommissioned officer was away, and the sergeant later complained that Plummer should not have been there with his wife and daughter. Plummer was found guilty, dishonorably discharged from the Army, and died in 1905. Many years later, the Committee to Clear Chaplain Plummer took up his case, and in 2005 it convinced the Army Board for the Correction of Military Records to upgrade his discharge to honorable. The board, however, "declined to remove the stain of Plummer's court-martial and conviction."[1] The other four black chaplains had much more successful military careers, especially Allen Allensworth of the 24th Infantry, who retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1907. The author concludes that all of these chaplains worked hard to perform their duties, educate their troops, and fight racism. Although they "recognized that racism existed in the army, all five believed that the military was the best opportunity for young black males of the day" (p. 81).

A somewhat controversial topic is discussed by DeAnne Blanton, a senior military archivist at the National Archives, in her essay, "Cathay Williams: Black Woman Soldier, 1866–68." In 1891, Cathay Williams filed for a federal disability pension based on her military service in the 38th Infantry, one of the Army's first six black regiments. She claimed that she had served as an infantryman named William Cathey for almost two years (of a three-year enlistment) before being discharged with a surgeon's statement of disability at Fort Bayard, New Mexico, in 1868. The Pension Bureau rejected her claim for medical reasons, so the question of her identity was never raised or confirmed. The details of her life after that rejection, including where and when she died, are unknown. Although it is well written, Blanton's essay is very speculative and thinly footnoted because there are few documents on which to base this amazing story. Even given the rudimentary medical coverage that soldiers received in the mid-nineteenth century, it is hard to believe that a woman could have masqueraded as a man for so long without being detected. There are admittedly proven instances of it happening during the Civil War, but many of those cases are based on much stronger documentation.

The book's other essays cover a wide variety of topics, from the assignment of the first black Regular Army units to western posts just after the Civil War to the role of the 24th Infantry band at Columbus, New Mexico, from 1916 until 1922. The authors include William A. Dobak, a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History, and Frank N. Schubert, a retired Department of Defense historian. The editors seem to have imposed a limit of one essay per author, so that other equally worthy journal articles by Schubert and other prolific authors were omitted.

The volume concludes with a lengthy bibliography listing more than four hundred fifty articles, books, chapters from books, dissertations, and one or two master's theses that deal with black military history through the early twentieth century. This bibliography is quite useful as a tool for further research, but it has only a handful of entries for publications printed after the year 2000. It fails to list a recent biography of Charles Young (the third African American to graduate from West Point in 1889), as well as a book dealing solely with his

cadet years, and several relevant scholarly journal articles.

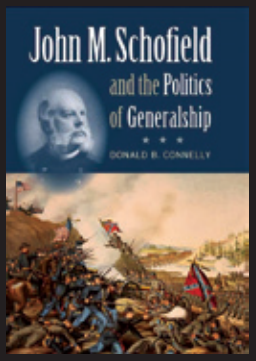
These are minor flaws, however, and they do not prevent the essays in *Buffalo Soldiers in the West* from constituting a useful resource for both scholars and general readers. The essays present a good look at the first six decades of African American service in the Regular Army, and readers who are interested in that topic will want to add the book to their military libraries.

Notes

1. *Washington Post*, 10 February 2005.

Roger D. Cunningham is a retired Army officer who has contributed many articles and book reviews to *Army History* over the past decade. He is the author of *The Black Citizen-Soldiers of Kansas, 1864–1901* (Columbia, Mo., 2008).

John M. Schofield and the Politics of Generalship



By Donald B. Connelly
University of North Carolina Press, 2006
Pp. xii, 471. $49.95

Review by Thomas Goss

"From the Civil War to 'Root Reforms,' General Schofield played an influential role in the formulation of American military policy and especially in shaping the American military profession" (p. 1). With this thesis, Donald B. Connelly begins his *John M. Schofield and the Politics of Generalship* and lets the reader know up front this book seeks to be far more than just a general's biography. Connelly is an associate professor of joint and multinational operations at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and brings this background in military thinking into this book, which is based on his 2003 dissertation at the University of Houston. As a result, this book is really three books in one. By taking a basically chronological approach to not just the life, but the times of Schofield and the role he played, Connolly combines a biography of Schofield with an examination of evolving military campaigns, military professionalism, and civil-military relations throughout his long-storied life.

