

ISSUE 51

# COMMAND

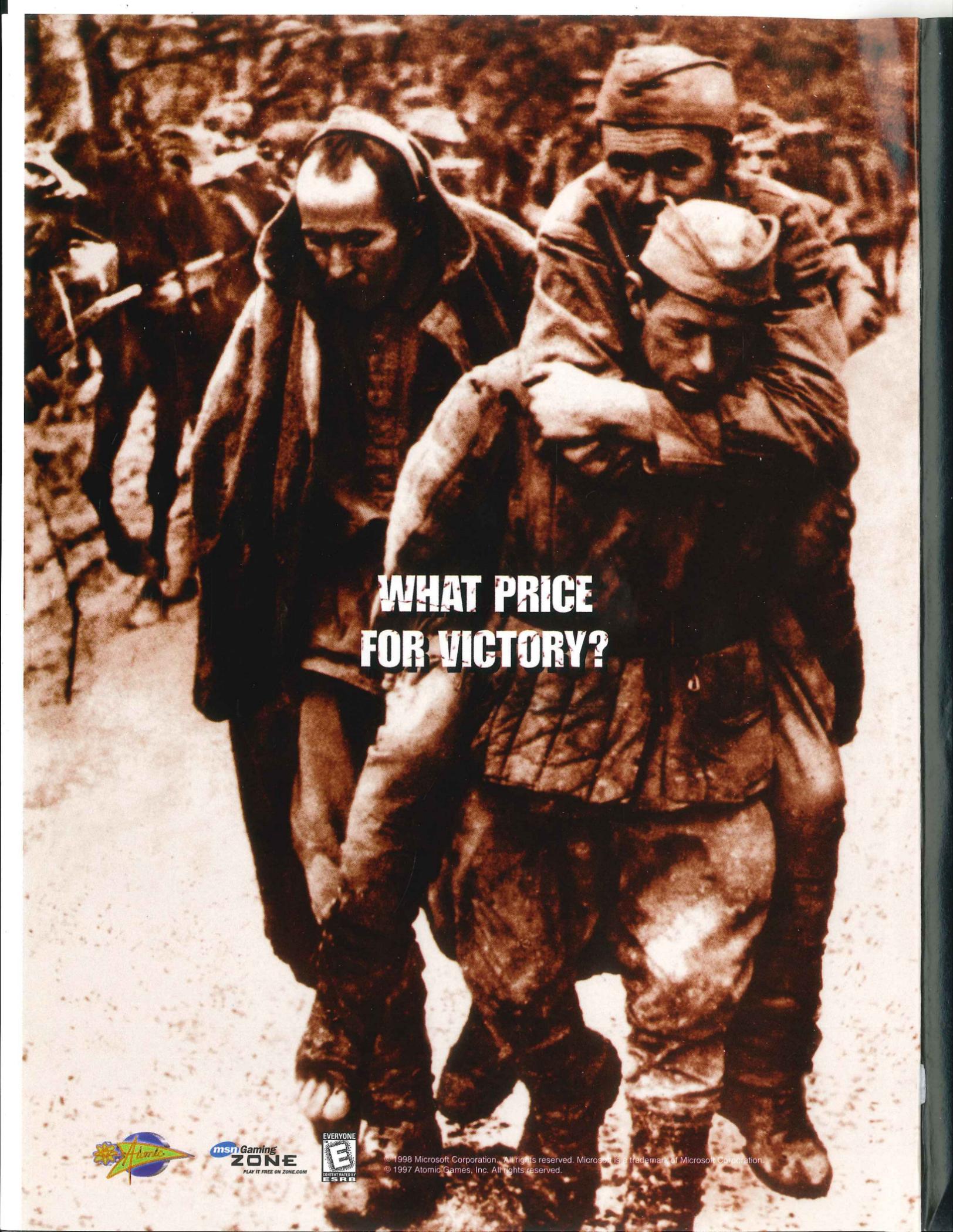
MILITARY HISTORY, STRATEGY & ANALYSIS

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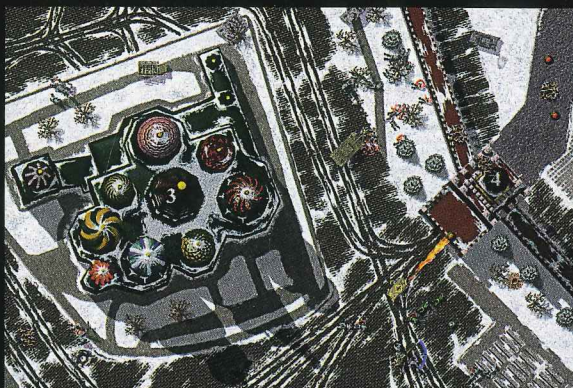


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# COMMAND

## MILITARY HISTORY, STRATEGY & ANALYSIS

ISSUE 51

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**Cover:** The Courageous Twelve by Mark Churms.  
Doughboys from a dozen states overrun German  
positions in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.



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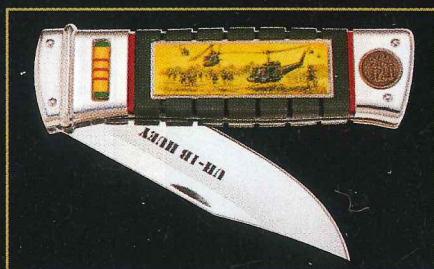
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2	Kepi, Backpack, Advancing	36	Soft-hat, blanket, Cmd
3	Kepi, Backpack, Charging	71	Zouaves, Fez, Marching
4	Kepi, Backpack, Loading	76	Zouaves, Fez, Cmd
5	Kepi, Backpack, Firing	82	Zouaves, Strawhat, Advancing
6	Kepi, Backpack, Cmd	86	Zouaves, Strawhat, Cmd
12	Kepi, Blanket, Advancing	ARTILLERY	
13	Kepi, Blanket, Charging	201	Napoleon Gun
14	Kepi, Blanket, Loading	202	Rifled Gun
15	Kepi, Blanket, Firing	221	Gunners in Kepi
16	Kepi, Blanket, Cmd	222	Gunners in Soft-hat
22	Iron Brigade, Advancing	241	2 Limbers each with 2 Horses
23	Iron Brigade, Charging	242	6 Limber Horses
24	Iron Brigade, Loading	CAVALRY	
25	Iron Brigade, Firing	101	Kepi, Sabre at Ready
26	Iron Brigade, Cmd	102	Kepi, Waving Sabre
31	Soft-hat, blanket, Marching	103	Kepi, Carbine
32	Soft-hat, blanket, Advancing	104	Kepi, Pistol
33	Soft-hat, blanket, Charging	105	Kepi, Cmd
34	Soft-hat, blanket, Loading	122	Soft-hat, Waving Sabre
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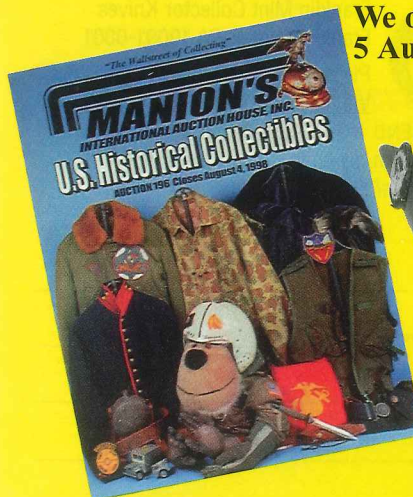
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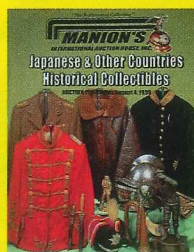


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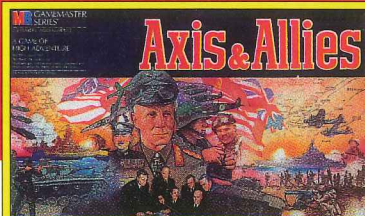
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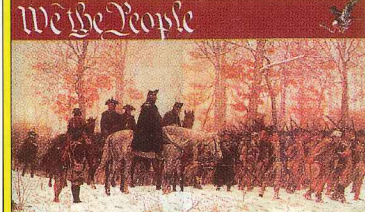


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# SHORT ROUNDS

Weapons Backdate...

## The Davis Gun: Aircraft Artillery in World War I

In 1906, US Naval Comdr. Clelend Davis, an 1890 graduate of Annapolis, began to work on developing a large caliber aerial gun capable of firing a well-aimed, high-explosive shell at distances of more than 2,000 yards. He visualized a weapon of that kind as the perfect way to strike at both land and sea targets from the air.

In August 1911 he submitted a patent application for an "Aeroplane Gun," commenting on the form: "It having been demonstrated that it is practical to navigate the air under normal atmospheric conditions — and, while as yet, the practice is too hazardous for ordinary commercial purposes — aircraft have already become a part of the military equipment of major world powers. So far, however, they are of little offensive value."

Davis designed two, six and 12-pounder versions of his innovative weapon. In its original form the gun itself served as a counterbalance and was expended along with the fired projectile. But since only one shell could be fired from such a gun, the design's use for actual warfare was obviously limited.

Three months later, however, Davis submitted another patent on his idea. The new design called for both a breechlock and shell to be held in a disposal connection. Upon firing the gun the projectile would be discharged toward the target, and the powder gasses would shoot the breechlock through the top of the barrel-tube and away from the aircraft. The weapon itself didn't recoil when fired. Rather, the breechlock was held

in such a manner it flew to the rear with a force corresponding to that required to propel the shell. Consequently little stress was placed on the frame of the aircraft. As before, though, the gun was limited to one shot per flight.

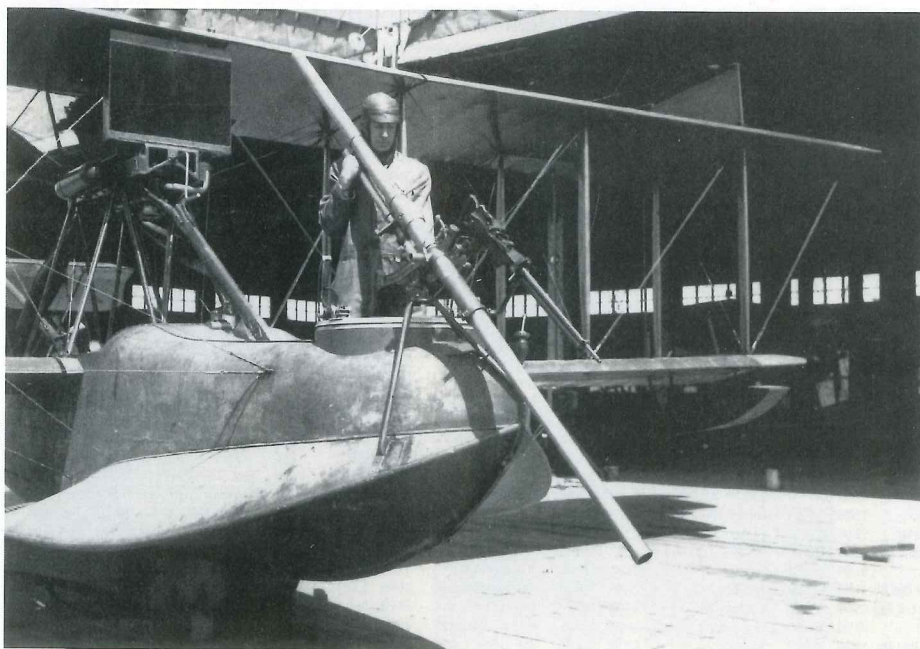
Davis remained determined to improve his recoilless gun, and in 1913 he filed yet another patent. It was issued on 24 August 1914, just in time for the beginning of World War I. He stated in his new application: "The object of this new improvement is to provide an apparatus that will be light enough to be carried on an aircraft along with one or more projectiles — to be readily loaded and reloaded — to be quickly and conveniently clamped in any desired position — and that can be fired with as little recoil as possible, so as not to put undue strain upon the aeroplane."

Specifically, he'd devised a means by which he could uncouple the center of the gun tube, insert a shell, reclamp the tube and fire the weapon. He was also granted a patent on the type of ammunition and recoil material to be used in the operation of the gun.

In the new model, Davis set a powder charge propellant, along with a few wads of felt, behind the projectile. He then placed a compensating recoil weight of bird-shot into the breechlock. On firing the gun, the recoil mass was forcefully expelled from the top of the tube.

He also noted the gun could be rifled, preferably with the powder charge turning in the opposite direction of the shell. The twisting of the projectile, and the compensating weight in the opposite direction, caused the two forces to neutralize all rotary movement of the gun on its axis.

Davis' aircraft artillery piece generated interest among other inventors who hoped to capitalize on the revolutionary concept of the new weapon. For the most part, however, they only improved on the device without changing the basic idea. For example, in 1917, Charles John Cooke believed he could increase the number of shells carried by an aircraft by decreasing



*Lt. Ditman in the cockpit of an HS-1 Flying Boat aiming a Davis 6 pounder gun downwards. (Elsilrac Ent.)*

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the weight of the recoil material. His plan was to elongate the rear section of the gun barrel. In that way the gun would remain balanced and additional shells could be carried. In his patent application Cooke recommended the gun should be of five-inch caliber and slightly more than six feet long.

In May 1918 another patent based on the Davis gun concept was filed by L.Y. Spear and G.C. Davison. The particular problem they were concerned about was the possibility of the projectile case jamming in the gun after firing. Their solution was to combine the shell's cartridge casing and recoil mass into a single unit that could be discharged from the gun by the pressure of the gasses from the exploding powder. The cartridge case itself, therefore, became the recoil mass, counterbalancing the projectile and preventing the mechanism from being clogged. That was accomplished by providing a series of holes in the shell casing through which the gasses could be vented. The pressure of the gasses inside and outside the cartridge became equalized and prevented shell expansion.

Each of the inventors believed the recoilless gun could be used in air-to-ground combat. Davis claimed his design could protect an aircraft from surface-to-air fire while the plane was attacking ships, submarines or ground installations.

The British Admiralty soon ordered several Davis guns through the General Ordnance Company of Connecticut. The weapons were shipped to Shoeburyness, England, where a six-pounder was mounted on a Royal Navy seaplane. It proved accurate at ranges up to 2,000 yards, and had a maximum range of 8,000 yards. The British were impressed and further orders were made. By October 1915, then, the Royal Navy had purchased more than 300 of the guns. In addition to mounting them on aircraft, the British also planned to put them on armored cars and motor boats.

In early February 1916, officers of the Admiralty Air Service met to study the results of all the tests conducted with the Davis gun and make final recommendations. They called for more tests on additional types of planes. So a six-pounder was mounted on the side of a BE2c fighter, a type of plane that had been successful battling German Zeppelins in the skies over England. Obsolete aircraft were used as targets by the BE2c at ranges up to 3,000 yards. The trials were successful as far as target damage was concerned, but the gun's discharge and recoil wrecked the parts of the fighter's airframe that were in the immediate path of the back blast.

The Admiralty men realized a larger aircraft would be needed to properly carry such a heavy gun and its ammunition. Various calibers of Davis guns were therefore sent to aircraft manufacturers, and they were asked to come up with a new plane that would be suitable for the weapon.

In the spring of 1917, a remodeled Handley-Page bomber was fitted with a six-pounder Davis gun for use in ground attacks and antisubmarine patrols. It was attached to the nose of the aircraft. When operational trials revealed the recoil blasts were damaging the upper wing of the bomber, the gun mount and wing were modified to correct the problem.

Though the British experiments continued, the weapon saw only limited wartime use. At least one was employed in the 1918 Mesopotamian campaign.

In April 1918, Davis guns were fitted on US Navy seaplanes sent on missions against German U-boats operating off the coast. On those planes the Davis gun was usually combined with a Lewis machinegun. The two weapons' barrels were aligned, and the Lewis was used to ensure correct aim before the bigger weapon was fired.

Despite initially high expectations, by war's end only about 1,000 Davis guns had been manufactured. Even those few were officially declared obsolete in April 1919, and were among the first wartime weapons to be dropped from the American and British ordnance arsenals. But the idea of the recoilless gun didn't die. It was revived during World War II as the famous anti-tank "Bazooka," and two models of German recoilless guns also saw service.

— A.B. Feuer

## Movers & Shakers. . .

# The Real Horatio Hornblower

C.S. Forester's fictional hero of the Napoleonic Wars is probably the most popular naval character of modern times; yet most people don't realize many of his exploits were based on the true-life adventures of a real British frigate captain, Thomas Cochrane. Widely regarded as the most successful frigate commander in the history of the Royal Navy, Cochrane's career is truly the stuff of legend. His amazing life was a combination of incredible highs and lows, filled with so many feats of audacity and heroism he earned the nickname "Sea Wolf."

Born in Lanarkshire, Scotland, on 14 December 1775, Cochrane was the eldest son of the 9th Earl of Dundonald. His father had impoverished the family by squandering his fortune on scientific experiments he carried out on his estates. Young Thomas was only rescued from that poverty by his uncle, also a future admiral and member of Parliament, Sir Alexander Cochrane. He arranged for his nephew to enter the navy aboard a frigate in 1793. A born seaman, Thomas' obvious talents enabled him to rise swiftly through the ranks.

By 1800 Thomas had achieved command of the gun brig *Speedy*, with an assignment to operate in the Mediterranean. Over the next 15 months he captured over 50 prizes, including the 32-gun Spanish frigate *El Gumo*. He was taken prisoner by the French soon thereafter, but was quickly exchanged and promoted to captain. Given command of the frigates *Pallas*, followed

by the *Imperieuse*, he successfully protected the Orkney fisheries before returning to prize-taking off the Azores and in the Bay of Biscay during 1803-06. His unparalleled successes in those operations enabled him to amass a fortune of £75,000 in prize money.

In 1805 he unsuccessfully stood for Parliament from Honiton, but was elected the following year, largely due to his liberal use of bribes. In 1807 he was returned to Parliament as member for Westminster. His efforts to expose navy and government abuses won him the enmity of his superiors, and he was ordered back to sea to get him out of London.

One of Cochrane's most daring exploits was his April 1809 attack with fireships on the French fleet blockaded in the Basque (or Aix) Roads, where his actions won him the Order of the Bath. But the operation proved only partially successful because his fleet commander, Adm. Lord Gambier, failed to follow up Cochrane's opening move. Cochrane's unwise public criticism of his commander resulted in the senior officer's court martial and acquittal. Afterward the politically connected admiral used his influence to deprive him of any further commands at sea.

Discredited and placed on half-pay, the prickly and resolute Cochrane continued to plague his opponents by again taking up the Parliamentary crusade for navy and government reform. In 1814 they seized their chance to be

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rid of him by having Cochrane arrested in connection with a stock exchange fraud charge. Those involved spread rumors Napoleon had died to drive up the price of certain stocks and then sell them at considerable profit. Cochrane was convicted, fined £1,000 and sentenced to a year in prison. He also suffered the humiliation of being forced to stand in a pillory for an hour, was deprived of his Order of Bath and expelled from both Parliament and the navy.