The first theme of this book is the life story of a fascinating military leader. In the first full biography of Lt. Gen. John McAllister Schofield (1831–1906), Connelly provides both range and depth to every major facet of Schofield's military career: his siding with the radical Unionists in Missouri in 1861 against the lawfully elected governor; his commanding the Department of Missouri, balancing the fighting of guerrillas with the constant call to reinforce field armies; his commanding a corps, then the Army of the Ohio, under Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman during all the major campaigns in the West and the campaigns penetrating into the South; his commanding the Department of Virginia (as well as a short stint as secretary of war) during Reconstruction; his commanding a department in the West dealing with Indian tribes; and his rising to become the commanding general of the U.S. Army. While seen in history in the shadow of generals like Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman, the Schofield that emerges in these pages is an important military figure in his own right, having served as a department, corps, and army commander during critical campaigns of the Civil War, most especially as the Union commander at the battles of Spring Hill and Franklin, which all but crippled John B. Hood's Army of Tennessee. But it is Schofield's own assessment of Sherman's generalship and Connelly's analysis of Schofield's role as an emerging reformer that this reader found most rewarding in the first half of the book that addresses the Civil War years.

The second theme running through the book is the birth of a professional U.S. military officer corps. Building on and expanding Samuel Huntington's framework of expertise, social responsibility, and corporateness as the pillars of military professionalism, Connelly links aspects of Schofield's leadership with the greater struggle for professional autonomy occurring during Schofield's military career. Over nearly four critical decades, Schofield acted as a key agent for reform, and Connelly well documents these efforts while Schofield served as an interim secretary of war, as Sherman's confidant while Sherman was commanding general, as superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy, as commanding general himself, and finally as an adviser to Elihu Root after retirement. While many military and civilian leaders played various roles in the professionalization of the U.S. Army officer corps, the Schofield that comes to light in these pages single-handedly helped advance the acceptance of military autonomy by his example of military authority accommodating the needs and wants of elected and appointed political leaders.

The third theme addresses the dynamic changes in civil-military relations during Schofield's life and the role he played in the emergence of modern civil control over the military. Because the Civil War and Reconstruction marked the two periods of greatest challenge to civil-military relations in this country's history, examining Schofield's struggles and decisions in Civil War Missouri as a field commander and as a commander during Reconstruction and his critical actions as commanding general all are fertile ground to assess the changing relationships between Army commanders, their commanders in chief, Congress, and the American people. This analysis is what sets this book apart from other studies of key generals in the Civil War

and its aftermath. Connelly describes an affable and confident military leader who lacked the aggressive ego of many of his peers. What emerges in these pages is the impact that Schofield had in instituting the modern American military command system and the importance of his simple willingness as a commander to obey (without infighting or politicking) the civilian leaders the Constitution placed above him.

The strengths of this book are many and include solid scholarship and a clear writing style. The greatest weakness is simply the price of the book, which is too bad given the scholarly value of its arguments. However, this hefty price is offset somewhat by the fact that the reader is in reality getting three good books on the evolution of U.S. military generalship woven into one readable package. By combining a biographic approach with analysis, this book is similar to Allan R. Millett's seminal *The General: Robert L. Bullard and Officership in the United States Army, 1881–1925* (Westport, Conn., 1975), in describing the changing nature of the U.S. Army and politico-military relations through the lens of the life of a key military leader involved in critical events. All this is possible because of both the author's approach and the material he chose as the subject of his work: the life and times of General Schofield, an American military leader who played an important role in all three pillars of senior military generalship in the United States—military campaigning, officer professionalism, and civil-military relations.

Col. Thomas Goss earned his Ph.D. in history from Ohio State University and is the author of *War within the Union High Command: Politics and Generalship during the Civil War* (Lawrence, Kans., 2003). He is currently deployed as the executive officer to the deputy commanding general for operations, U.S. Forces–Iraq.