There have always been defenders of Cochrane who believe he was framed. Indeed, the vindictiveness of parts of his punishment reinforce the idea Cochrane's "betters" were going out of their way to see he was once and for all put properly in his place. At any rate, Cochrane's supporters never lost faith in him; he was reelected for Westminster in 1815 while still in prison. In a bold gesture of defiance, he broke out of his cell and made his way into the House of Commons. But he was forcibly removed from the chamber, returned to prison and forced to serve the remaining three months of his sentence while also being fined another £1,000 for the escape attempt.

Seemingly ruined and unemployed, Cochrane's fortunes took a dramatic turn upward in May 1817, when the government of Chile offered him command of that nation's infant navy in its struggle for independence from Spain. Cochrane accepted, arriving in Valparaíso to take over the four-ship navy on 28 November 1818. After failed attempts to draw out the Spanish ships based at Valdivia and Callao during January and February 1819, he cruised his small fleet along the Chilean coast. On 18 June 1820 he captured Valdivia by sailing his flagship, the 50-gun heavy frigate *O'Higgins* (named for the Chilean revolutionary Bernardo O'Higgins), into the harbor, bombarding its 15 forts into submission one after the other, then landing a party to take direct possession of the port.

The seizure of Valdivia broke the Spanish grip on the Chilean coast and paved the way for José de San Martín's invasion of Peru. In September, Cochrane's squadron escorted San Martín's transports north to Pisco to cover their landing, then blockaded the Spanish ships in Callao. On 5 November he led 250 sailors into that harbor in small boats on a cutting-out raid. He managed to seize the Spanish flagship, the frigate *Esmeralda*, and might have captured all the enemy vessels but for a failure of nerve among his subordinates. Still, when San Martín captured Lima in July 1821, the Spanish in Callao were forced to

surrender to Cochrane shortly thereafter. Those two victories established the independence of Peru.

On 21 March 1823, Cochrane transferred his services to Brazil to aid that people in their fight for freedom from Portugal. With his new command he immediately blockaded the superior Portuguese fleet in its base at Bahia. The Portuguese evacuated the city on 2 July, sailing north with over 60 transports escorted by 13 warships. Though Cochrane couldn't hope to defeat such a force with the two frigates he had on hand, that consideration wasn't enough to stop him from at least harassing the convoy. In those actions he once again demonstrated his astounding seamanship by capturing several transports while avoiding the attacks of their warship escorts.

Guessing correctly the Portuguese were bound for Maranhão (São Luiz), he sailed ahead with his flagship, the 50-gun *Pedro Primeiro*, and captured that port in another daring assault. When the Portuguese fleet arrived, it had no place to land and so was forced to turn for Europe, hounded clear across the Atlantic by Cochrane's ships. In 1825 Portugal recognized the independence of Brazil, and Cochrane went home.

In March of that year he was offered command of the Greek navy in that people's battle to gain independence from the Ottomans. His efforts to relieve the siege of the Acropolis

(May-June) were thwarted by squabbling among the various Greek factions, but Cochrane struggled on until 1828. He finally resigned in disgust to protest the rebels' constant infighting and the interminable delays in the delivery of the steamships they'd promised him. Cochrane had earlier been the first man to propose steam-powered warships, and one can only wonder what he might have accomplished if he'd actually gotten command of such a squadron.

Returning to England again, Cochrane began a campaign to clear his name and gain reinstatement to the Royal Navy. In 1831 he succeeded his father as the 10th Earl of Dundonald; and the following year Lord Cochrane was indeed granted pardon, reinstatement and promotion to rear admiral. It's not clear, though, whether those compensatory actions were based on proof of Cochrane's innocence or were carried out merely because he'd become an earl.

Cochrane went on to command the American and West Indies Stations from 1848 to 1851, and was promoted to admiral in that latter year. He also continued his career as political reformer and became a technical innovator, overseeing pioneering experiments in the use of tube boilers, screw propellers and gas warfare. He died in London on 30 October 1860, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

— James A. Yates

## Weapons Backdate. . .

# Rheintochter R3: Nazi Germany's Surface to Air Missile

1942 was a difficult year for Germany. The failure to conquer the Soviet Union, and America's entry into the war, narrowed strategic choices. The eastern front was consuming enormous amounts of resources; Rommel's Africa campaign was still undecided; and the western Allies were stepping up their bombing campaign over Fortress Europe. Ground offensives were implemented to try to solve the Russian and African problems, strategic decisions that ultimately led to the Battles of Stalingrad and El Alamein. But the third problem fell to the Luftwaffe to solve. Though the Allied bombing campaign had yet to inflict serious damage on the Reich, it was apparent to most of the Nazi leadership the strength of that effort was growing and it would undoubtedly become a significant threat in the near future.

The Luftwaffe command tried to approach a solution in three parts. The first two included concentrating on fighter production over bombers, and counter-bombing Great Britain to punish that nation into stopping its strategic air war effort. The V-1 and V-2 "flying bomb" attacks were the final phase of that counter-offensive.

The third part of the solution was the development of guided anti-aircraft missiles that were expected to be more effective than anti-aircraft guns. As with so many potentially decisive German weapons of World War II, those surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) entered service too late to affect the war's outcome. But they did have a significant influence on postwar SAM systems, and the Rheintochter (Rhine Daughter) was one of the most promising designs.

# THE SEVEN DAYS

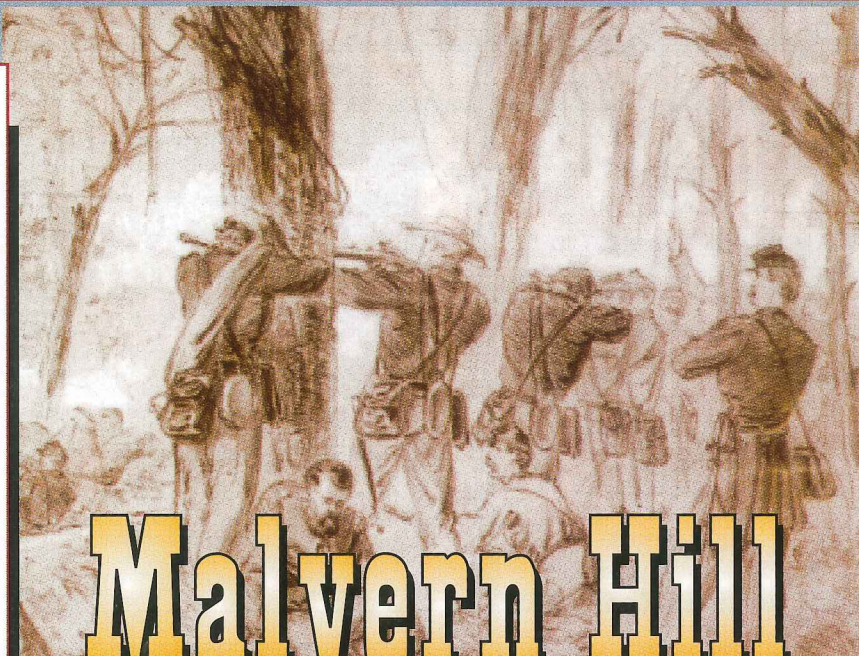
The Seven Days of fierce battles just east of Richmond crested in the final actions at Glendale and Malvern Hill. Backed into a corner along the James River, Little Mac (George B. McClellan) defended his Army of the Potomac against the Rebel final assaults. His campaign was a failure and his enemy, Robert E. Lee, turned north to cripple Pope's Army of Virginia before McClellan could be withdrawn. McClellan grudgingly sent Porter's Corps to help Pope, but was not fully withdrawn from his Penninsular position until after Pope's defeat at 2nd Manassas.

**Malvern Hill** is the last of three linkable games which we have published covering the entire Seven Days Battle. The now final massive linked game showcases the **Civil War, Brigade Series** innovative command rules (which show players the limitations of the real commanders and the command system available) as never before.

Despite its large map area, each Seven Days game is easily playable due to the limited number of counters involved.

**Malvern Hill** covers two battles in the same package. The Battle of Glendale and that of Malvern Hill. Linked with **Gaines Mill** and **Seven Pines** this game shows the entire Seven Days campaign on a nine map play area. The options are numerous. With this installment, the finished set of Seven Days games allows an innovative look at these crucial early ACW battles.

Don't miss this limited edition game—only 2,000 are being printed. Copies of the earlier two games are still available in limited numbers as well.



## Malvern Hill

THE BATTLES OF THE SEVEN DAYS. JUNE, 1862. VOLUME III



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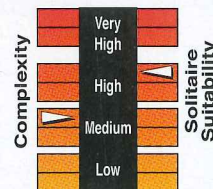
Game No. 13

game designer:  
David A. Powell

series designer:  
Dean N. Essig

### Game Data

- ◆ Die-Cut Counters: 280
- ◆ Full-Color 22"x34" Maps: Three
- ◆ Scenarios: 7
- ◆ Playing Time: 6-20 Hours
- ◆ Players: 1 or more
- ◆ Unit Scale: Brigades
- ◆ Turn Length: 30 Minutes
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- ◆ 1-Map Scenarios: Yes



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were the only answer, but their development was at least two years away. He nevertheless forwarded a two-phase program proposal to Luftwaffe chief Göring on 1 September 1942.

For his plan's first phase, von Axthelm recommended cheap, mass-produced, unguided rockets to be fired *en masse* into Allied bomber formations. Such simple, solid-fueled rockets were to use launchers mounted on standard anti-aircraft gun carriages and use the existing fire control systems for targeting. For the second phase he urged development of command-guided missiles using the same guidance system as the Hs-293 guided-bomb (see Command no. 37 p. 13). He intended the missile operators to guide the rockets onto their targets by keeping the bombers centered in their sights. Eventually, however, he envisioned fully self-guided missiles incorporating built-in homing systems to get them near the targets, and proximity fuses to ensure detonation at optimum range. His proposal was approved on 10 October.

The Rheinmetal-Borsig Corp. had meanwhile been pursuing anti-aircraft rocket development unofficially since the war's start. Von Axthelm's proposal brought government funding and focussed the effort, but labor shortages, the large number of other projects under way, and the armed services' competing priority claims all inhibited the program's timely implementation. Over a year passed before the first prototype was ready for testing.

The Rheintochter I and II missiles enjoyed a successful test program. First ordered in November 1942, the weapon was originally a two-stage, solid-fueled, rail-launched missile system. All variants used solid-fuel booster rockets, but Rheinmetal also planned for the later R-3 model to use a visol-nitric acid liquid-fuel engine for sustained flight. Liquid fuel rockets provided more thrust and had longer burning times, but only a handful of R-3s were ever tested. The majority of launches were conducted with solid-fuel sustainer engines.

The missile employed a modified 88mm Flak 41 gun carriage to support its launcher. The Rheintochter used radio-command guidance, and carried its 330 lb. warhead in the tail of the sustainer section to create maximum fragmentation upon detonation.

Testing began at Libau (in modern-day Lithuania) on 21 August 1943, and continued until the Germans evacuated the area in January 1945. By then the program had run up 78 successful launches and only four failures. Success continued after the program's move to Peenemünde, as

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Rheinmetal shifted to the R-3 variant, which the company intended to offer as the final, operational weapons system. Unfortunately for German efforts in the air war, the final guidance systems had yet to be installed when the program was canceled in February 1945.

The termination was ordered because the Dornberger Committee, which had been set up to rationalize all Germany's anti-aircraft programs, decided the guidance systems would not be ready in time for operational employment. In that they were correct. Though the records aren't completely clear, it seems only a handful of the systems were available early in 1945. In fact, only four shots were conducted using them.

The majority of Rheinmetal's technicians, bringing some missiles with them, surrendered to American forces in May 1945. Postwar US testing of those Rheintochters indicated they could have been effective against the relatively slow-moving Allied bomber streams. That is, their introduction early in 1944 undoubtedly would have forced Allied air commanders to change their target priorities and tactics, but the war's overall result would not have been changed. German electronics technology had fallen behind that of the Western Allies, and that su-

periority would have enabled the latter to overcome the missile threat quickly. Further, Allied fighter aircraft had become such a dominant presence over Germany by 1944 that the on-the-ground survival of any deployed German SAM systems would have been problematic at best.

Like the rest of Nazi Germany's "wonder weapons," the Rheintochter came too late to change history. Allied

materiel supremacy had become too great to be overcome by a handful of brilliant, but spottily developed and produced, ideas. Still, the missile system's capabilities were advanced for those times, and the Germans must be given credit for contributing to the success of postwar Allied SAM development in such weapons as the Nike Hercules.

— Carl O. Schuster

## Movers & Shakers...

# John Charles Fremont

John Charles Fremont was born of French emigre parents in Savannah, Georgia, on 31 January 1813. He grew up to become a famous explorer of the American frontier, the first Republican Party presidential candidate, a Civil War general, US Senator, and governor of the Arizona Territory.

After an early life spent traveling, Fremont was graduated from the College of Charleston, South Carolina. Shortly after, in 1833, he went on a cruise aboard the Natchez to South America. He later spent the summer of 1836 as a surveyor in the Carolina and Tennessee mountains. Two years later he became a second lieutenant in the US Army Topographical Corps. In 1838 his great opportunity came when he joined the government-financed scientific expedition of Joseph N. Nicollet to the Minnesota country. Under Nicollet, Fremont learned even more of mathematics and mapping, along with botanical and geological observation.

His marriage to Jessie Benton, daughter of the influential US Senator Thomas Hart Benton, gave his career another great assist. In 1842, with the help of the Senator, Fremont was put in command of his own expedition. That began a series of five western explorations that he would lead over the course of his long and illustrious career. He moved across the western plains and climbed the highest peak of the Wind River Mountain chain, which was later named for him. He also explored Oregon and California.

Following each expedition, he and his wife co-authored highly readable and colorful reports that were published by the Senate. Due to their popularity, he soon became nationally known as the "Pathfinder." Kit Carson, another legendary frontiersman, also joined him on the expeditions, and together the two made great strides toward opening the far west to settlement.

In 1845, while on his third expedition, Fremont became embroiled in what would soon be known as the Mexican-American War; and he may also have instigated the American revolt the following year in California, when settlers there rose to proclaim the "Bear Flag Republic." Once war was formally announced, Fremont moved his expedition to Monterey, California, where he linked with the Commodore Robert F. Stockton's US naval force. Fremont was soon made lieutenant colonel as well as civil governor of California.

At that juncture Fremont got between the quarreling Stockton and Army Gen. Stephen Watts Kearney, when each claimed to hold higher command. In doing so, Fremont experienced his first reversal. The structure of the chain of command made it clear Fremont should have obeyed Kearney, but he chose instead to follow Stockton. When Kearney's authority was reaffirmed by Washington, Fremont was recalled to the capital to stand court martial. Found guilty of mutiny and disobedience, his



Photograph of Fremont during the American Civil War.

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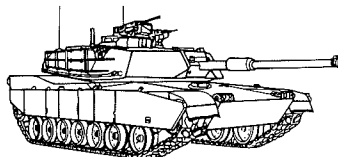
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sentence was dismissal from the service. Though President James K. Polk, in an act of clemency, abrogated the punishment (while letting the conviction itself stand), Fremont still chose to resign in protest.

His fourth expedition, this one privately funded, failed to get anywhere in 1848. Undeterred, he then returned to California and ran successfully for the US Senate. During his time in Washington he vigorously pressed California's claim for quick entry into the Union as a state. When that goal was accomplished, after less than a year, he resigned from Congress in order to free himself for his fifth expedition in 1853. Following that he renewed his political career by becoming the newly formed Republican Party's first presidential nominee. But he lost the general election to James Buchanan by an electoral college vote margin of 174 to 114.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, President Lincoln appointed Fremont a major general and also gave him command of the Western Department, which was headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Fremont's first task in the new role was to secure the vital Mississippi river port of Cairo, Illinois, from threatening Confederate attack, then raise an army to go against that of Rebel Gen. Sterling Price.

Again, though, Fremont got himself in trouble with higher authority when he arbitrarily issued his own emancipation proclamation freeing all the slaves in Missouri. Lincoln reacted to the politically premature move by removing him from command. For a time reassigned to duty in the Rockies, he resigned again in 1864 when a junior officer was promoted over him.

Nominated again for the presidency that same year by the radical wing of the Republican Party, Fremont withdrew from the race so as not to cause Lincoln any further embarrassment or split the pro-war vote. Though that move finally closed both his electoral and military careers, it didn't completely end his public life. After an unsuccessful business venture and bankruptcy, Fremont got himself appointed governor of the newly formed Arizona Territory in 1878. He served in that capacity for five years before resigning to try his hand at mining and land schemes.

The last years of his life were spent in travel between the two coasts and in writing his memoirs. Three months before his death, Congress authorized his reappointment as Army major general (retired), with an annual pension of \$6,000. He died in New York City at the age of 77 on 13 July 1890.

— Blaine Taylor

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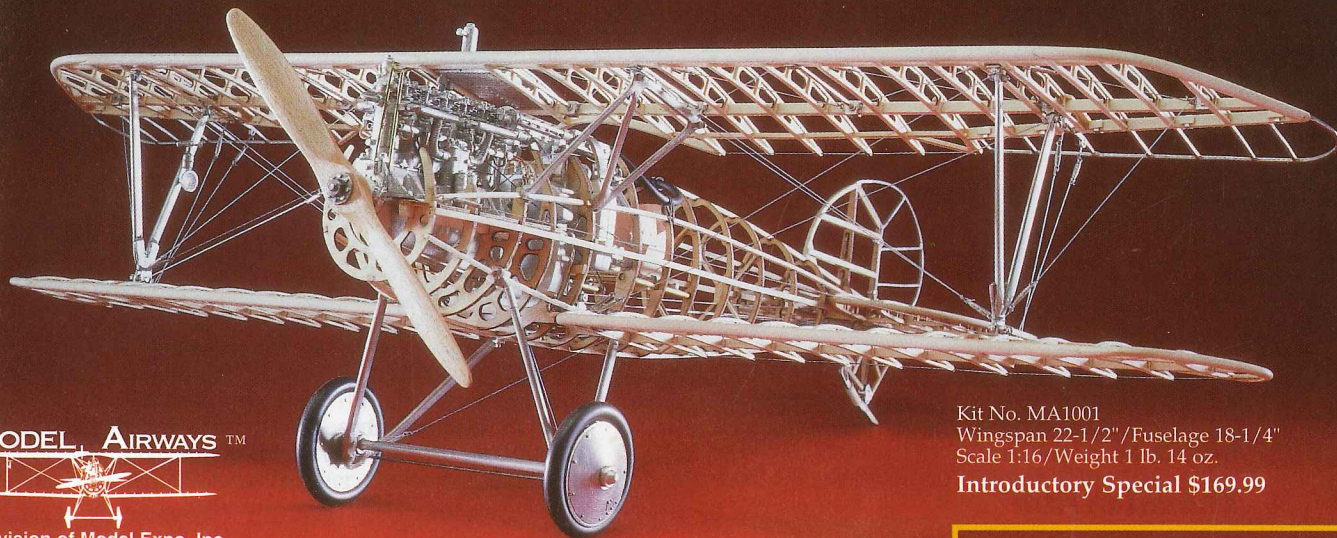
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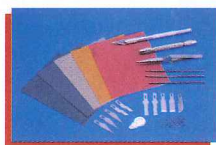
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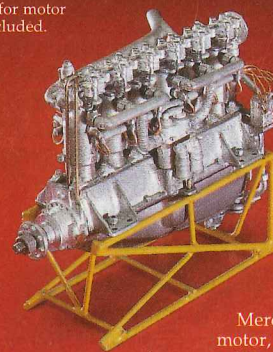
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# The Meuse-Argonne Campaign

# America's Last Offensive

# in the Great War

by John Desch

*Ed's note: German units are in italics, Allied units are in plaintext.*

## The Situation

In September 1918 the specter of defeat loomed ever closer to Germany. Though their spring offensives had nearly knocked the Allies out of the war, those efforts had also resulted in the sacrifice of most of Germany's remaining offensive power for what turned out to be minor gains. By early autumn, reinforced by tens of thousands of Americans, the Allies had recovered all the ground lost earlier and had begun to bash at the Hindenburg Line. Maintaining that long belt of entrenchments, and thereby forcing a cessation of Allied offensive operations through attrition, was Gen. Erich Ludendorff's last hope. Constructed over several years to a depth of five miles, it was a line stronger than any thrown up previously in the war. Properly manned with resolute troops, it might hold indefinitely.

But the German army was showing signs of breakdown, and Marshal Ferdinand Foch, appointed over-

*Men of 58th Infantry, 4th Division HQ at Monfaucon picking off German machinegunners covering the retreat of their fellow soldiers.*

all Allied commander during the spring emergency to orchestrate a coordinated response, didn't want to allow them an opportunity to recover equilibrium. Combined Allied offensives by the British in Flanders, the French in Champagne, and the Americans along the Meuse were intended to further erode the German army's combat power in 1918 and gain the ground needed to enable the launch of the war-winning push into Germany the following spring.

Though he didn't expect the Americans to get far along the Meuse, Foch hoped their offensive would draw off German reserves, perhaps even reaching and cutting their important east-west rail line through Sedan. Loss of that line of communications would inhibit the Germans' ability to reinforce laterally, and force them to supply all their forces in Belgium through the bottleneck of Liege. Gen. Pershing would write of it in his final report:

*The strategic importance of this portion of the line was second to none on the western front. All [German] supplies and evacuations were dependent upon two great railway systems — one in the north, passing through Liege, while the other in the south, with lines coming from Luxembourg, Thionville, and Metz, had as its vital section the line Carignan-Sedan-Mezieres. No other important lines were available to the enemy ...and should this system be cut by the Allies before the enemy could withdraw his forces through the narrow neck [at Liege and in the Ardennes] his ruin would be complete.*

Pershing felt that in terms of threatening areas vital to the Germans, an advance of 30 miles to Sedan would be the equivalent of going twice that distance into Belgium. Because of the relative lack of depth in the more southerly sector, the fortified lines there ran more closely together. Whereas on the British and French sectors there was an average of 15 miles between the various German defensive lines, in the



Marshal Foch (left) and Gen. Pershing.

Meuse-Argonne their Kriemhilde Stellung — their main defensive position — was just seven miles from the front line. Their final position, the Freya Stellung, was only three miles beyond that. Therefore a 10 mile advance in the American sector would carry Pershing's army through the entire German defensive front.

But a more difficult sector would have been hard to find anywhere along the entire western front. Flanked in the west by the nearly impenetrable Argonne Forest, and to the east by the unfordable Meuse River and the dominating heights east of it, the entire axis of attack was subject to intense flanking fire from artillery and machineguns.

The Argonne Forest was itself a serious obstacle for several reasons. First, command and control were difficult to maintain in the thick woods. Forest fighting requires a great deal of initiative on the part of experienced junior officers and NCOs, and that was still lacking in many divisions of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) at the time. Also, the effectiveness of artillery support was diminished by the limited visibility across the forest. Artillery had to be fired carefully because many infantry units would be uncertain of their exact locations just shortly after moving out, and could therefore easily come under friendly fire. On the other side, though, the Germans had already carefully registered their guns and trench mortars, and were often able to catch the Americans without cover. Further, the shrapnel effect



*The traffic congestion on the roads in back of the American lines in the Argonne was so great vehicles were able to move only two miles an hour.*

of tree top bursts was demoralizing. Finally, there were few roads running through the forest, which made efficient resupply nearly impossible.

The heights east of the Meuse offered excellent observation across the attack sector. Pershing recog-





*US tanks going into action near Boureuilles 26 Sept.*

nized the early capture of that flank high ground would facilitate the main push, but he felt he didn't have sufficient manpower in place to attack on both sides of the river. The build up for the offensive was conducted according to a tight schedule, and it would have been impossible to get an attack force in place east of the river without tipping off the Germans. By massing his divisions only to the west of the Meuse, and thereby preserving surprise, Pershing hoped to quickly push past the danger zone.

But his thinking was far too optimistic. Few Allied offensives had ever been able to penetrate more than

a dozen or so miles before command and logistical disorganization forced a halt to operations. Invariably, the Germans were able to use the pause to bring up enough reinforcements to prevent a successful follow through after the initial break in. Even a delay of 48 hours was enough time to rush reinforcements from virtually anywhere along the front, as the British found to their sorrow at Cambrai in 1917.

Between the Argonne and the Meuse small wooded hills served as excellent natural defensive positions. A typical hill had clear slopes crowned by a rocky patch of woods that offered superb cover for machinegun crews. American units often suffered heavy casualties in assaults to gain a foothold on the front edge of such positions. German artillery barrages then prevented reinforcements from reaching the exhausted attackers, leaving them vulnerable to well executed German infantry counterattacks. The Germans applied all their engineering skills in fortifying the zone across which the Americans would have to attack, transforming what was by nature already difficult into what was possibly the strongest defense ever assaulted by US armed forces to that time.

According to German defensive doctrine (see sidebar), the front line trace was to be covered by a sacrificial security zone. There any attack was to be detected, channeled where possible, and subjected to artillery fire while the advancing enemy struggled through extensive belts of barbed wire. To minimize the effects of potentially heavy Allied preliminary bombardments, only a small portion of the defense force, mostly machinegunners, was to be positioned within the security zone.

The main position was set up several miles to the rear, whenever possible along reverse slopes. There the attackers, by then reaching a critical level of dis-

## The German Army Late in 1918

By early October 1918, the Germans had begun to reel from a powerful combination of Allied offensives along the Cambrai, Meuse-Argonne and Champagne sectors. Only two factors enabled them to go on fighting past that time: the superb application of an excellent defensive doctrine and the courage born of desperation. Still, by that time it was also generally recognized within the Allied high command if continuous offensive pressure could be kept up across the front, the prospects for victory that year, rather than in 1919 as earlier projected, were good.

Four years of bloody, unrelenting warfare had changed the composition, but not the basic structure, of the German army. On paper its three major pre-war components — Active, Reserve and Landwehr (national guard) — still existed. But in practice the high command had set up a system that rated divisions individually on a scale from one to four, with one being the best, for their demonstrated offensive and defensive capabilities irrespective of branch.

In 1914, when the war first began and before the rating system was implemented, each Active division was expected to be elite, each Reserve division to be adequate, and each Landwehr division to be at least marginally effective. But by 1918 those traditional branch distinctions were less accurate. In many cases Reserve divisions were rated higher than Active ones. The better than expected performance of the Reserve divisions had in fact been recognized early in the fighting, and they therefore received quality replacements to try to keep them that way. (As had been expected, however, the Landwehr divisions performed only marginally throughout the war.)

Under the new rating system, "first class divisions" (those

receiving a "1"), were considered suitable for offensive combat and contained large numbers of specially trained assault troops. But most of them suffered terrible losses during Ludendorff's spring offensives, and were thus far less robust by early October than they'd been in March. Second class divisions were designated as follow up units for major offensives once a breakthrough had been achieved. They were still considered good divisions, only less well honed in up to date attack techniques. Third class divisions were holding units, considered able to conduct defensive operations, even demanding ones where the emphasis was placed on maneuver and counterattack. Fourth class units were considered capable of sustaining themselves only in quiet sectors. Their troops had low morale, inadequate equipment and mediocre leadership.

A look at the schematic reveals the disposition of German divisions on 1 October 1918, a date when several Allied offensives were under way. Looking over the situation, it becomes clear the British — advancing across northern France — were viewed by the Germans as the most dangerous threat, followed by the French in Champagne, and finally by the Americans in the Argonne.

Also of interest is the composition of the German armies on the shut down Russian front at that time. Nearly all the divisions there were fourth class units, and even those had their best men sent to the west. Clearly there were no further worthwhile reserves to be had from that area. The units serving as garrison in defeated Russia were barely able to perform their occupation duties there, and only then because the brewing civil war between the Reds and Whites in that country kept anyone from effectively attacking them.

organization from their advance, were to be finally halted and thrown back with counterattacks by local and area reserves. Counterattack was the key to all German defensive schemes. An effective counterattack could paralyze an enemy offensive, even recovering much or all of the ground given up earlier. Experience had shown attacking troops were always most vulnerable while consolidating on their post-break-in objective, and it was best to hit them before they were set.

Throughout the zone of defense by 1918, the Germans relied on concrete pillboxes, positioned in depth and set up with interlocking fires, in addition to the traditional, linear trench system. It was a simple matter to collapse the walls of a trench with artillery fire, but a direct hit from a heavy shell was needed to knock out a pillbox. At the same time, belts of barbed wire, in places hundreds of yards across, slowed movement to a crawl and prevented the effective deployment of large infantry formations.

Fortunately for Pershing and his troops, the German army in front of them was in bad shape. While their defensive position was certainly strong, only five divisions, each at only about 30 percent of authorized strength, manned the sector between the Meuse and the Argonne. Some of those units, such as the *1st Guards Division*, though classified as first rate by the German high command (see sidebar), nevertheless had poor morale due to heavy casualties suffered in the failed spring offensives. The performance of

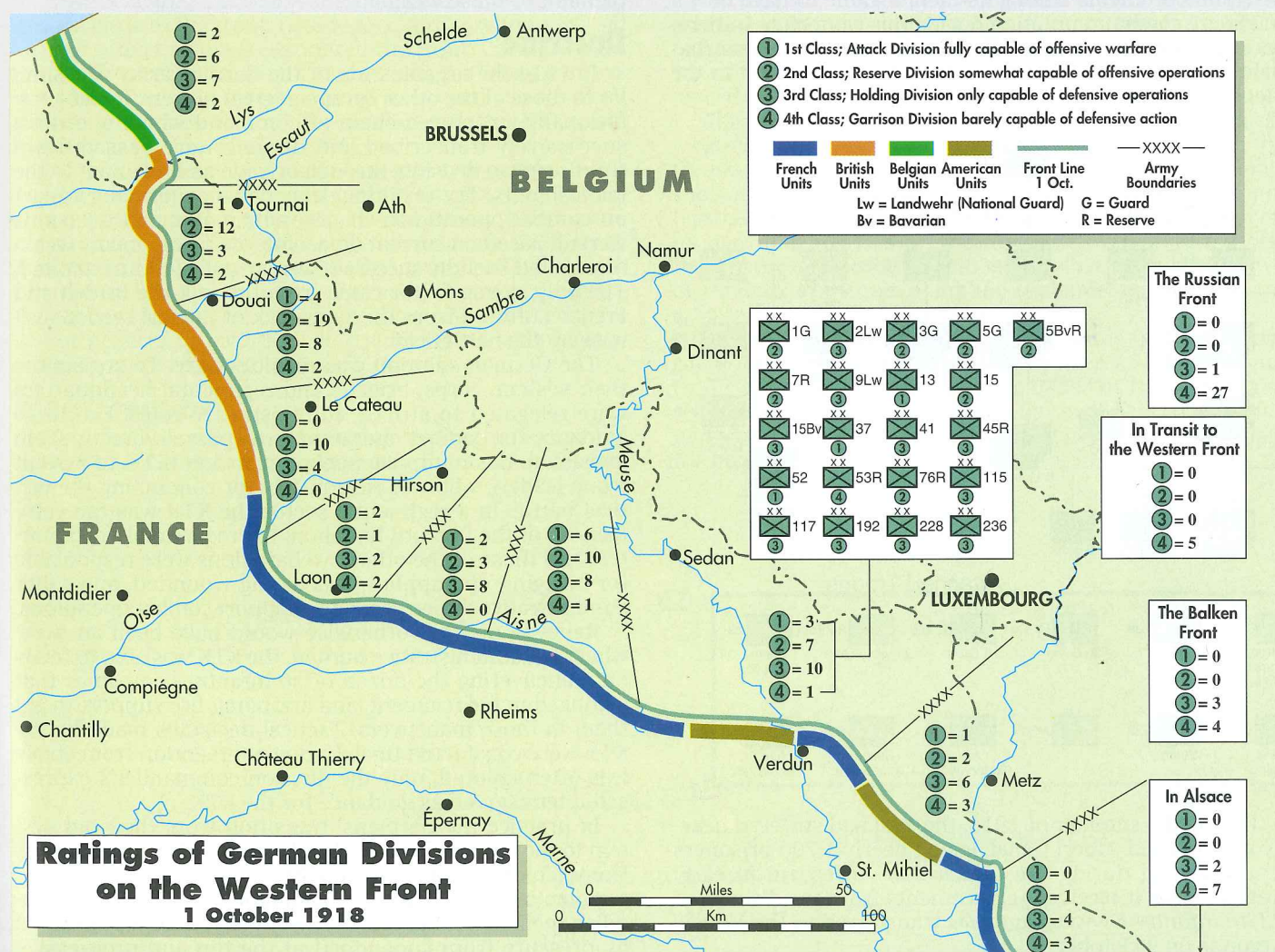
that once elite German division during the American offensive was disappointing. Its positions were given up too quickly, and its counterattacks weren't carried out with vigor. Some of the Landwehr (German national guard) units were more up to strength due to their stints along quieter sectors of the front, but they proved even less reliable than burned out regular units.

It's unlikely the Americans could have gained much ground at all had the area been well manned. But the Germans no longer had the troops to properly defend all along the western front, and other Allied offensives north and west of the Meuse-Argonne prevented them from stationing strong reserves in the immediate area of the initial attack.

## Plan & Assembly

The American plan was straightforward. Nine divisions would rush the German defenders after a short but heavy bombardment. The optimistic scheme called for the lead units to breach the Hindenburg Line in just two days, then immediately push on to the critical Sedan-Metz railroad.

Simply gathering together the attack force proved a major challenge even before anyone went over the top on 26 September. The two weeks allowed for it wasn't enough time to move up the veteran divisions that had participated in the earlier St. Mihiel offensive to the south; so completely inexperienced units had to initially take their place. That process of mov-



ing hundreds of thousands of American troops into a sector with all their equipment, while simultaneously moving out a similar number of Frenchmen, was a mammoth undertaking. The Germans had excellent observation posts along the Meuse and at Mountfaucou, forcing most of the shifts to take place at night. Only the masterful planing of Col. George C. Marshall allowed everything to get done on time.

The offensive was in fact a gamble in a number of ways. Foremost was the use of inexperienced troops in the opening assault. Of the nine divisions making up the first wave, only five (the 4th, 28th, 33rd, 77th and 80th) had experienced any combat at all. Four divisions (the 35th, 37th, 79th and 91st) were completely green and only partially trained. Some of the infantrymen had just been rushed through a crash course in how to operate their newly issued Enfield rifles. Anti-gas procedures were sloppy. Worse, the artillery components of several of the divisions had just been issued their French-made guns and had no opportunity to work on their liaison with the infantry.

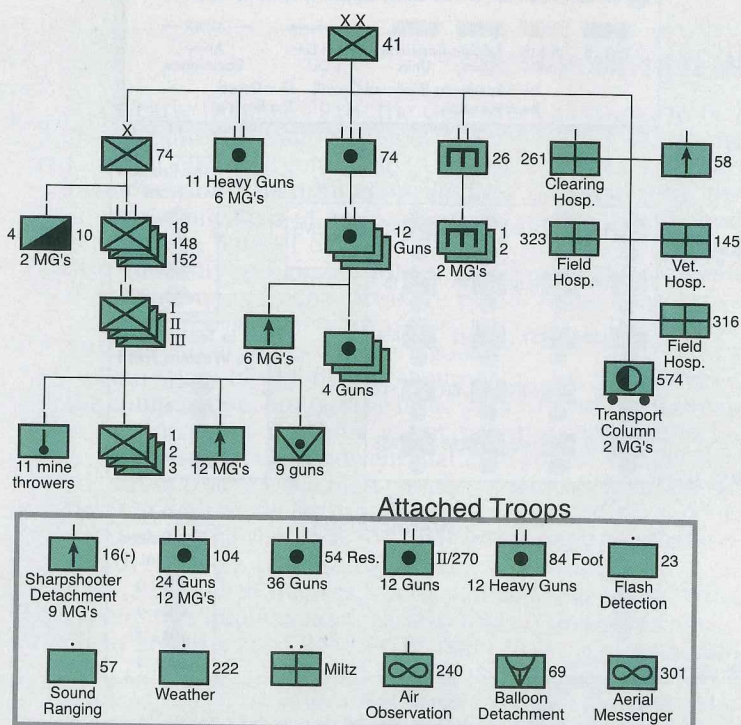
But surprise was seen to be the key. If the Germans caught wind of what was coming, they could move more divisions into the sector and thereby jeopardize the entire operation. Elaborate precautions were undertaken to prevent that from happening: only limited reconnaissance was allowed by American troops; and those who were permitted to go forward were dressed in French uniforms. A further deception plan was concocted to lead the Germans into believing a major thrust toward Metz was going to be undertaken. But though the Germans didn't become suspicious enough to reinforce the Meuse-Argonne sector before the battle began, they did earmark a dozen divisions as reinforcements against the offensive they deduced was certainly imminent somewhere from the Americans. When the attack did occur, then, they were able to quickly rush a substantial force to the area.

## Battle Begins

Early in the morning of 26 September, nearly 2,700 guns opened up a terrific barrage across the Meuse-

## German Division Organization & Doctrine

This diagram shows the table of organization and equipment (TO&E) of the German *41st Infantry Division* as it defended a portion of the Meuse-Argonne front against the US 1st Infantry Division. Though classified by the German high command as a second class division, because of growing discipline problems among its men, it came to have only a mediocre combat reputation during this campaign. It therefore provides an example of a unit that was just somewhat below average for the German divisions that fought in the Meuse-Argonne.



During the summer of 1918, the *41st* had suffered heavily at Arras and Albert Canal, losing nearly 1,700 prisoners to the British during the "Black Day" offensive in early August. Later it received replacements from the disbanded *225th Infantry Division*, and was transferred to the Meuse-Argonne on 9 October.