The Son Tay Raid: American POWs in Vietnam Were Not Forgotten

By John Gargus
Texas A&M University Press, 2007
Pp. xv, 332. $29.95

Review by Eric Setzekorn

Lost amid the thousands of books and articles on the U.S. aspects of the Vietnam conflict have been accurate depictions of the operational middle ground between high-level strategy and ground-level tactics. John Gargus' 2007 work, *The Son Tay Raid: American POWs in Vietnam Were Not Forgotten*, is a dense but successful effort to follow a historic mission from conception through execution. As the largest U.S. special operation of the war involving over a hundred aircraft and dozens of Special Forces personnel, the November 1970 raid on the prisoner-of-war (POW) camp at Son Tay failed to rescue any American POWs because the prisoners had been moved but was a triumph of planning and execution. While perhaps too detailed for the casual reader, it adds significantly to our knowledge of Vietnam-era special operations and our larger understanding of the professional, tight-knit special operations community that is so vital in current U.S. military engagements.

John Gargus, a retired Air Force veteran of numerous special operations missions, identifies and closes several important gaps in our understanding of the famous Son Tay raid using newly discovered and recently declassified materials along with exhaustive research. Previous accounts of the raid, such as Benjamin Schemmer's work *The Raid* (New York, 1976), were either too contemporary to the event to allow access to sensitive materials or were focused on high-level politics and intelligence. Relying on not just his own memories as a participant in the raid, Gargus draws on dozens of personal accounts by raid members and countless official documents to present an incredibly intricate retelling of the six-month mission arc, from planning to training through execution. Structured in a straightforward chronological arrangement with chapters headed "Conception," "Training and Planning," "Preparations in SE Asia," and "Mission," Gargus' narrative proceeds in direct, workmanlike fashion with sometimes excessive attention to detail.

First conceived in May 1970 as a bold attempt to free several dozen U.S. POWs held at Son Tay, twenty-three miles west of Hanoi, raid planning was approved under the direct control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, bypassing both General Creighton W. Abrams at Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and Admiral John S. McCain Jr. at U.S. Pacific Command. Gargus does an excellent job in developing the backgrounds of many of the raid members, particularly the legendary ground force commander Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons. The degree of precision that went into the preparation of ground and air elements is simply astonishing. On top of basic mission requirements for peak physical fitness and elite proficiency in military skills were added the additional demands of rescuing the prisoners, which required specialized training and cumbersome equipment. Gargus is at his best when describing the planning and training portions of the mission, including the development of such mind-boggling techniques as drafting, or slipstreaming, a UH–1 Iroquois helicopter off a C–130 Hercules transport plane from less than ten feet behind the wing. The vivid portrayal impresses on the reader a profound respect for the skills, dedication, and professionalism of the entire operation team.

The lengthiest section of the book, spanning 92 pages out of the total 265, is dedicated to the raid itself on the night of 20 November 1970. The complexity and scope of the raid, which required large deployments of specialized air assets and naval vessels and extensive diversionary efforts, are all painstakingly re-created, with particular emphasis on air operations. The almost anticlimactic ease with which the ground forces overcame Vietnamese resistance and gained entry to the camp speaks to the accuracy of the planning and appropriateness of the training. The shock and incredulity of the assault force when the camp is discovered to be empty is best conveyed by Gargus' highlighting the order of the assault leader, Dick Meadows, to re-search the empty cells in disbelief that the brilliant planning and execution would not be able to accomplish the mission.

As the book is an operational account, Gargus devotes relatively little time to the legacy of the Son Tay raid and its political aftermath. He wisely sidesteps discussion of the conspiracy theorists who believe the helicopter landing of Colonel Simons and one assault section at the adjacent site known as the secondary school was not accidental, although he does repeat claims that the team did come into contact with still unidentified non-Vietnamese forces. Gargus also barely mentions the post-raid political battles over so-called intelligence failures that led to one of the U.S. government's seemingly endless reorganizations of the intelligence community. Unlike previous attempts to examine the impact of the raid, the author is able to incorporate the postwar recollections of prisoners of war, which reveal that U.S. prisoners were moved from small, primitive camps to the more developed Hoa Lo "Hanoi Hilton" facility following the raid, leading to a tremendously improved quality of life. These accounts also highlight the incalculably beneficial effect that news of the raid had on the morale of U.S. prisoners of war.