Judging from the attachment of extra artillery and machineguns, it appears the Germans were trying to substitute firepower for a perceived weakness in the quality of the division's infantry. American records give the *41st* a credible defensive capability, probably due to its more than full complement of those weapons.

## Doctrine

In 1914 the organization of the German army was similar to those of the other European great powers. It had a traditionally structured chain of command whereby orders, successively transcribed and filtered, were passed down from corps to division, through brigade and regiment to the tactical units. The resulting delay had an enormous impact on combat operations. Of necessity, command decisions weren't based on current data, with the result enemy weaknesses and friendly successes were usually left unexploited. The only saving factor came from the fact the British and French suffered from the same lack of tactical responsiveness on the battlefield.

The German solution was revolutionary. To streamline their system, corps, brigade and regimental headquarters were relegated to strictly administrative roles. Executive guidance for combat operations was passed directly from division to the Kampftruppenkommandeur (KTK, or assault troop leader), who was responsible for conducting the tactical battle. In a regimental sector the KTK was the commander of the forward battalion; the regimental headquarters and those of the other two battalions were responsible for bringing up supplies, evacuating wounded, and other administrative duties needed to support combat operations.

Relieved of what otherwise would have been an overwhelming administrative burden, the KTK was able to focus on maneuvering the dozen or so infantry companies that belonged to his regiment, and arranging fire support to aid them in those maneuvers. Tactical decisions made by the KTK were considered final. Undue intervention from above was often ignored; only the division commander's expressed intent served as guidance for the KTK.

In practice the Germans' transition from their old system to the new one didn't take place smoothly or overnight. Many senior officers tended to be conservative, while many regimental and brigade commanders were loathe to relinquish their combat authority. Eventually, though, squeezed by pressure from Ludendorff at the top and progressive

Argonne sector. For several hours the Franco-American gunners methodically worked over the German forward and reserve trenches, battery positions and communication lines with a drumfire barrage. Fortunately for the German defenders, however, a large percentage of those guns were French-made 75mm field pieces, which were devastating against troops in the open but relatively ineffective against fortified positions. Overall, the bombardment could at most be judged a partial success; when the assault troops did move forward they still encountered some scattered resistance from the forward German line.

But a heavy morning fog helped the Americans. Robbed of visibility, the surviving German machinegun teams were unable to stop the first rush of attackers. The doughboys threw ladders over the wire and cleared the first three trenches of the security zone in short order. Isolated German outposts were either grenaded or their defenders routed off the field. German artillery fire was light throughout and, given the heavily fortified nature of the attack sector, good progress was made all day.

But fog blinds both ways. In it, command and control was impossible to maintain over an advancing force. In any army with an overall high quality of junior leadership, such as had been enjoyed by the Germans during their spring offensives, the fog would have posed less of a problem. But that kind of leadership was lacking in the green American units that attacked on the morning of the 26th. Once beyond their initial objectives, platoons and companies tended to halt, bunch up and wait for further orders before moving on again. Flank conscious battalion commanders held up their units until contact was reestablished with neighboring forces and proper alignment assured.

Where they had control, regimental and brigade commanders adhered strictly to their plans, failing to take advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves. Reporting at all levels failed in the afternoon, giving higher-level commanders at best an unclear picture of the situation. Nevertheless, when the attack came to a halt late in the day, most on the American side felt things had gone well enough

junior officers at the bottom, the traditional mindset was largely overcome, so that by the end of 1917 the process was complete.

The new way was not without disadvantages. With so much authority passed down to the lowest possible command levels, there was necessarily a premium on excellent junior officer and NCO leadership. To respond to the constantly changing tactical situation, commanders had to remain close to the front. Face to face conversation replaced written orders as the KTKs toured the front. Casualty rates among them were inevitably high. Given that situation, talent had to be recognized as more important than rank. It wasn't uncommon to find lieutenants serving as KTKs, and majors as division chiefs of staff.

In good divisions the system worked superbly. Given good leadership, training and morale, German units using this doctrine consistently outperformed their Allied counterparts. But not all divisions were of the needed top notch quality. In those formations without the leaders able to oversee mobile situations, or the morale necessary among the troops to maneuver and fight, there was a tendency for senior officers to meddle. The results were usually disappointing and occasionally disastrous.

## Machineguns

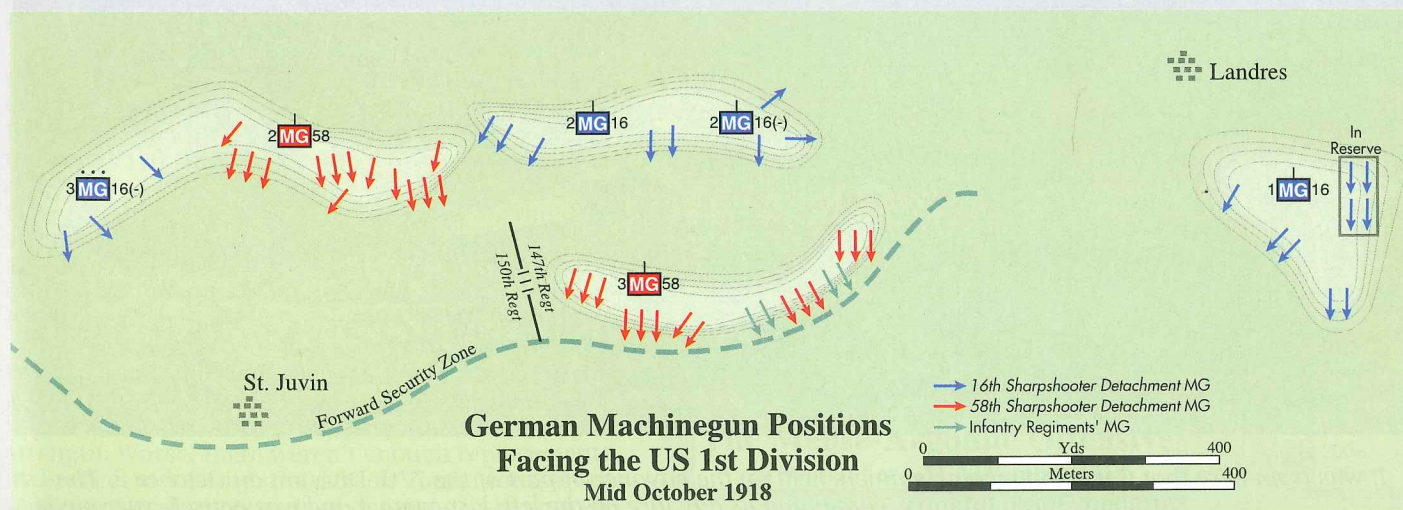
No front line weapon dominated the battlefield of the Great War more than the machinegun. Combined effective-

ly with thick belts of barbed wire, they formed the backbone of all tactical defenses; and until they were neutralized, no offensive was likely to succeed. All combatants recognized that fact by 1918. All kinds of remedies — tanks, prolonged artillery barrages, gas, infiltration tactics, etc. — were tried with varying degrees of success.

Early in the war, machineguns were sited to fire straight ahead into oncoming masses of infantry. That could be devastating in its own right, but it was later discovered enfilade fire was even more potent. Entire waves of attacking infantry could be shot down in that way using only a few well placed machineguns.

This map shows the actual set up of the German machineguns along the front of the *41st Infantry Division* in the Meuse-Argonne in October 1918. Because of the division's shortage of skilled infantry, and hence its inability to counterattack, the *41st* relied even more heavily than normal on its machineguns to stop the Americans. They were therefore placed in as much depth as possible, usually with two or three to a position, along the probable main avenues of approach.

Rarely would all available machineguns be fired at the same time. The idea was, rather, to keep at least one gun firing at all times, as the others reloaded or had field maintenance performed. In that way a few experienced machinegun teams could keep an attacking infantry battalion pinned for hours.





*Black soldiers of the 369th Infantry, 93rd Division, awaiting a counter-attack in the Argonne. This outfit distinguished itself in the Champagne-Marne operation.*

despite the confusion. Substantial advances had been made and casualties had been low except in two places: the Argonne Forest and the dominating position of Montfaucon.

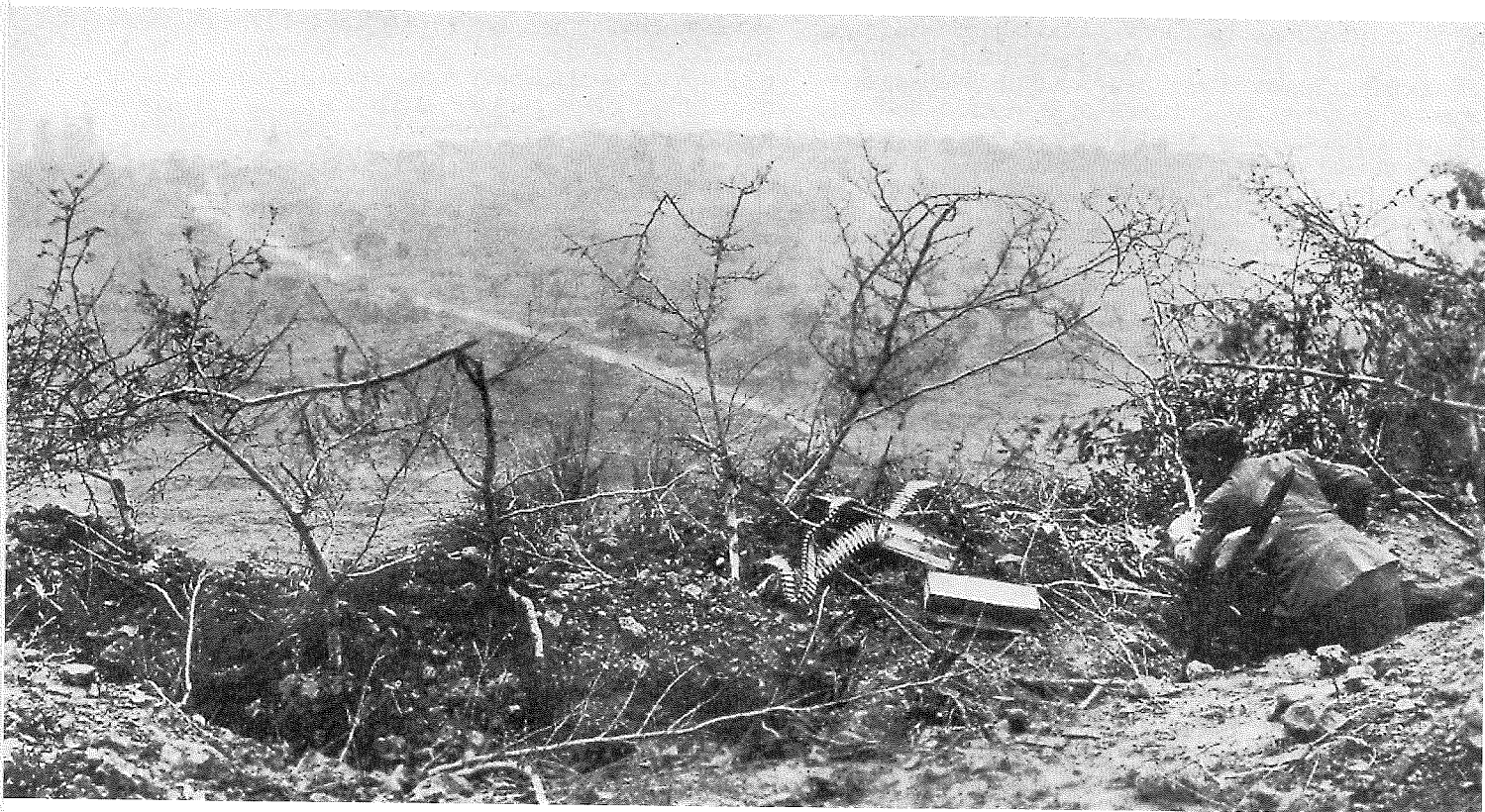
Advances in the Argonne itself had been limited because the attacking division there, the 77th, occupied a front twice as long as the other first wave formations and the German defenses proved especially strong. Several huge underground "pavilions," stocked with weapons, administrative facilities and even wine cellars, formed the backbone of the position.

The 77th was fortunate the pavilions weren't fully manned, otherwise they would have been virtually impregnable. During the initial gain of a mile or so of forest through surprise, several of them fell to the advancing Yanks almost without a shot being fired. But, again, American command and control broke down as units lost contact with one another in the woods, and the advance came to a halt.

But the major and potentially most dangerous disappointment of the day was the failure to take Montfaucon. From there the Germans had close, direct observation on the entire American sector. It was an objective slated to be taken on the first day, but the inexperienced 91st Division fell just short of doing so despite several determined tries. Unquestionably, the place should have been assigned to a division with some combat experience, such as the 4th or 77th. As it was, it didn't fall until the second day.

The attack continued on the 27th, but with somewhat diminished ardor. After having spent much of the night shuffling around the battlefield, the doughboys were exhausted. The artillerymen were also less certain of the locations of friendly troops, and so provided decreasing fire support. The guns couldn't get across no man's land, an affliction that hindered all Great War offensives, despite Herculean efforts by the engineers to build roads.

By the 29th the Germans had moved in five additional divisions to try to stabilize the front line forward of their main position. In a couple spots those units even counterattacked, threw back the Americans and regained some ground. German artillery fire also increased in intensity, firing mixed barrages of gas and high explosive shells. The attack clawed forward several hundred yards more in most sectors, but after the capture of Montfaucon there were no major accomplishments.



*It was from here that German machine gunners held up the advance of part of the 77th Division on October 2. The 1st Battalion, 308th Infantry, continuing its advance on the left, lost contact and was entirely surrounded.*

More could not be done without fresh units, an improvement in the supply situation, and the forward displacement of artillery. Pershing therefore reluctantly called for a halt of several days, ordering everyone to dig in where they were. For their part, the men in the field didn't need any encouragement to go to ground. Many of their positions were exposed to heavy German fire and were therefore difficult to consolidate.

Over the course of those first few days of fighting, the infantry strength of US 1st Army had been consumed at an increasing rate. If the Germans had adequate reserves immediately on hand, it would have been dire straits for the Americans. Some estimates put as many as 100,000 stragglers doing nothing more than milling around the AEF's rear areas. Some of those men were undoubtedly genuinely lost, but others were certainly shirkers. Many were suffering from shell shock, and needed rest before resuming their duties. Commanders had to spend much of their time simply trying to locate their units and get them resupplied.

But the Germans had also suffered heavily. As it was, the pressure forced them to commit their reinforcement divisions piecemeal into the line as battalions and regiments. Many of the battalions initially along the front had been annihilated, and those coming up from the rear were understrength. Some divisions had only a dozen or so of the vitally important machineguns. But the artillery, though not strong in number of guns, had sufficient ammunition to put down heavy barrages on exposed attackers. More, Pershing's halt was instrumental in helping not only the AEF, but also the German army, regain balance.

## Kriemhilde Stellung

The second phase of the American offensive began early in October and lasted for two weeks. Paying a heavy price in blood for every yard gained, the Yanks pushed forward about six miles to breach the Kriemhilde Stellung, the main Hindenburg position. In the Argonne forest the 77th struggled forward against increasing resistance, almost losing an entire battalion in the legendary "Lost Battalion" episode.

After slipping through a gap in the German lines, the 1st Battalion of the 308th Infantry Regiment found itself surrounded and remained so for several days. Short of food, water and ammunition, the men gallantly fought on until relieved indirectly by a push from the neighboring 82nd Division into the forest from the east. The battalion had been lucky; if the Germans had more strength in the area it almost certainly would have been annihilated.

In the central sector the Americans pushed forward against the Germans at Romagne, Cunel and Grandpre. Those battles were as bitter and hard fought as any in American history. To try to keep up the momentum, Pershing rotated divisions in and out of the line. But the restrictive nature of the terrain, the general lack of experience in many of the divisions, and the pressure from the top to keep going at all costs, meant many units had no practical choice other than to launch costly frontal attacks on heavily fortified positions.

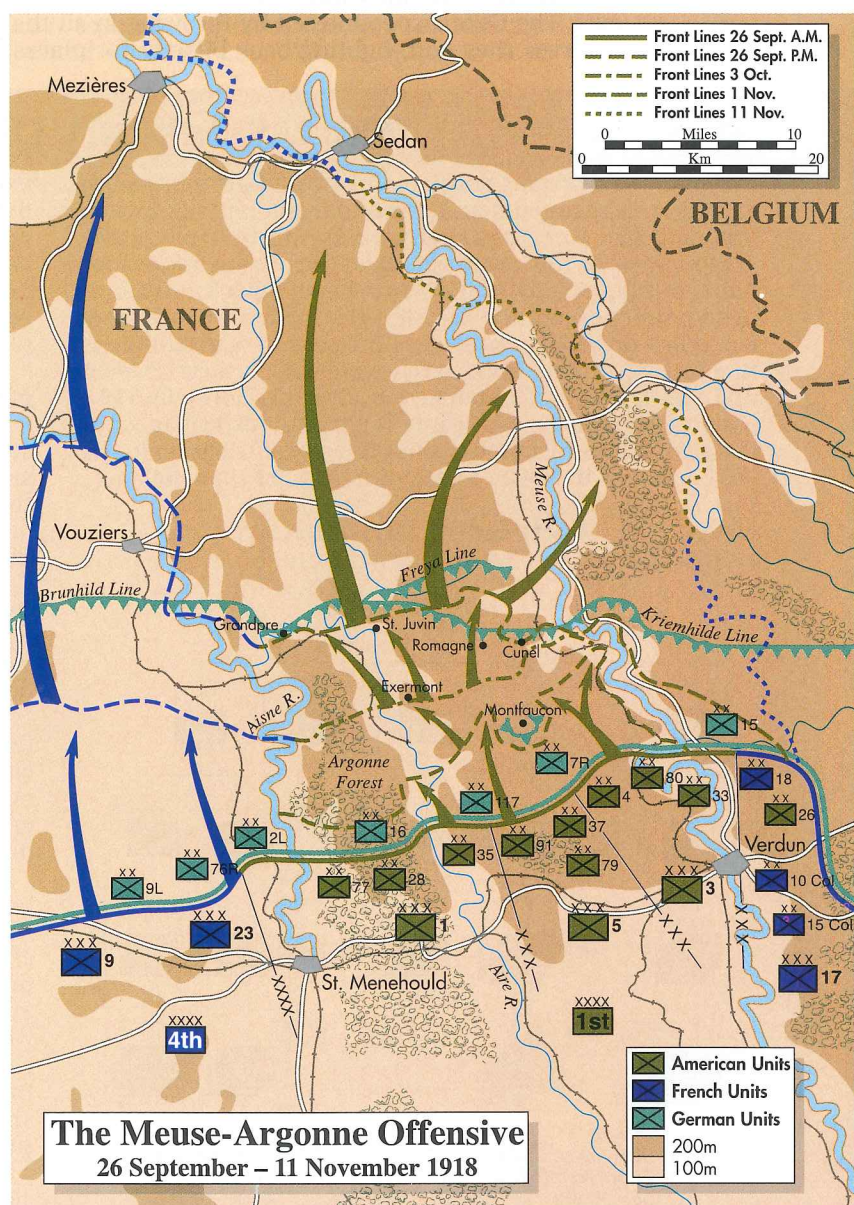
It took an average of just six days of such fighting to burn out an infantry division. Nearly all the casualties were infantrymen and machinegunners, with some divisions losing 90 percent of their rifle strength. Worse, there weren't enough replacements in France to restore the attack formations, even though several newly arrived divisions were entirely

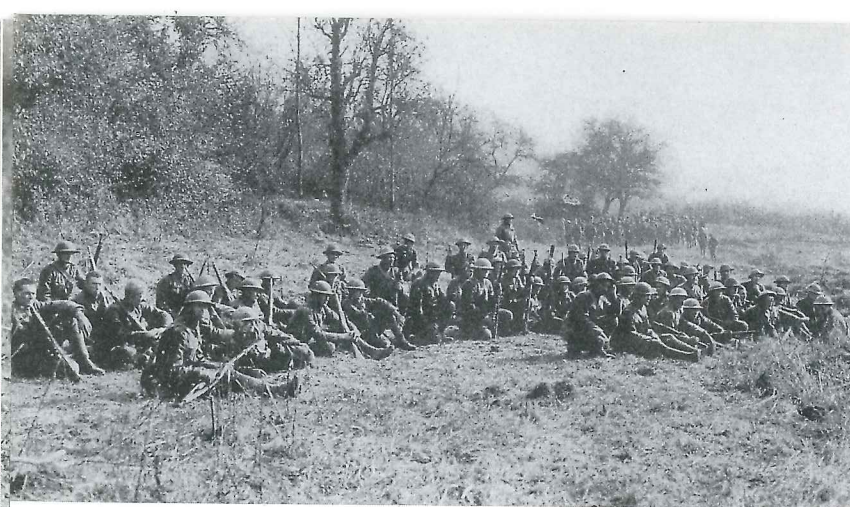


American vehicles crossing a bridge hastily repaired by 103rd Engineers of the 28th Division near Boureuilles.

robbed of their manpower to do so. Of the 90,000 replacements called for by the infantry divisions in the campaign, only 45,000 reached those front line units.

At that point Pershing belatedly opened an offensive on the east bank of the Meuse. Using US and French divisions side by side, the new push made





*The Lost Battalion held out without food, drink, or medical care for the wounded, from 2 Oct. until 7 Oct., when connection with the division was re-established. During this time the detachment of 750 men lost 498.*

some gains before grounding to a halt. But the effect on the main effort was positive in that the Germans on the east bank were forced to turn to defend themselves rather than being able to go on pouring flanking fire into the units advancing along the central axis. The Germans countered by throwing in all the reserves they had, fighting back bitterly for places

named in American reports as "Corned Willie Hill" and "Molleville Farm."

The 42nd "Rainbow" Division's battle for a key hill along the Kriemhilde Stellung was illustrative of the kind of heavy fighting that had become typical. The Cote de Chatillon was a bell-shaped wooded hill about 1,000 yards long and wide. It was an essential position for the Germans' defense of their main line, and they were determined not to give it up. Its capture would allow the Americans to observe to the village of St. Georges in the north and even beyond it to the Freya Stellung, the last prepared line of fortifications. After the battle almost 200 machineguns were counted among the debris. Lt. Gen. Charles Summerhill, commander of 5th Corps, to which the 42nd was attached, told Brig. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who ran the division's 84th Brigade, to press the attack on Chatillon until he took it or his casualties ran to more than 5,000. MacArthur assured him the job would be done or his name would be on the casualty list. Both men meant what they said.

After a six-hour bombardment, the 84th kicked off its attack on 14 October. All the division's artillery, together with that of the 1st Infantry Division, plus 18 batteries of US and French corps guns, and three battalions of 8-inch pieces from the 59th Coast Artillery, pounded the hill with thousands of rounds. Pressing forward on a two battalion front, the infan-

## The U.S. Infantry Division in 1918

American divisions consisted of two infantry brigades, each of two regiments and a machinegun battalion. Each regiment had three battalions, each with four large rifle companies. The symmetrical look of the organization chart led to this type of division being dubbed "square." All European powers except the British had gone to war with similar square divisions containing 12 thousand-man battalions (the British army did not have regiments, so their division of 12 battalions was organized in three brigades). By 1918 a standard division had three regiments (or brigades) of three battalions each (thus called "triangular" divisions), and the battalions had been reduced to no more than 800 men,

usually fewer. These reductions were done for a number of reasons: smaller units were easier to handle for leaders lacking pre-war training, increasing numbers of machineguns, mortars and artillery made riflemen redundant, and in static trench warfare the additional (brigade) command level was more hindrance than help. In short, the divisional structure had evolved to meet the new form of war.

But the American square division was not simply a copy of the original European model. They were designed specifically for the fighting in France, particularly with regard to staying power, the weakness of the smaller triangular divisions. An American division had 28,000 men, 16,000 of them riflemen. This was more than 50% larger than the original European division, and nearly four times the size of the attenuated German divisions fighting in 1918.

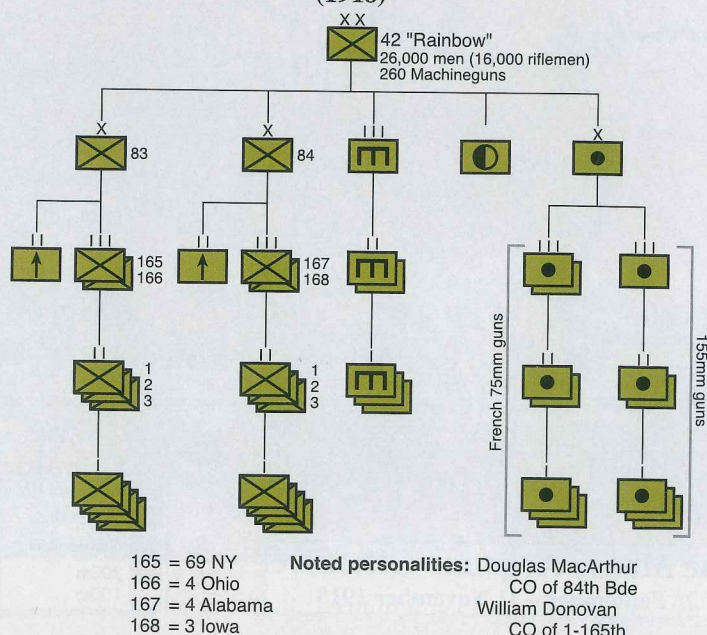
In offensive combat, US divisions tried to keep about one-third (or four battalions) of their rifle strength in contact with the enemy, another third in immediate reserve to exploit opportunities as they came up, and the last third in deep reserve or in rest and replenishment mode.

Soldiers were usually brought forward via train in 40x8 foot boxcars, each carrying 40 men or eight horses, to as close to the front as the rail system would allow, usually not more than within 10 miles. They would then march to an assembly area, conduct reconnaissance, and relieve the (usually) French units then in place in the line.

Typically brigades would operate side-by-side and each be given a set of objectives by the division commander to be taken that day. Those objectives were usually well defined as particular hills or farms, and were seldom more than a mile or two distant from the start line. Each brigade would attack with both regiments forward; and each regiment would advance in column with one battalion leading and two echeloned in reserve. The attack would continue until the objective was taken or the foremost battalions were so shot up they had to be replaced by fresh ones from the same regiment.

The battalions would be rotated in that way until the division was completely combat ineffective, at which time it

### US Infantry Division (1918)



try managed to gain about 500 yards before the Germans opened on them. The losses that followed were staggering. Both assault battalions lost two-thirds of their strength in a few hours. For example, of the 500 men that went over the top in two companies of the 1st Battalion, only 70 were still fit for duty at mid-day.

Flailed by a storm of machinegun fire and artillery liberally using gas shells, the attack stalled. In desperation, MacArthur considered ordering a night bayonet attack with his reserves, but changed his mind at the last minute. The next day the attack inched forward trench by trench. The fighting was all-out, with the climax coming late in the afternoon as the depleted rifle companies at last neared the summit.

Just as the Germans were massing for a counter-attack, a heavy Allied artillery barrage was brought down on the top and reverse slope of the hill. That broke the Germans, allowing the Americans to make one last charge and take the hill. For the next week they had to resist repeated German counterattacks, but they held. The most heavily defended strongpoint in the German main line of resistance had fallen, and the way was seemingly open to press on through it to the north.

But the Rainbow Division was no longer combat effective. It had suffered a disastrous 3,679 casualties, most of them in the two day attack on the hill and in the area immediately to its west. It could no



Advance guard on a road leading into Cunel, 29 October. German machinegun nests were in the trees overlooking the road.

longer go on; and had to be pulled out of the line for rest and replenishment on 21 October.

As long as was the Rainbow's casualty list, other divisions suffered even more. For example, what was arguably the most experienced division in the AEF, the 1st Infantry, lost 7,772 killed, wounded or missing in 12 days while assaulting the German defenses near Exermont and on the Cote di Maldah. Close behind was the 82nd "All American" Infantry Divi-

would be pulled from the line and sent to the rear for regrouping. Intensive offensive operations at division level were measured in handfuls of days as rifle strength was burned up quickly in the trenches of the western front. Still, American divisions could sustain combat operations for about twice the time of their much smaller British and French counterparts.

By the end of the war the infantry division TO&E had been adjusted downward several times, due in part to the inability of the AEF to replace all its casualties, and also in recognition of the fact smaller units were easier for junior

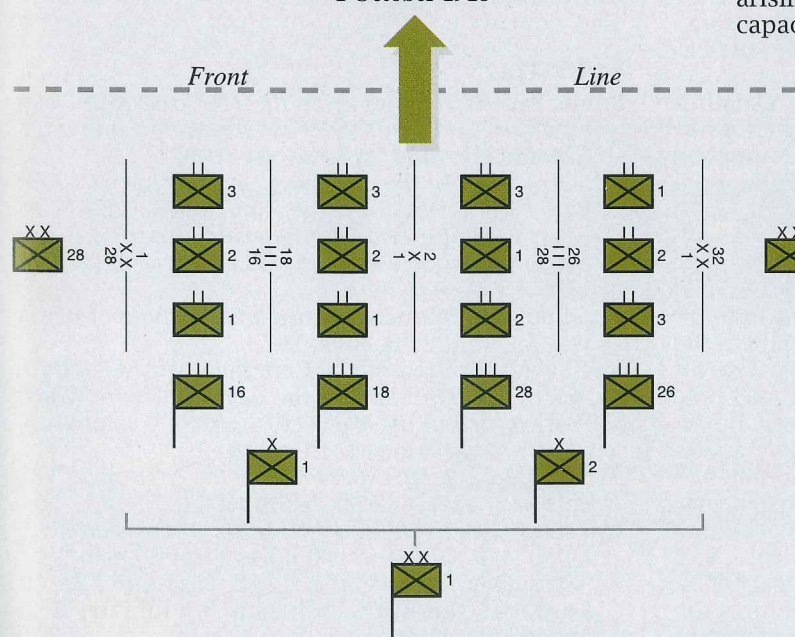
officers and NCOs to command. For example, by November 1918, rifle companies had been reduced from an on-paper strength of 250 to 175.

The divisions of the AEF came from three sources: the Regular Army (1st through 8th Divisions), the National Guard (26th through 42nd) and the National Army of conscripts with a leavening of Regulars (77th through 92nd). Most of the Guard divisions came from one or two states, but the 42nd "Rainbow" Division (pictured here) was drawn from 26 states and included two regiments, the 165th and 167th, whose antecedents (the 69th New York and 4th Alabama respectively) had been rivals during the Civil War. Whether because of this rivalry or despite it, the 42nd became one of the finest units in the AEF.

There was a great deal of rivalry between the Guard and the rest of the army (which continues to this day), largely arising from the mistrust of the Regulars for the fighting capacity of the "weekend warriors."

### Deployment. . .

US 1st Infantry Division  
South of Exermont  
1 October 1918



### . . .and its results

Rifle Strength of the 1st Infantry Division  
on 7 October 1918, after six days of  
fighting near Exermont.

#### 1st Brigade

Officers/EM

1/16	35/800 (Full Strength)
2/16	7/310
3/16	4/341
1/18	19/709
2/18	7/342
3/18	7/262

#### 2nd Brigade

Officers/EM

1/26	8/200
2/26	10/419
3/26	7/260
1/28	*505
2/28	*424
3/28	*203

\* Officer strength not submitted



On Oct. 8, Sgt. York with seven men, Co. G, 327th Inf., 82nd Div., armed with rifles and pistols, captured 35 machine guns, 132 Germans and killed 20.

sion, which lost 6,369 men to all causes while attacking the eastern approaches of the Argonne Forest near Cornay. Those figures represent nearly half the rifle strength available to those units.

In mid-October, Gen. Hunter Liggett, 1st Army's commander, petitioned Pershing to call a halt: a thorough reorganization was needed. For the next two weeks the troops were rested and an intensive retraining program was implemented with emphasis on small unit maneuver and assaulting fortified positions. Special assault teams were organized, well equipped with grenades and submachineguns. Units at all levels were directed to bypass enemy strongpoints whenever possible. Above all, the soldiers were completely indoctrinated in anti-gas procedures. (Thirty percent of the attack force's casualties had been from that cause.) Logistical and administrative procedures were streamlined, and supplies were brought up for what turned out to be the final offensive, scheduled to begin on 1 November.

## The Final Offensive

After a short but intense bombardment, the men of the 2nd, 77th, 78th, 80th, 89th and 90th Infantry Divisions went over the top. For the first time in the American offensive, the Germans themselves were hit with a large quantity of gas. The doughboys met only scattered resistance, quickly seizing all their objectives along the Barricourt Heights. They pushed on through the night, and by dawn the second day had irreparably breached the last German defensive line.

The Germans were suffering similar defeats in the French and British sectors of the western front, and were forced to withdraw to a line running from Sedan in the south to Antwerp on the coast. Along the American sector all German forces were ordered to

withdraw as rapidly as possible behind the Meuse, where a new defensive position was under construction. In fact, though, most German divisions in the area had already ceased to exist as such: some regiments were down to 200 men with no machineguns. Numerous artillery pieces had to be abandoned due to a lack of horses to pull them; the Germans were increasingly unable to substitute those heavy weapons' firepower for their growing lack of manpower along the front line, as they'd done previously.

On 10 November the Yanks established several bridgeheads across the new German line east of the river. The German army was reeling, and behind the lines negotiations were in their final hour. The next day the guns stopped firing and an eerie calm descended over the battlefield.

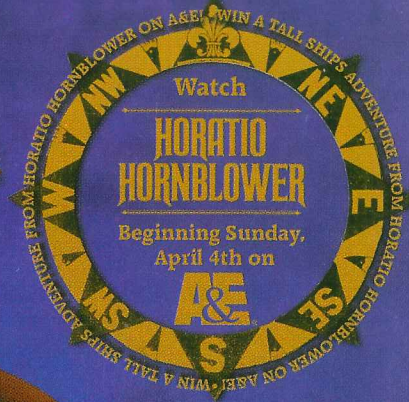
The campaign was costly for both sides. During the six week operation the Americans suffered 117,000 killed, wounded and captured. Many others suffered long-term affliction from exposure to poison gas. German casualties numbered 100,000 in addition to the 26,000 captured by the advancing Americans. Nearly 900 cannon and 3,000 precious machineguns were lost or had to be abandoned in the retreat.

The AEF performed well during the final two weeks of the war. The last attack, particularly when compared with the recent operations in the Meuse-Argonne, was executed with skill. Command, staff and logistical activities at all levels had greatly improved. The two weeks of intensive retraining had paid off, and the soldiers worked their way forward with greater confidence as it became more and more apparent the Germans were being defeated.

While not decisive in itself, the Meuse-Argonne offensive contributed mightily to the overall Allied effort to defeat the Germans in 1918. The Germans reacted vigorously to the American attack by sending 34 divisions to reinforce the defenses there, taking them mostly from adjacent sectors facing the French. Wearing down the German reserves in that way had always been an Allied goal and was a prerequisite to final victory. The Meuse-Argonne was the paramount test of an army that in the operative sense hadn't even existed just a year earlier. Given its inexperience and the difficult conditions under which it was committed, the AEF must be judged to have done well. ★

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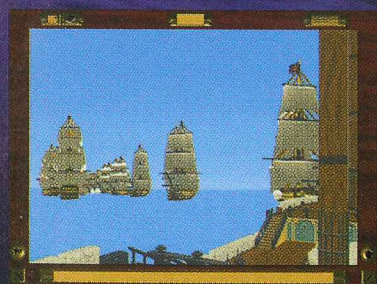


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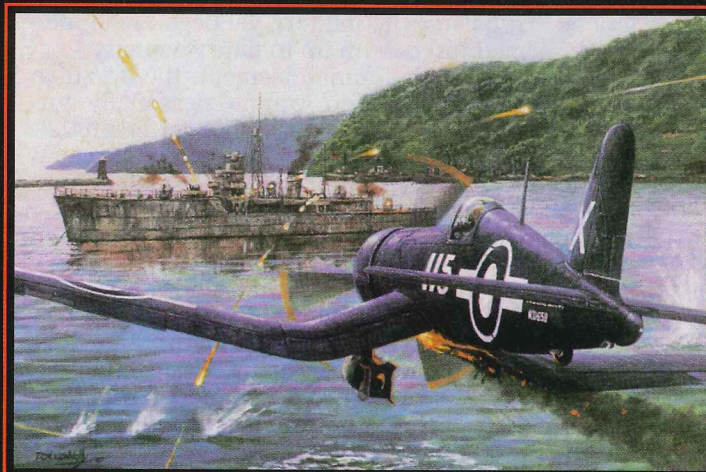
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# Smoking Cobras

## Brazil in World War II

by Douglas W. Richmond

*[Ed's Note: The Brazilian stamps shown in the article commemorate the FEB's participation in World War II. Shown at 100 percent.]*

### Reluctant Ally

In 1937, Brazilian President Getulio Vargas responded to both communist and fascist attempts to overthrow him by announcing a new constitution and declaring his intention to remain in office. To revive his country's depression-strapped economy, he also suspended payment on the foreign debt and began a road and railway construction program into the hinterland. To bolster the military, he began resupplying the armed forces with up to date weaponry.

On the day of that announcement, the Brazilian foreign minister, Oswaldo Aranha, personally outlined Vargas' ideas to US Ambassador Jefferson Caffery. Aranha promised Brazil's foreign policy would remain as it had been. He pleaded for Washington to remain friendly and maintain good relations.

In fact, however, growing German influence in Brazil (as well as in Chile and Argentina) was already becoming worrisome to the US State and War Departments. Some Brazilian military leaders, such as War Minister Eurico Dutra and Army Chief of Staff Goes Monteiro, openly favored Germany because they believed Hitler was destined to conquer Europe and possibly much territory beyond it. Yet another complicating factor came from the fact about a million persons of German descent lived in Brazil at the time, of whom only a fourth had been born in South America.