Despite relentless attention to detail, Gargus nevertheless succeeds in developing as a powerful unifying theme woven throughout the book the professional ethos and deep-rooted values of the special operations community. The insular environment of the training facility at Eglin Air Force Base, in particular, facilitates Gargus' depiction of the shared culture of duty, service, and, if called for, sacrifice, which bridged service and functional divisions in the special operations community. This rare insight into this culture enhances our understanding of the powerful motivations that impelled the raiders to volunteer for a long-distance helicopter assault through a dense air defense network knowing that the mission could well end with the would-be rescuers captive in the very prison they came to liberate. The genuine emotions that are conveyed by Bull Simons when he says of the mission, "This is something American prisoners have a right to expect of their fellow soldiers" (p. 151), would sound somewhat hollow without the personal meaning Gargus is able to successfully communicate to the reader.

Although *The Son Tay Raid* offers a wealth of factual information, the sheer volume of military acronyms, names, and technical terms make much of the book a difficult read even with an extensive glossary and appendix. While those with a military background should be able to follow along with moderate effort, general readership will be restricted to only the most enthusiastic and highly caffeinated. This work deserves a prominent place in military collections, offering insights not just on Vietnam but also the development of U.S. special operations forces.

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The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity

By Antoine Bousquet
Columbia University Press, 2009
Pp. ix, 265. $35

Review by Mark T. Calhoun

Throughout history, military theory and practice have developed in parallel with scientific discoveries and intellectual trends. This has been particularly evident since the Scientific Revolution of the late sixteenth century. Antoine Bousquet, a lecturer in international relations, at Birkbeck College, University of London, analyzes how the relationship among science, technology, and warfare has evolved during this period in *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity*.

Bousquet identifies four distinct, evolutionary "technoscientific regimes" that have each held sway during a portion of the modern era: the mechanistic, thermodynamic, cybernetic, and chaoplexic. The book begins with an introductory chapter that provides a concise summary of the developments in science, philosophy, and military theory, which set the stage for the scientific way of warfare. He devotes the next six chapters to detailed discussions of the four regimes, describing the key technologies, scientific concepts, and forms of warfare specific to each. A concluding chapter summarizes the key points of Bousquet's argument and assesses the degree to which America's scientific way of warfare has embraced the intellectual concepts of the chaoplexic regime.

In the introduction, Bousquet describes the practice of warfare as an effort to impose order on chaos, and surveys

the various scientific developments and theories that increasingly led modern armies to rely on science and technology to achieve this goal. The crucial achievement of the Scientific Revolution was Isaac Newton's synthesis of the previously distinct practices of theoretical thinking and technological activity, which created an interrelationship that supplied a key source of metaphors to the discourse of Western society. Bousquet argues that each of the resulting technoscientific regimes centered on a guiding metaphor: in the mechanistic regime it was the clock; in the thermodynamic regime, the engine; in the cybernetic regime, the computer; and in the chaoplexic regime, the network. With this foundation as a jumping-off point, Bousquet describes each regime in detail, providing perhaps the most lucid and well-developed history of the growing affinity between science and military practice currently available.

Most readers will be familiar with the characteristics of the mechanistic and thermodynamic regimes. The invention of the mechanical clock in the thirteenth century and the refinement of its precision over the succeeding centuries enabled a new orderliness in human activity, and the clock soon became the guiding metaphor in Western discourse. The universe came to be viewed as a mechanical system that was governed by laws of nature and behaved in predictable patterns of geometric precision. This mechanistic worldview was readily apparent in the military realm, which emphasized orderliness through drill—taken to its ultimate expression in the clockwork precision of Frederick the Great's Prussian Army. However, just as the mechanistic regime reached this pinnacle of perfection, the worldwide political upheaval resulting from the dramatic events of the French Revolution laid the intellectual groundwork for a change in worldview. The advent of the steam and later the internal combustion engine sparked the Industrial Revolution and with it the thermodynamic regime. Discovery of the laws of thermodynamics resulted in awareness of the principle of entropy, which dictates closed systems experience ever-increasing disorder. While the clock merely transfers movement along predictable mechanical linkages, the engine transforms energy to motion in powerful and often unpredictable ways. With the engine as its new metaphor, the West's discourse thus shifted from orderliness and precision to instability and change, reflected in the nineteenth century's political revolutions and the rapid growth in scope and intensity of armed conflict.