There was no question Brazil excited Berlin's strategic interest. In Hitler's own words, he planned to "transform a corrupt mestizo race into a German dominion." Inside Brazil, therefore, German consular agents and spies built up large organizations aimed at creating popular support for Nazism.

The Abwehr, the German armed forces intelligence service, also utilized Brazilian territory as a radio transmission center. (Atmospheric conditions made it easier to broadcast from there back to Europe than from most other points in the New World.) So German agents in Canada, the US and elsewhere in the hemisphere mailed their reports, secreted in ostensibly private correspondence, to drop boxes in Brazil. Those mailing addresses were often set up through the creation of dummy businesses, sometimes with unknowing third parties serving as fronts. The agents themselves were frequently Brazilian-born Germans, or Germans who'd lived in the country for many years.

During the late 1930s, then, Germany seemed to be gaining the upper hand in vying for control of Brazil. US military policy allowed Roosevelt to send assistance to all Latin American republics in the form

of military training and direct aid, but the Brazilians never responded to the offers. Isolationist legislation in the US hindered the delivery of what arms deals were made, and American arms manufacturers were often unable to meet the low prices and easy payment terms offered enticingly by Axis firms.

Argentine opposition to US plans also weakened FDR's hand. In 1937 that country protested the transfer of three old destroyers to Brazil from the US Navy. In backing down from the deal, the US was made to seem to be deserting Brazil. Disappointed by the Allies' appeasement of Hitler at Munich in 1938, and determined to maintain their position as the leading country of South America, the Brazilians decided to act alone and turned outright to Germany for arms. In March 1938 they bought \$55 million in infantry weapons, naval vessels and artillery pieces from Krupp.

To try to win more Congressional support for his efforts in Brazil, Roosevelt went so far as to declare Vargas a "coauthor" of the New Deal, and also sent Chief of Staff George Marshall there to begin talking up the idea of hemispheric defense (at its nearest point, the African coast lies only 1,400 miles from Brazil's). When a friendly populace lined the streets to greet him as he arrived in Rio de Janeiro aboard the *USS Nashville* on 25 May 1939, Marshall felt somewhat emboldened. In his talks with Dutra and Monteiro, he called for the establishment of US air bases in northeast Brazil to help cover the Panama Canal.

Monteiro accompanied Marshall on his return voyage, with the main topic enroute centering on more arms shipments to Brazil. It became clear Brazilian military cooperation depended directly on the degree of free assistance the US was willing to provide. Impressed by Marshall's friendly treatment of him, as well as the evidence of burgeoning US military strength he saw while in the US, Monteiro backed off from his earlier embrace of the Germans. When he returned to Rio in August, he carried with him the outline agreement for full military cooperation between the two nations, though it wasn't officially signed for two more years.

Shortly after war exploded across Europe, a flight of B-17 Flying Fortresses commanded by Maj. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, then C-in-C of the entire Army Air Corps, landed in Rio. Emmons hand-carried a letter from FDR to Vargas calling for yet more US/Brazilian friendship and solidarity. On the same trip Emmons also investigated Brazil's northeast, in particular examining the Natal area as a probable site for a major air base. At the same time, US Navy patrols were initiated in the South Atlantic.

During the first half of 1940, Vargas continued to try to tread a cautious path between official neutral-

ity and increasing cooperation with the US. In south Brazil, where hundreds of thousands of Italian immigrants lived, he stressed in a speech that any action he took in the war would only be made in accord with the other nations of South America.

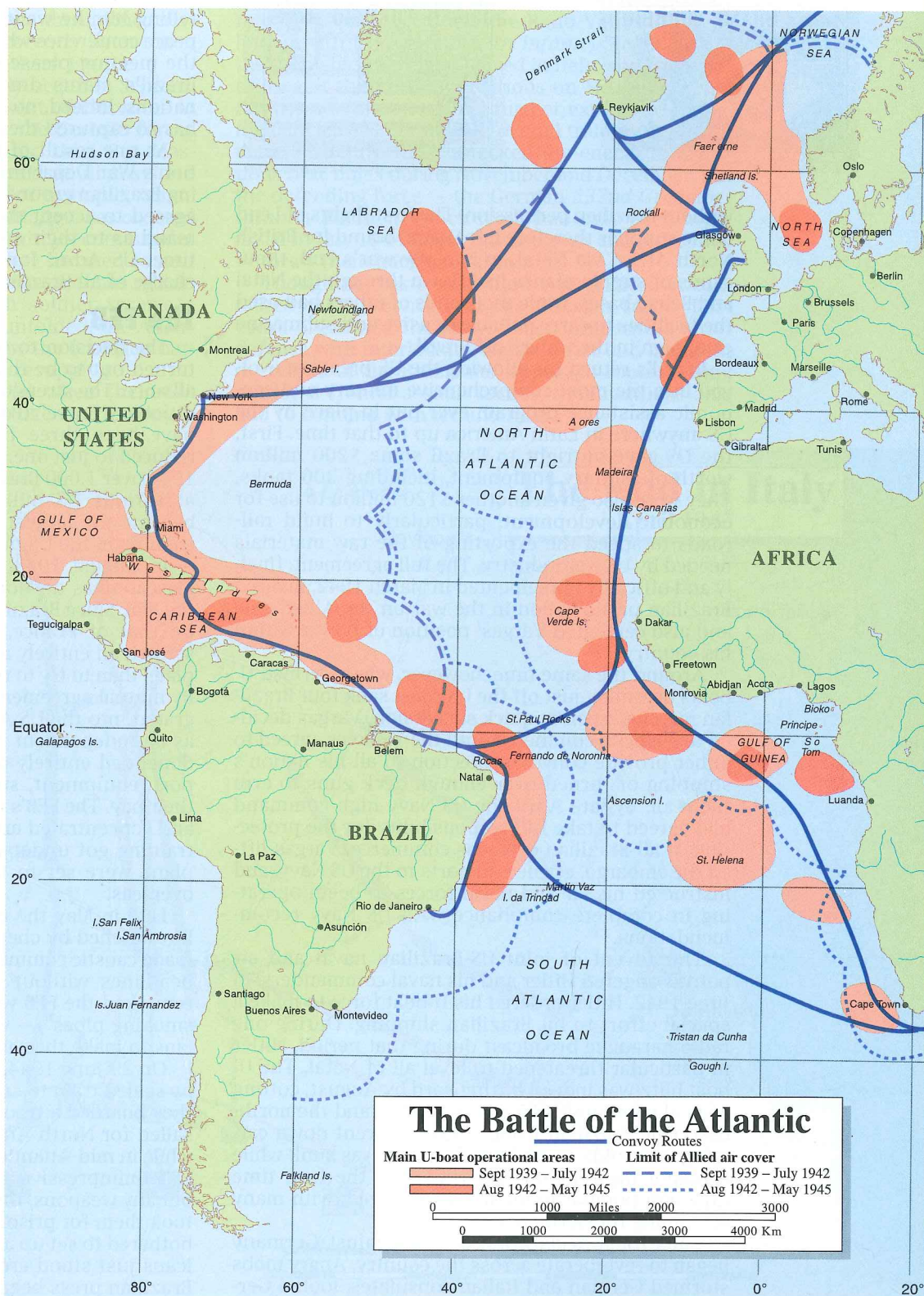
Brazil's diplomatic corps, along with those of the other Latin American nations, protested the German invasion of the neutral Low Countries, but at the same time also agreed to handle Italian and German affairs in England through their diplomatic offices. With the fall of France, US strategists became intensely alarmed about the security of the Caribbean and Brazil's northeast. Marshall cabled Monteiro stating the Roosevelt administration had come to consider "closest cooperation" between Brazil and the US was "vitally necessary." In fact, FDR had become so alarmed over the seemingly unstoppable German advances he ordered Marshall to prepare plans for a US invasion and occupation of all of Brazil in case unfolding events made such a move necessary.

For his part, Vargas doubted the US had the means to defend his country against German invasion, and doubted even more those in Washington would be willing to hand over the equipment needed to enable the South Americans to do the job themselves. So during the summer of 1940, Vargas negotiated simultaneously with Germany and the US in an effort to get one of them to set up a modern steel mill in Brazil. Krupp made the more attractive offer, but Vargas turned it down when it became clear the Germans weren't going to win a quick victory in the Battle of Britain. On 26 September 1940 he signed a steel mill agreement with the US, and the Export-Import Bank was thereby also immediately authorized to lend Brazil \$10 million, with a pledge of a second amount of that size to be made available later.

Also during 1940, as all this diplomacy was going on, a secret clause of the Military Appropriations Act had authorized Roosevelt to carry out clandestine projects across North Africa and South America. The War Department therefore secretly arranged with Pan American Airways to set up an airport development program (ADP) in Brazil. Under it, Pan Am constructed twin chains of (ostensibly corporate) airfields leading from the US to Brazil, one through Central America

and the other across the West Indies and the Guianas. Travel time between New York City and Rio had previously taken 14 days by ship, but the new air routes cut that to only five days, and later to just three after further improvements were added.

Pan Am begun the airfield development program in November 1940, but Vargas delayed those facilities' availability to US armed forces until June 1941. By that time Roosevelt had come to consider the new airfields' military use so vital that he authorized US armed forces to begin operating out of them even





without Brazilian permission. The first flights of Lend Lease supplies therefore left Miami, bound for British North Africa via Natal, in May. By war's end, thousands of supply planes had flown through the Natal and Belem bases, while thousands of others had used the facilities to carry out an extensive anti-submarine campaign in the waters off Brazil.

Brazil's return for allowing the US presence evolved into the most comprehensive military and economic assistance program ever put in place by the US anywhere in Latin America up to that time. First, the US gave outright to Brazil some \$200 million worth of military equipment, including 300 tanks. They were also given another \$120 million to use for economic development, particularly to build railroads to speed the exporting of the raw materials needed by US war industry. The full agreement, finally and officially implemented in March 1942, insured Brazilian participation in the war on the Allied side and also cemented Vargas' position of power within his country.

Around the same time, however, when German U-boats operating just off the US coast sank four Brazilian merchantmen in quick succession, Vargas decided to suspend commerce until the Yankees agreed to either provide convoy protection to all his nation's shipping or turned over enough deck guns to arm them all. By late April the US Navy high command had agreed to take full responsibility for the protection of all Brazilian overseas commerce. Vargas lifted the embargo, opened all ports to the US Navy, and instructed his air and naval forces to begin operating in complete compliance with US Navy recommendations.

The advent of joint US-Brazilian naval and air patrols angered Hitler and his naval commanders. In June 1942, Hitler ordered his U-boat force to make a special effort to hit Brazilian shipping. During one radio harangue broadcast during that period, Hitler in particular threatened to level all of Natal. The U-boat blitz was indeed hitting hard by August, cutting coastal communications between Rio and the northeast. One Brazilian troop transport went down carrying 260 soldiers, and another ship was sunk while transporting religious pilgrims. For the first time Brazilian popular opinion was outraged, with many screaming for German blood.

Calls for a declaration of war against Germany began to reverberate across the country. Angry mobs stormed German and Italian consulates, looted Ger-

man owned stores and ransacked German owned newspapers. A somber Vargas finally recognized the obvious, that his days as a wheeler-dealer in the middle were over, and formally declared a state of war on 21 August 1942.

Vargas met with FDR at Natal on 28 January 1943, to discuss the ongoing air and naval campaigns being waged from Brazil, and also the post-war consequences of Brazil having actively joined the Allies. Roosevelt charmed Vargas, as the two talked without interpreters in a language they both knew: French. The American president pleased the Brazilian by telling him he wanted him "at his side" during the peace conference when that time came. The results of the meeting pleased both leaders, and heightened Brazil's status among the other Latin American nations. Indeed, no American leader before or since has so captured the hearts of Brazilians.

As one result of the Natal Conference, both nation's War Departments endorsed the idea of sending Brazilian ground forces overseas. Further, Vargas agreed to accept the decision of the US high command as to their area of deployment. At the same time, US Adm. Jonas H. Ingram was given direct charge of all Brazilian naval forces.

## The FEB

The decision to send Brazilian troops to Europe turned out to be the high point of the two nations' alliance. The strength of the planned "Brazilian Expeditionary Force" (Portuguese acronym: FEB) was to have been three full divisions, but it was soon reduced to just one. As part of the deal, by the end of 1944 over 1,000 Brazilian officers were given training at various US military bases. Brazilians, in fact, became the largest group of foreigners to receive training in the US during the war.

In August 1943, Vargas appointed Joao Batista Mascarenhas de Moraes as commanding general of the FEB. Since Brazil had until then modeled its army on that of France, it was simpler to build from scratch an entirely new division, based on a US template, than to try to restructure one of the older units. By mutual agreement the FEB was then directly integrated into the US Army, rather than go to the field as an independent Allied command. The Brazilians depended entirely on the US Army for their transport, equipment, supplies, mail delivery and even their pay. The FEB's component units were mobilized and concentrated around Rio by January 1944. Final training got underway in April, and a month later plans were set to transport the South Americans overseas.

Late in May the entire division paraded through Rio watched by cheering crowds. But the Axis press made caustic comments about the FEB's ability to win headlines without having been in combat. Hitler remarked the FEB would sail the day "snakes began smoking pipes" — which then prompted the Brazilians to make their unit symbol a smoking cobra.

On 29 June 1944, the first units of the FEB moved by sealed train to an embarkation dock in Rio where they boarded a troop transport. Two days later they sailed for North Africa. Rerouted directly to Naples while in mid-Atlantic, the Brazilians' arrival in Europe was unimpressive. Debarking on 16 July, still without any weapons, the US port authorities at first mistook them for prisoners of war. Because nobody had bothered to set up a camp for them, the South Americans just stood around the docks. Back home, the Brazilian press began to publish shocked reports at

the apparent lack of importance the US Army command was giving to their nation's troops.

Gen. Mascarenhas struggled to gain better US support, since his nation's honor, along with his and all his officers' careers, depended on the FEB's performance. Once they were armed, however, the Brazilians began to gain in confidence. The assignment of some good US liaison officers also began to make a big difference. At a ceremony organized just prior to the Brazilians' moving to the front, the assembled soldiers sang "God Bless America" in English in front of their new army commander, US Gen. Mark Clark. For his part, Clark was glad to have them, since several of his other divisions had recently been taken from him for the invasion of southern France.

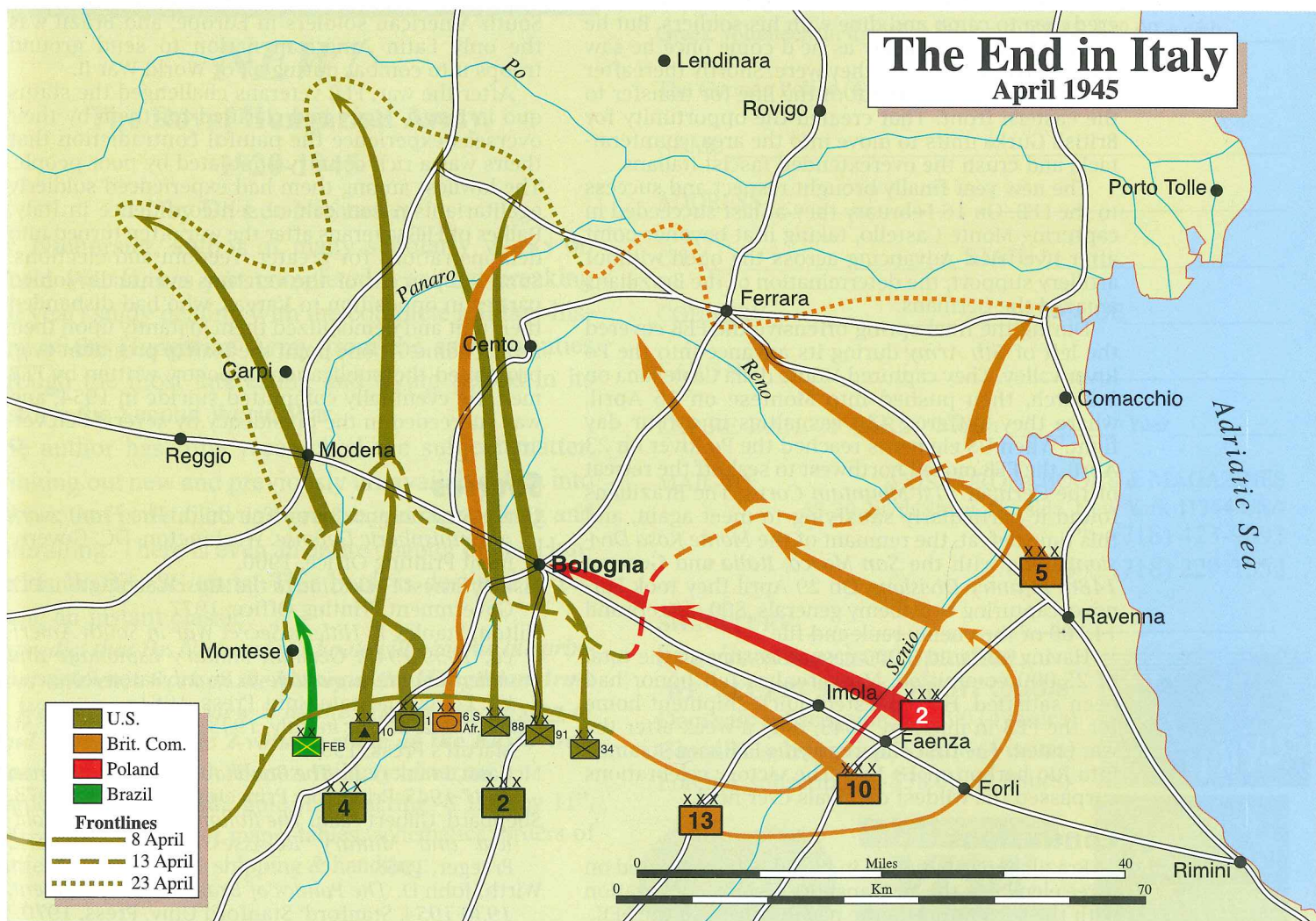
The FEB's combat career finally began in September 1944, in the Serchio valley west of Florence. At first, they advanced well against the German forces then withdrawing into the Gothic Line. But Mascarenhas' determination to succeed at all costs led him into a hard nosed stance. For example, when, after six weeks in the field, one battalion was ordered to move to relieve an American unit, its commander requested a 24 hour delay to allow his men to rest and resupply with ammunition. Mascarenhas rebuked him by asking: "Didn't each soldier receive a knife?" (As the situation finally unfolded, the American command intervened to allow the Brazilian battalion a full 48 hours to rest and resupply.)

The first FEB reverse occurred when their 6th Infantry Regiment occupied a ridge overlooking a

German communications center within the Gothic Line. The macho Brazilians typically disdained of digging defensive trenches and foxholes, so the enemy took advantage of that by launching a counterattack at 2:30 a.m. on 31 October. Until then involved in what had been almost entirely a pursuit operation, it was a new experience for the South Americans. The 6th was therefore easily rolled back by the Germans, earning Mascarenhas and his regimental commander censure for allowing such a poor defensive stance.

After that setback, however, the FEB was given another chance to prove its worth when the 6th Regiment was transferred to the Reno Valley. There it linked with the 1st and 11th Infantry Regiments of the FEB, which had just arrived in Italy, and prepared to assault the German positions on Monte Castello. But the new situation only further exposed the glaring deficiencies in the FEB's overall training and command structure. They attacked the enemy fortifications four times during November and December, but the defending force — the German 232nd Grenadier Infantry Division, which itself had only been organized in July 1944 from convalescents and older men — threw them back each time.

Though new as a unit, the German division contained many veterans of the Russian front. That cadre organized the rest of their unit into a stout defense with interlocking fields of fire and excellent overviews of the Brazilians' approach routes. Using outdated frontal assault tactics, the Brazilians also had to contend with ice and mud.



One battalion, moved into its jump off positions at night, two hours before their attack was to begin, discovered at daybreak they were in full view of the Germans. The lead company was swiftly cut to pieces by enemy fire. The commander of the neighboring Brazilian company was so stunned by the slaughter he witnessed that he refused to go on, resigning and handing over his command to a lieutenant in the midst of battle.

The Germans that day proved particularly effective in their use of hand grenades. At one point a single one of their "potato mashers" instantly and simultaneously killed nine South Americans. From a distance all that could be heard of the battle was the rattle of German machinegun fire and the roars of their grenades going off, intermingled with the screams of wounded and dying Brazilians.

Another unpleasant setback occurred for the FEB as 1944 was drawing to a close. Motivated by Mussolini's urging to make good use of several of his fascist divisions that had recently received German retraining, and to duplicate in Italy the success then being achieved by the German army in the Ardennes, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring planned an offensive against the FEB and the neighboring US 92nd Division, whose infantry consisted of African-American battalions. On the night of 25/26 December, troops of Mussolini's *Monte Rosa Infantry Division* and the German *16th SS Panzergrenadier Division* broke into the US/Brazilian lines and recaptured the town of Barga.

An elated Mussolini journeyed into the snow covered area to camp and dine with his soldiers. But he left again just as quickly as he'd come once he saw how poorly provisioned they were. Shortly thereafter the SS unit was pulled out of the line for transfer to the eastern front. That created the opportunity for British Gurka units to move into the area, counterattack, and crush the overextended fascist Italians.

The new year finally brought respect and success to the FEB. On 16 February they at last succeeded in capturing Monte Castello, taking it at bayonet point after five tries. Advancing across the open without artillery support, the determination of the Brazilians amazed the Germans.

During the final spring offensive the FEB covered the left of 5th Army during its advance into the Po River valley. They captured Monte della Castellana on 5 March, then pushed into Montese on 16 April, where they suffered 426 casualties in a four day fight. When US elements reached the Po River on 23 April, the FEB moved northwest to seal off the retreat of the German *51st Mountain Corps*. The Brazilians found it particularly satisfying to meet again, and this time defeat, the remnant of the *Monte Rosa Division*, along with the *San Marco, Italia* and German *148th Infantry Divisions*. On 29 April they took Fornovo, capturing two enemy generals, 800 officers and 14,700 of the enemy rank and file.

Having suffered 3,000 casualties among the total of 25,000 committed, Mascarenhas felt honor had been satisfied. He requested quick shipment home for the FEB in mid-May 1945, only a week after the war ended. The first ships carrying FEB men steamed into Rio harbor on 18 July. The victory celebrations surpassed the wildest carnivals ever held.

## Conclusions

Brazilian participation in World War II centered on three elements: the air transport system, cooperation with the US South Atlantic naval force, and the FEB.

The air transport system played an immensely important role in the overall war effort against the Germans in 1942 and 1943. Without it, Allied supply problems in North Africa would have been much greater. The Brazilian airfields enhanced the defense of the Panama Canal in 1941 and 1942, and allowed for the carrying out of a successful anti-submarine campaign across the Caribbean and South Atlantic. Had the German U-boats been able to close the Atlantic narrows, the balance of naval power throughout that ocean would have swung in favor of the Axis.

After a stumbling start, the FEB's contribution to the ground war was enough to at least satisfy most Brazilians that their national honor had been well served. Dependent upon the US Army, the Brazilians' role at first seemed almost mercenary; but their determination and increasing combat prowess eventually led them to rack up a good overall combat record.

Domestically, the creation of what amounted to a US-Brazilian alliance fulfilled Vargas' goals of boosting his country's economic and military development. The steel mill he acquired marked the very beginning of Brazilian industrialization. The new airfields, roads and railways greatly facilitated internal communications even before the war was over. Brazil also gained a strong voice, and recognition of its dominant position as regional power, within South America.

Reequipped with modern weapons, the Brazilian military gained both prestige and combat experience. The FEB in fact represented the first appearance of South American soldiers in Europe; and Brazil was the only Latin American nation to send ground troops into combat during all of World War II.

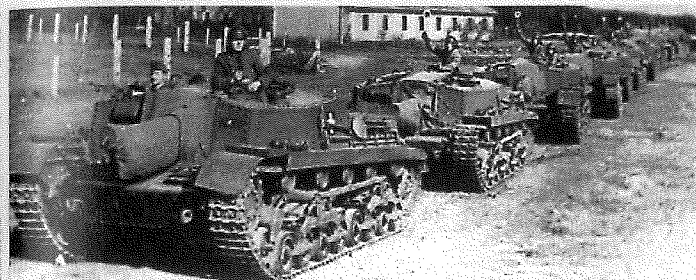
After the war, FEB veterans challenged the status quo in Brazil. Many had clarified for them by their overseas experience the painful contradiction that theirs was a rich country populated by poor people. The lowliest among them had experienced soldierly egalitarianism and gained self-confidence in Italy. Rallies of FEB veterans after the war often turned into demonstrations for greater freedom and elections. Some 80 percent of the veterans eventually joined parties in opposition to Vargas, who had disbanded their unit and demobilized them instantly upon their return home. At one point the fearful president even prohibited the publication of poetry written by FEB men. He eventually committed suicide in 1954, and was succeeded in the presidency by several FEB veterans. ✱

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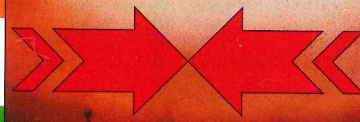
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# The Fire Next Time



## Speculations on the Coming India-Pakistan War

by Ty Bomba

The Indians and Pakistanis have fought each other three times in the past half-century. The first war broke out even before both nations had officially gained their independence from Britain. That struggle lasted 15 months, from October 1947 to December 1948, and certified the two belligerents' national identities but failed to resolve the question of which should possess the mountainous northern province of Kashmir. The second war lasted three indecisive weeks in September 1965, ending with the Kashmir situation still in contention. The last of the three wars was fought over only two weeks in December 1971, and resulted in the severing of East Pakistan from

Islamabad's control and its transformation into the nation of Bangladesh, which immediately gave it the sorry status of being one of the world's poorest countries.

During the remainder of the Cold War after 1971, some stability was injected into the two enemies' relations as each — in search of military alliance and defense aid — began to drift into that struggles' two opposed camps. New Dehli aligned itself — strategically, if not ideologically — with Moscow to create a check against the perceived Chinese threat from Tibet, along with securing massive arms aid. (Some 70 percent of all Indian military equipment in use today is still of Cold War-era Soviet origin.) Islamabad, particularly after the rise of the ayatollahs in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, for a time became the linchpin of Washington's strategy of containment across the region.

But the ending of the Cold War at the start of this decade meant the Indian subcontinent again diminished in global strategic importance. With their national destinies back in their own hands, however, both the Indians and Pakistanis rejected the idea of even trying to establish a workable detente along their lengthy common border. Instead, both pushed to complete their atomic weapons development programs — even though the resultant sanctions and embargoes would lead to the deterioration of their conventional armed forces' strength — while also fighting a renewed, though so far low-intensity, conflict in divided Kashmir.

The west is today almost entirely free of the scourge of large-scale inter-faith strife; not since the Protestant-Catholic wars of the 16th century has it known anything even remotely comparable to the subcontinent's Hindu-Moslem rift of today. As Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif recently explained in justifying his decision to go ahead with atomic weapons testing: "The outside world is not aware of the emotional feelings of the people of this region."

### Pakistan's Strategic Situation

Pakistan's population is estimated to be about 130 million. Almost all are Moslem (97%), poor (average annual per capita income \$400), uneducated (35% literacy) and unhealthy (average lifespan 56.5 years).

### How to Read Unit Symbols

Unit symbols are a quick and easy way (once you get used to them) to clearly show the makeup of even the largest and most complex military organizations. The symbols are used to show the location of the unit on a map. When combined with other symbols in a wire-diagram, the symbols can be used to show the strength and weaponry of a single unit (a Table of Organization and Equipment, or TO&E) or show all the units commanded by some higher organization (an Order of Battle, or OB).

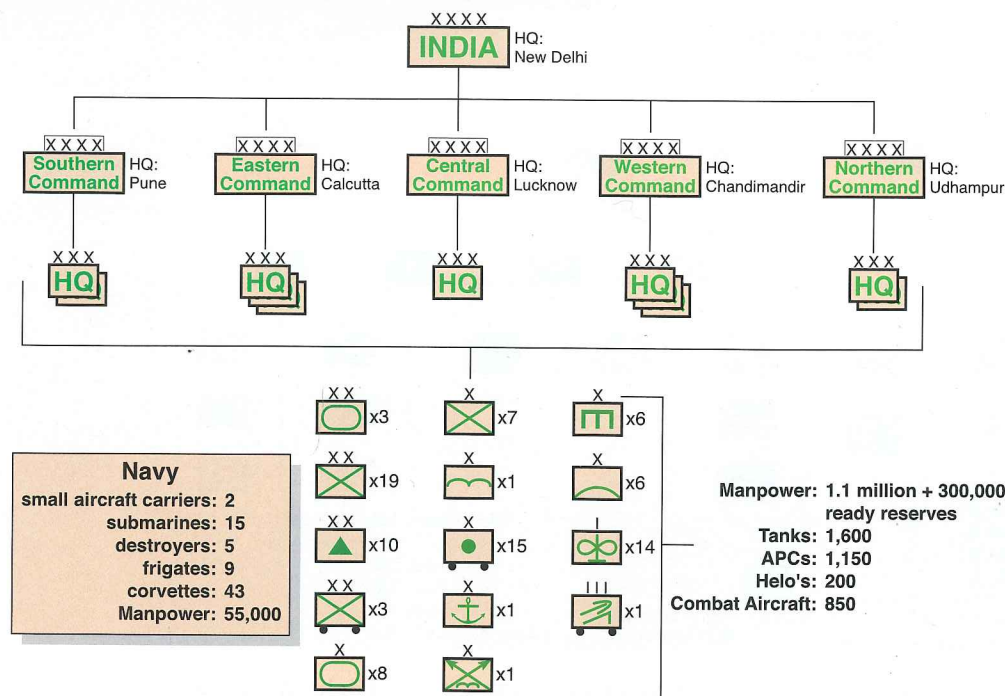
Each unit is identified by a box. The symbol inside the box indicates the unit's type, meaning the primary weaponry and equipment the unit uses to carry out its missions. Examples of unit types are:

Infantry	Commando or Special Forces
Road-Motorized Infantry	Armored Cavalry or Reconnaissance
Airborne (or Paratroop)	Armor or Tank
Marines or Naval Infantry	Truck-Towed Artillery
Mountain Infantry	Motorized SSM's
Mechanized (or "Armored") Infantry	Modern Air Defense Artillery
Combat Engineers	Helicopters

### Unit Size

XXXXXX - Theater of Operations	- Regiment
XXXXX - Army Group or Front	- Battalion
XXXX - Army	I - Company
X X X - Corps	••• - Platoon
X X - Division	•• - Section
X - Brigade	• - Squad or Fire Team





everything strategy they tried in the three previous wars, the Riposte is intended to allow for redress at the peace table. At the tactical level, night attacks, breakouts and rapid follow-on advances are emphasized, while at the operational level the rapid crossing of large obstacles is seen as key. At the strategic level the idea is to move between the main enemy axes of advance to seize some Indian territory that can later be traded for areas lost within Pakistan. To better accomplish the Riposte, the Pakistanis have created two "strike corps" within their army (see diagram). Those units contain some of their best officers, men, equipment and weapon systems — including about 250 T-85s, the best tank presently available in any serious numbers anywhere on the subcontinent.

## India's Strategic Situation

India's population is estimated to be about 931 million, which makes it the second most populous nation on the planet. Eighty-two percent are Hindu and another 11 percent are Moslem; the rest are a mix of Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Jains. They are mostly poor, but are generally not as bad off as the Pakistanis (average annual per capita income \$1,300). They are likewise a bit more educated (48% literacy), and slightly healthier than their cross-border enemies (average lifespan 57.5 years).

By any measure India's armed forces are huge, with over 1.2 million regulars on duty, backed by another 300,000 ready reserves and 600,000 in paramilitary forces. Just as in Pakistan, though, the latter two groups are unprepared for serious war and also drain the regulars of needed talent. For instance, a 1995 parliamentary report admitted the army alone was short about 9,000 captains — men who, the document admitted, should be making up the "cutting edge of operational units."

If internal security duties can be said to be straining Pakistan's regulars, they are almost certainly plunging India's into crisis. There are currently rebellions, guerrilla struggles, assassination campaigns and terrorist attacks taking place in Kashmir, Punjab, Manipur, Assam, Nagaland, Jammu and between

three to seven other areas, depending on the sources consulted and the political science definitions each uses. By any definition, India is racked with communal and ethnic violence, insurgent nationalisms, religious conflict and general overall political instability.

What all that means on the ground is on any given day about one-third of India's regular army is deployed on some kind of internal security operation. That excludes the frequent "confidence building" marches and parades the army is regularly called on to perform in numerous cities to abort simple sectarian rioting. So bad has the situation become one senior Indian general, who declined to go on record with his name, recently lamented the army is "looked upon [by the government] as just better organized, experienced and disciplined riot police."

Regardless of other factors, then, the current mode of deployment alone is a powerful force working to dull the true warfighting capabilities of the Indian military. Even so, there are other factors also pulling in the downward direction.

The first is an almost complete lack of a guiding strategic doctrine. The Indians can be somewhat excused for this, since their strategic position is much more complicated than that of the Pakistanis (for more detail on that, see *Command* no. 50, p. 32). But those in power in New Delhi have not only failed completely at forging any long-term directional principles for their military, they have also developed a second detrimental pattern of waffling at lower levels of defense planning, such as weapons procurement and personnel training.

For example, the air force's training accident record is currently one of the worst in the world, and up to half of their fighter aircraft are grounded for repairs each day. Similarly, the domestically produced "Arjun" tank, a program originally begun back in 1974, has gone through so many redesigns and false starts the number operationally deployed will now only reach 124 (enough for two regiments) in 2001. In yet another example of this type, the Indians, perhaps in an effort to counter the Pakistanis' riposte doctrine, have recently designated three of their army corps as "reserve/strike" formations. But there doesn't appear to have been any follow-on effort in terms of manning, equipment or training to match the Pakistanis in honing those outfits into any kind of elite.

The strategic, operational and tactical direction of the Indian defense structure has in fact become so bad, Lt. Gen. K.K. Hazari, the army's former chief of staff, recently claimed the whole process could at best be described as "ad hocism." He feels the sporadic course-changing of the past quarter-century has actually been "counter-productive" in maintaining overall defense capabilities.

But despite the Indians' many problems, given the pattern of the previous wars and the sheer size of their army, we could probably expect them to be the overall aggressor in any new conflict. Their effort

would likely center on attempting a broad front advance, stretching more or less evenly from Kashmir to the coast and aimed at causing, through attrition and conquest, the complete national collapse of Pakistan. The final goal would probably then be to divide the defeated country into three or more small and weak successor states, thereby creating a buffer situation similar to the one already in place in the area of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

## The Atomic Factor

Despite the many problems, uncertainties, weaknesses and outright failings plaguing the militaries of India and Pakistan, one thing of which those in both governments are certain is they must have atomic weapons. And that they have accomplished. According to the best estimates, Pakistan has perhaps as many as two-dozen aircraft- and missile-capable atomic warheads, while India's tally is about 65. Even more frightening is the fact that by the rapidly approaching end of the century that combined figure may go as high as 300.

Because of the already poor state of both nations' medical infrastructures and the crowding within their cities, Pentagon estimates place the immediate death toll of an atomic war begun now on the subcontinent at about 36 million to start, with the figure then climbing to around 100 million in the two weeks after the initial exchange. It should also be noted those same Pentagon wargames always conclude, though the next Indo-Pakistan war might start with only conventional weapons in use, there's little or no chance it will end that way.

Some experts are hoping the advent of nuclear weapons in south Asia, and with it the certainty of "mutually assured destruction" (or "M.A.D.") will lead to peace there just as it did between the USSR and the USA during the Cold War. But decision making in Islamabad and New Delhi isn't conducted in the same way it was in Washington and Moscow. In fact, Prof. Stephen P. Cohen, an expert on the two countries from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, summarizes Indian-Pakistani top-level decision making this way: "At various times both countries have displayed an incoherent decision-making system. Although at present the system has improved, you cannot predict...what will happen during a crisis."

In short, because of the lack of the many safeguards the US and Soviet Union built into their confrontation — dual launch controls, clear chains of command, surveillance satellites, mutual monitoring agreements, etc. — a tragic-comedy climax, like the one portrayed in the classic film *Dr. Strangelove*, is much more likely to occur between India and Pakistan than it ever was in the larger, older standoff. From the western perspective, however, one mitigating factor comes from the fact no crucial US/European interest is really at stake on the subcontinent. In fact, since India and Pakistan are about as far away from the centers of western power as they could be while still being on Earth, the two can probably blow each other to smithereens while the rest of us simply watch on TV and go about our business. One has to wonder, though, if that was the kind of thing President Bush was thinking of when he called for the birth of the new world order.