The West, and in particular the United States, emerged from the thermodynamic regime in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Advances in computing and communication technology caused a shift from a physical to an informational worldview and led to the field of cybernetics in which man and computer worked together as components of computer-enabled servomechanisms. Military applications included antiaircraft defense systems, air traffic control networks, and research efforts in areas such as cybernetic organisms that would seamlessly integrate man and machine. Cybernetics failed to deliver on this and many other promises and hit a low point with the operations research and systems analysis debacle that contributed to defeat in Vietnam. Nevertheless, many key characteristics of cybernetics survived the most recent evolution to today's chaoplexic regime, which blends the "new sciences" of chaos and complexity (combined in the term *chaoplexic*) with the enhancement of computing power provided by the network. Officially embraced as Defense Department doctrine under the moniker "Network Centric Warfare," this new regime has promised to usher in a revolution in military affairs (RMA) leading to unprecedented U.S. military dominance enabled by information superiority and precision weaponry.

Promoters of Network Centric Warfare claim its principles stand on a foundation of the new sciences' nonlinear dynamics, but Bousquet convincingly argues that it is in fact "in complete contradiction with the principles of chaos and complexity theory. Warfare cannot be completely predicted or controlled, knowledge is imperfect, and redundancy allows for great adaptability and resilience in the face of contingency" (p. 218). Contrary to the claims of RMA proponents, America has not fully embraced the chaoplexic way of war; it is merely building on the foundation of the previous cybernetic regime, which sought increased control and centralization by exploiting information system capabilities. The key lesson in the demise of cybernetics seems to have been forgotten: nonlinear systems' sensitivity to initial conditions means no matter how much information is available, long-term predictability is severely limited and, furthermore, greater access to information does not address Clausewitz's pronouncement of its inherent unreliability.

Bousquet's reminder that the most successful armies have acknowledged and accounted for unpredictability in war does little to recommend specific adjustments within the chaoplexic regime. He advocates military swarming tactics as more in line with the nonlinear nature of warfare than network-enabled command and control but admits that the notion of information-enabled bottom-up "self-synchronization" is equally in conflict with the principles of the complexity theory. If, as the author suggests, the "new sciences" are in fact a rediscovery of ideas first advocated in the nineteenth century by Poincare, perhaps a return to more traditional methods emphasizing decentralized command of flexible, redundant formations is advisable. To this end, Antoine Bousquet's *The Scientific Way of Warfare* serves as both a clear and detailed history of the interrelationship of science and warfare and a reminder that the promise of chaoplexic warfare is to understand how to exploit the inherent unpredictability of war rather than attempting to subject its practice to an unrealistic degree of predictability and control. This is essential reading for the student of modern military affairs.

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The Chief Historian's Footnote

Dr. Richard W. Stewart

Knowledge Management

"Knowledge Is Good"

Motto of the fictional Faber College
from the movie *Animal House*

One of the more annoying things about being a military or civilian leader in the Army is the marked predilection of our senior leaders to force us to indulge in various management "fads." These fads, each with its own set of unique (and confusing) terms, precepts, and acolytes, seem to appear on a cycle of five to eight years and engage the attentions of military writers and senior managers far beyond the worth of the concepts themselves. These management ideas have included such worthies as MAPTOE (Management Practices in Table of Organization and Equipment [TOE] units, if you must know) from the early 1970s; Organizational Effectiveness (OE) in the mid-1970s; Excellence in this, that, or the other thing in the 1980s; Total Quality Management (TQM) in the 1990s; Lean Six Sigma, still alive and kicking; and lately at Headquarters, Department of the Army, "The Army Enterprise" (and what is this Enterprise—an Army starship?). These fads seek to uncover new principles of organizational, informational, or leader effectiveness, but more often they end up putting old wine in new bottles at great cost and leave us merely amused. At best they simply use new terms to express more-or-less familiar concepts. At worst, they confuse us while taking valuable time away from actually performing our duties. Mostly, those of us in the historical management world take note of their existence, say the new words when necessary, and take comfort in that oldest and best slice of philosophy, "This too shall pass." This may not be possible, however, with the newest fad, "Knowledge Management," as historians certainly do have a role to play in generating and applying knowledge (we like to call it education). We simply cannot ignore this new term or the ideas that are behind it.

What is Knowledge Management, or KM? In short, the term highlights the importance of capturing, sifting, distilling, presenting, and using data, information, lessons learned, and history in new and more comprehensive ways. In its most extreme form, KM seeks to create one grand, rationalized system of information, which would be accessible online throughout the Army. (Don't get me started on the whole fascination with distance learning—it won't be pretty.) Such a system would, ideally, make more databases and repositories of information available to a wide audience, including students, action officers, doctrine writers, and even deployed soldiers. It is, in many ways, a logical consequence of placing as much data as possible online in order to widen the audience of users and improve the "reach back" capability of operational units in theater. Yet, while the process offers many benefits, it is also accompanied by a few drawbacks and potential problems.

KM is the latest in a long line of attempts to "transform" the Army by creating huge databases of facts, accessible in most cases by the creative use of keywords, in a grand effort to "have a force with agile capabilities and adaptive processes powered by world-class network-centric access to knowledge, systems, and services—all interoperable in the joint environment," to quote a recent article in *Military Review* by E. J. Degen.[1] Despite the lapse into jargon-speak, this is not a bad concept. Who wouldn't want a more agile and adaptive Army? Who wouldn't wish to have more information available online so that it could be located more quickly by more people? Again, the idea is not without merit, and it warrants pursuing, but I think we should post some warnings up front before the KM process gets fully enshrined in doctrine.

One of my concerns is that KM may be just another case of "network-centric" operations run amok. Some seem to believe that if we have enough automated networks they will somehow create intelligence by their very existence. I think most historians would agree that it is better to have more knowledge and information than less. But will a

huge database of bits of information, after action reports (if units would actually write them), manuals, interviews, and historical vignettes really facilitate the exchange of knowledge? Or would the Army just be preparing another quarry of factoids from which disparate and unconnected smidgeons of information can be downloaded in a quantity that will only overwhelm any Army leader or student? Those who write doctrine, correctly described by Degen as the "result of our analysis of linkages between history, theory, experimentation, and practice," might make good use of better databases to view more sources that could assist them in generating better doctrine.[2] However, unanalyzed and unsifted (and thus unverified) "knowledge nuggets" may only present the more casual student, analyst, thinker, or deployed soldier with a grab bag of "wikipedia-like" information. A KM database could well be just another collection of unconnected and untested tidbits that really could not be considered "knowledge" by any stretch of the imagination. To the intelligence community, the difference between information and intelligence is that information is unsifted and untested data, whereas intelligence results when information is analyzed by a mind trained to see connections and trends. More broadly, knowledge is information that has been distilled by an analyst, writer, historian, social or physical scientist, or some other trained practitioner able to make sense of it and present it in a usable and useful way. Knowledge is more than mere collected facts—it is, in a very real sense, distilled wisdom.

Knowledge management is thus not, in itself, a bad idea. But historians and others need to work hard to ensure that *knowledge* is indeed what is managed and placed in context and not just inchoate data points. Historians are in the knowledge business, and we need to involve ourselves in the knowledge management process in order to steer it in the right directions to ensure that actual knowledge, and not just raw information, is stored and made available.

Notes

1. Then–Lt. Col. (P) E. J. Degen, "Knowledge Management by the Generating Force," *Military Review* 88 (July–August 2008): 102–10, quote, p. 109.
2. Ibid., p. 103.

Letter to the Editor

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the Winter 2010 edition of *Army History*, especially the article by Charles P. Neimeyer entitled "The British Occupation of Newport, Rhode Island, 1776–1779." The author's opening paragraph caught my attention when he listed the British Army's occupation of "five major colonial American coastal cities": Boston, New York, Newport, Savannah, and Charleston. As a native Philadelphian, I was somewhat dismayed to see that he omitted my hometown from the list. While technically not a *coastal* city, being situated on the Delaware River, the port city of Philadelphia, as every schoolchild knows, played a major role in the Revolutionary War. Furthermore, from Brandywine to Paoli, Germantown, and Valley Forge, the Philadelphia area figures prominently in the history of the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps. And so I would add Philadelphia as a sixth city to Mr. Neimeyer's list. In 1777 and 1778, Maj. Gen. Sir William Howe and his British forces occupied the city and surrounding areas, and the lovely Mrs. Elizabeth Loring occupied General Howe, but then that's another story.

William Rittenhouse
Smithfield, Virginia

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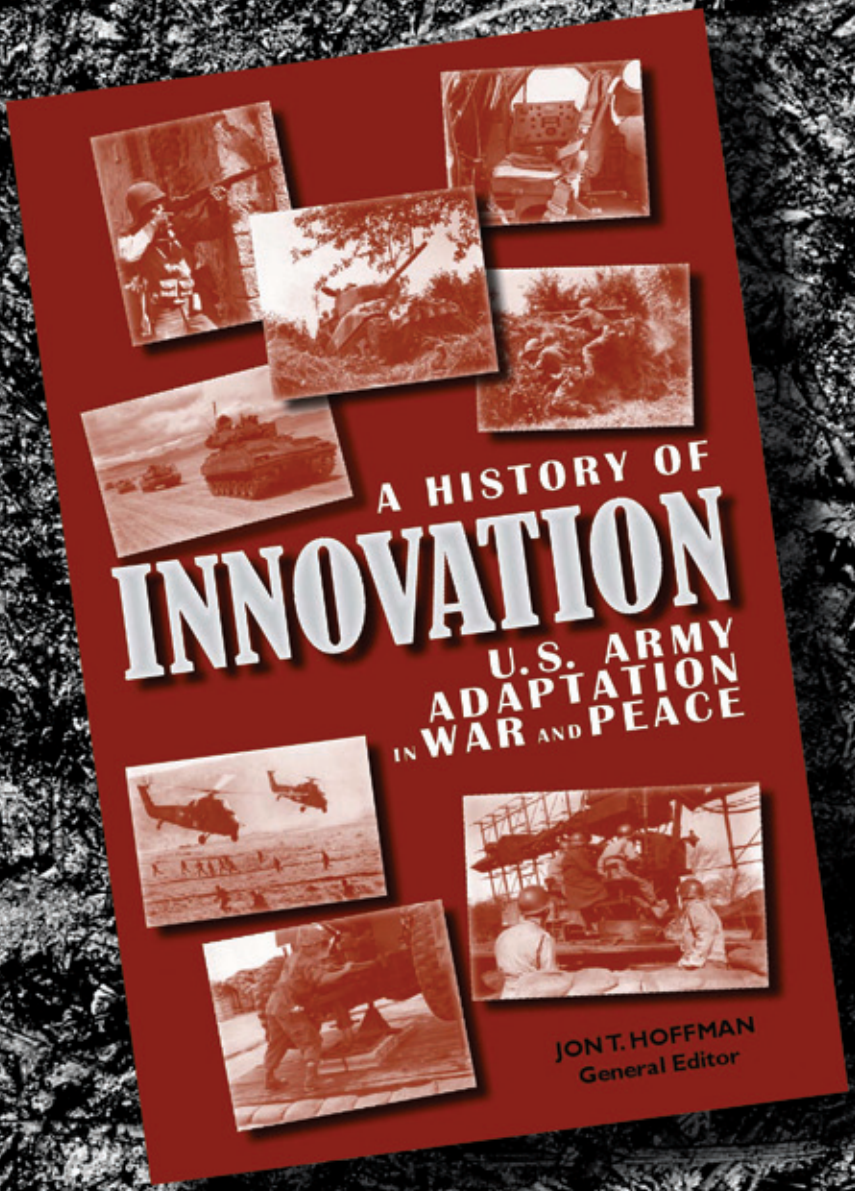
See page 5 for more information.