An even more awful realization comes from the fact the recent Pakistani detonations were hailed in the news media of the Middle East as signalling the advent of the "Islamic bomb." It's true Mr. Sharif heads what is currently considered a pro-western



The Indian designed Arjun battle tank weighs 60 tons and has a 120mm rifled main gun.

regime in Islamabad. But it's equally true Pakistan has shown itself susceptible to sudden and extreme changes of government throughout its entire modern national history. If such a shift were to take place, then Saddam Hussein and Muammar Qaddafi might at last find themselves in possession of the weapons they've long sought, along with dependably targetable missiles atop which to mount them. If that situation comes about, then the chicken hatched by the west's neo-isolationism will indeed have come home to roost. ☼

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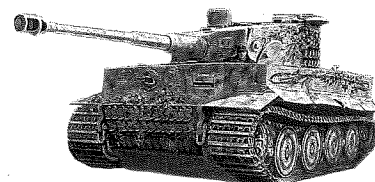
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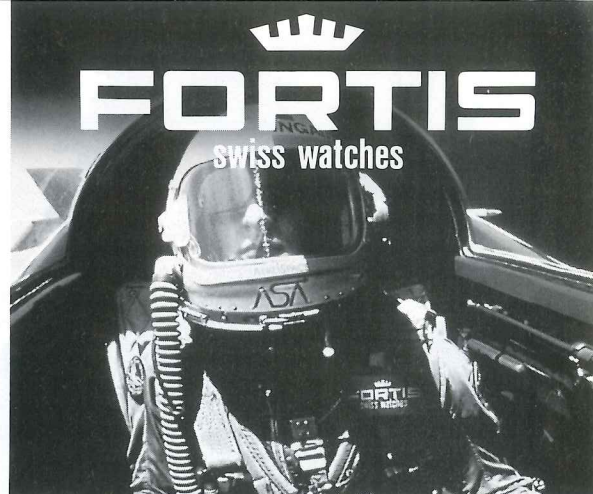
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# Napoleon's First Italian Campaign, 1796-1797

by Robert A. Forczyk

*Detail from David's painting of Napoleon at Arcola.*

Within three years of the outbreak of the French Revolution, that nation blundered with little forethought into war with most of Europe. In the War of the First Coalition (1792-1798), a France split by internal chaos and civil strife chose to simultaneously wage war against Austria, Prussia, Spain, England, Sardinia-Piedmont and Naples. Amazingly, the *ad hoc* French revolutionary armies were able to withstand multiple foreign invasions while also suppressing severe internal rebellions.

Once it became apparent there would be no quick or easy victory against the French, the allies began to drop out of the coalition. By 1795, Prussia and Spain had quit the war and the French had occupied Holland. Minor skirmishing continued on the German and Italian fronts, with Austria remaining the primary enemy. But by the winter of 1795-96, France's armies were also deteriorating due to disease, desertion, combat losses, lack of supplies and mediocre leadership. The war seemed to be approaching stalemate. The quietest front was Italy, where little had occurred since the French seized Nice and Savoy in 1792.

To try to conclude the war successfully, the French Directory wanted to inflict a crushing defeat on Austria. Lazare Carnot, the *de facto* French minister of war, developed a strategic plan for the campaign of 1796 that called for French armies in Germany and Italy to conduct a pincer attack against Austria, with the forces in the north making the main effort. Since Italy was regarded as the secondary theater of operations, the French armies there were ordered to merely tie down as many Austrians as possible and only to advance once the forces in Germany had defeated the main enemy army.

Forced onto the strategic defensive by a resurgent France, the Austrians in turn hoped to defeat their main armies in Germany, then eliminate their foothold in Italy. Thus the main Austrian effort was also committed to the German front, which both sides expected to be the decisive theater — both sides were wrong.

## French Commanders

On 27 March 1796, the 26-year-old Gen. Napoleone Buonaparte (as he then still spelled his name), arrived

to take command of the *Armee de l'Italie*. Originally commissioned in the royal artillery in 1785, Napoleon was a captain with only limited experience at the start of the war in 1792. Appointed commander of French artillery at the siege of Toulon in September 1793, it was his plan and organizational efficiency that led to the recapture of that vital city from the Anglo-Spanish occupying force. Success at Toulon brought recognition and promotion to brigadier general, but he was given only minor assignments in 1794. After briefly serving as chief of artillery of the *Armee de l'Italie*, he was placed on the inactive list early in 1795.

Napoleon then began to make great efforts to cultivate political contacts who might revive his career. Opportunity came on 5 October 1795, when a Parisian mob attempted to overthrow the shaky republican government: Napoleon was recalled to service through the intercession of a cavalry officer, Capt. Joachim Murat, and he was soon able to scrape together a force sufficient to defend the Convention. Napoleon brutally ended the rebellion by firing point-blank into the mobs with artillery, killing about 1,400. A grateful Convention appointed him commander of the *Army of the Interior*, but then on 2 March 1796 decided to send him to lead the rag-tag force in Italy. Napoleon had made political enemies as well as friends, and the former didn't want him anywhere near the seat of power in Paris.

When he arrived in Italy to take command of the army, Napoleon had never previously held a regimental, battalion or even company command. But he was young, energetic, talented and ambitious as well as brutal, cunning and politically devious.

Napoleon's three divisional commanders were a rough but experienced lot. His first division was commanded by Gen. Andre Massena, a 37-year-old former sergeant. Massena was a good tactician and had successfully commanded a division at Toulon in 1793 and at the Battle of Loano in 1795. He was competent and aggressive, but also greedy and uneducated. The second division was commanded by Gen. Count Jean Serurier, a 53-year-old product of the former royal army. He was one of the few regular officers who transferred his loyalty to the new regime; but though he had over 30 years' experience, he'd only had a year of divisional command. The third division was led by 38-year-old Gen. Pierre Augereau,

a rogue whose prior service included time as an enlisted man in the royal cavalry as well as stints in the Russian, Prussian and Neapolitan armies. All three of the division commanders were competent leaders, and they were initially irate that a much younger and political general of foreign birth had been given command of their army. Relations between them and Napoleon started out chilly.

The cavalry of the *Armée de l'Italie* was led by Brig. Gens. Stengel and Irish-born Charles Kilmaine (age 45). Stengel was an Alsatian-born hussar with considerable combat experience in Belgium and Holland. Brig. Gen. La Harpe commanded a fourth division, though technically he served under Massena. Col. Barthelemy Joubert (age 27), a former artillery sergeant, commanded one of Massena's brigades. Brig. Gen. Claude Victor (age 31), a former grenadier, also commanded a brigade in Massena's division.

Other key French leaders included Gen. Louis Berthier, the able 42-year-old chief of staff. Berthier, a well educated regular army engineer who'd served in the French expedition to America in 1780, was a superb staff officer and would serve Napoleon in that role for the next 18 years. Napoleon's aide-de-camp was Col. Joachim Murat, the 29-year-old cavalry leader who would also go on to provide many years of loyal service. Other French officers in the *Armée de l'Italie* who would later rise to prominence included Maj. Jean Lannes (age 27), Capt. Jean Bessieres (age 27), Maj. Auguste Marmont (age 21, ADC to Napoleon), and Maj. Jean Junot (age 24, also ADC).

## Austrian Commanders

The Austrian commanders who would oppose Napoleon in his first campaign were professionals of

the old school: cautious and uninspired. The senior was 71-year-old Gen. de Beaulieu, who'd cornered Austrian forces in Italy. He'd fought in the Seven Years War and had defeated several French units in Belgium 1792-94, but by 1796 he had lost his vigor and was unable to ride a horse. Baron Miot de Mellet, an Austrian general on loan to the House of Savoy, commanded the Piedmontese contingent in northwestern Italy. Johann Provera, age 56, was an Italian-born officer who served as an independent division commander. The best of the Austrian commanders were Gen. Count Dagobert Wurmser, 71 years old and another veteran of the Seven Years War; and the Hungarian-born 61-year-old Gen. Baron Nicholas von Alinzi (aka d'Alvintzi), who'd fought well at the Battle of Neerwinden in 1793.

All of the Austrian commanders had considerable combat experience, but it was mostly in positional warfare: they tended to focus on cities and fortresses. Unfortunately for them, the French under Napoleon would practice a fast-moving maneuver warfare



Joachim Murat.



**Italian Theatre of Operations**  
1796 - 1797

that focused on catching and destroying enemy armies, not on seizing terrain.

## The Armée de l'Italie

In 1796 the armies of the French republic were still

in a state of transformation, a process that had been formalized with the *Amalgame* of January 1794. According to that policy the old regiments were replaced with "demi-brigades" composed of one regular and two volunteer battalions. The idea was to

## Battlefield Operating Systems (BOS)

In modern military operations there are a number of core functions, collectively referred to as "battlefield operating systems" (or BOS), which a commander must coordinate to produce and enhance the combat power of his force. BOS include: maneuver, intelligence, fire support, mobility, counter-mobility, logistics and command control. Though not part of conventional BOS, morale is often an important combat-power multiplier or detractor. Thus a proper evaluation of Napoleon's 1796-97 campaign in Italy should be made in reference to those BOS.

Better use of operational and tactical maneuver contributed most to French success in Italy. The French infantry were capable of rapid and sustained forced marches, with their divisions able to go 50 miles in 36 hours.

Once in the presence of the enemy, the French would deploy up to 20 percent of their troops as light infantry skirmishers to harass and whittle down enemy linear formations. After the enemy had been sufficiently degraded by those skirmishers, the French main body would use battalion columns to smash through their wavering line with the bayonet at a chosen point. If an enemy defense were more resolute, flanking marches would be used to unhinge their position.

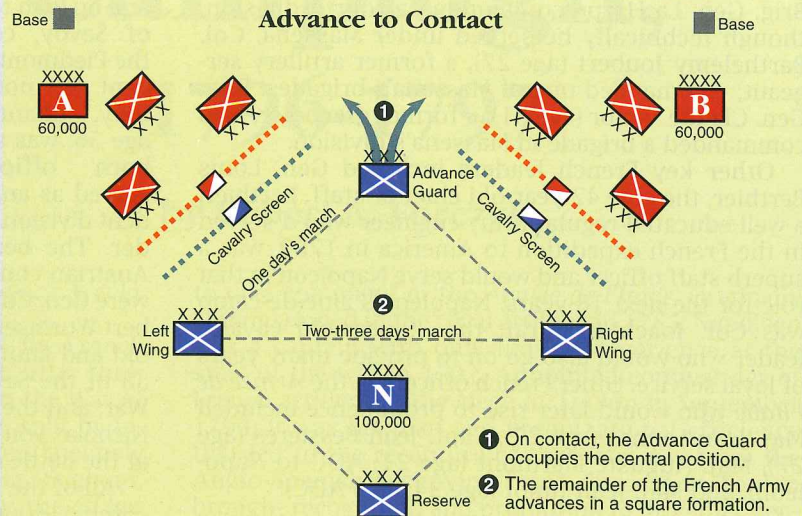
But all those tactics were used with equal success by French generals in Belgium and along the Rhine as well as in Italy, so Napoleon benefited from an already existing doctrine. His primary contribution in the use of maneuver, was in his mastery of the strategy of the central position, which he used to aggressively split his enemies and then defeat them in detail.

In contrast, the Austrians had no light infantry among their line regiments, and only a few auxiliary border (*grenzer*) units. They disliked skirmishing, preferring to rely on old-style linear formations that could fire large volleys. They also used conservative defensive tactics stressing cordon-like screens behind natural obstacles. In the offense their tactics were complex, calling for the use of multiple columns that always proved difficult to coordinate.

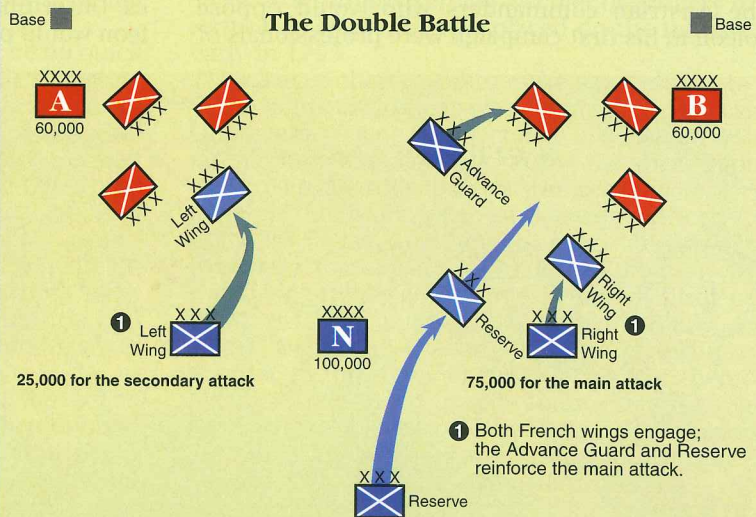
Neither side used their cavalry well as a maneuver force. The French were inhibited here by lack of quality and quantity of horseflesh. The Austrians had both, but were inhibited by the rough terrain across much of northern Italy. Actually, however, Lombardy is quite flat and the superior Austrian cavalry could have made a major contribution if used properly. Due to those deficiencies in cavalry, neither side was completely effective in pursuing a retreating enemy.

Fire support also made important contributions to French success in Italy in 1796-97. Gribeauval's reforms just prior to the French Revolution introduced lighter, more mobile field guns, fixed ammunition types, standard gunnery tables, eight-gun batteries and divisional artillery. French artillery doctrine promoted the use of massed

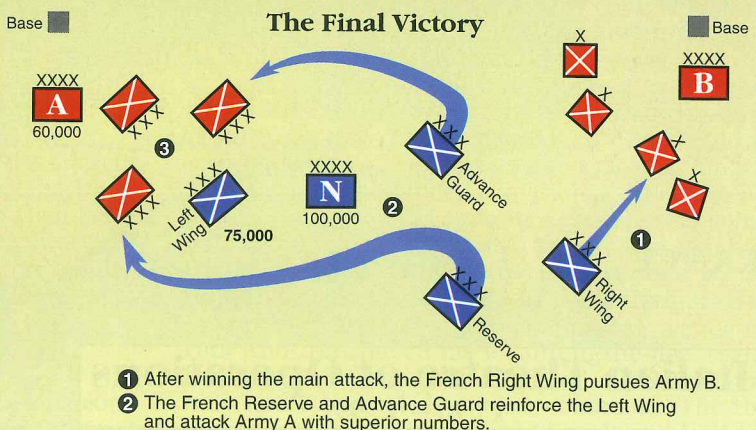
### The Strategy of the Central Position



### The Double Battle



### The Final Victory



strengthen the revolutionary armies by balancing quality and quantity to achieve useful hybrid units. But it wasn't fully implemented until 1795, and even then the Directory didn't have the resources to fully equip all the resultant demi-brigades.

When Gen. Bonaparte arrived in Nice on 27 March 1796 to take command of the *Armée de l'Italie*, he found both its morale and material conditions appalling. Only about 37,000 troops were available for operations out of the 63,000 listed on paper. Most

guns to focus large volumes of fire at a decisive point. Horse artillery was introduced in 1791, which combined firepower with even greater mobility. Napoleon, a trained artilleryman, was able to make maximum use of all those improvements. He formed a horse artillery battalion of 16 eight-pounders under Col. Marmont, and used its mobile firepower to tear huge holes in the Austrian lines at Castiglione and Rivoli.

In contrast, Austrian artillery doctrine, tactics and equipment were outdated. Though they started the campaign with a three to one numerical advantage in guns, those numbers were deceiving. The Austrian army dispersed its cannon in the infantry support role, and they didn't concentrate them beyond battery level. Their artillery was also heavy and less mobile, which always resulted in many pieces being lost or abandoned in retreats.

Combat intelligence wasn't a function either side performed well. One officer on Napoleon's staff, a geographer named Louis Baclet d'Albe, was responsible for coordinating intelligence reports, including updating situation maps and maintaining order of battle records known as *carnets*. D'Albe was a good staff officer, but he was swamped with paperwork. Napoleon's army therefore lacked a functioning, centralized military intelligence system — a key weakness that was never rectified. On both sides, in fact, intelligence collection was *ad hoc* and amateurish, relying on the use of civilian informants, prisoner interrogations, and sending staff officers on reconnaissance behind enemy lines. Cavalry was singularly ineffective at reconnaissance due to doctrinal emphasis on their employment as a shock force.

Command and control was another function in which the French army excelled. Emphasis was placed on unity of command, with Napoleon as the primary node. He was fortunate in that his subordinates proved able to act independently and with initiative, while still complying with his overall mission intent. The French style of tactical command was also distinctive, stressing bold leadership from the front, with officers always in the thick of the fighting.

Austrian command and control at both the operational and tactical levels was poor. Old, conservative generals like Beaulieu were content to locate their headquarters miles from the action. During the Battle of Dego on 14 April 1796, for instance, he attempted to command from seven miles off. Further, Beaulieu and a number of other older Austrian generals could no longer ride horses, and had to be drawn around in carriages. In contrast, Napoleon was constantly riding back and forth among his divisions. Consequently, the young, energetic French leaders were consistently able to better gauge the situation and take advantage of fleeting opportunities the distant Austrian leaders couldn't even perceive.

The logistics function produced mixed results for both sides. Since the French relied on foraging (that is, pillaging) and capturing enemy supplies, their formal lines of communication (LOC) were austere. Only minimal supplies were provided from home sources, while the delivery of what was sent depended on corrupt and inefficient civilian contractors. But that also reduced the logistical tail of the army, which allowed French infantry greater operational mobility.

On the Austrian side, their army was well supplied but overly reliant on a rigid depot system and its attendant LOCs. When on the offensive, large baggage trains reduced Austrian operational mobility to a relative crawl. On the defense, perceived threats to the LOC made Austrian commanders willing to surrender ground rather than risk being cut off.

Napoleon would later offer his famous dictum that in war the moral is to the material as three is to one; and he clearly learned that lesson in Italy. Despite the initially wretched quality and low spirits of his army, he was able to mold that armed mob into a formidable combat force. To accomplish that he used classic carrot and stick methods

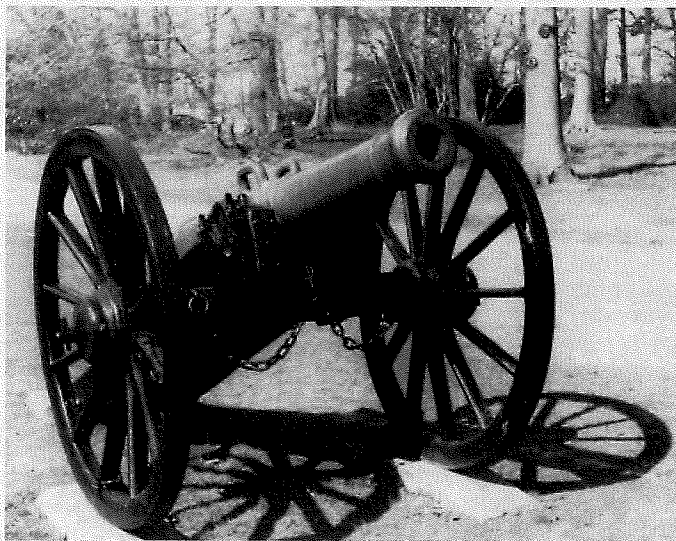
to motivate the troops. He promised opportunities to pillage in Italy, while also using executions to end mutinies and maintain discipline. On campaign, Napoleon made good his promises, using his victories to provide the troops cash, new boots, food, wine, women and pretty much anything else they could carry.

When in the presence of the enemy, Napoleon used elan and *esprit de corps* as combat power multipliers. French troops fought harder because they knew victory meant the difference between a full or empty stomach. But Napoleon also raised their battlefield morale to fever pitch by setting a bold personal example on the field of battle. Even before the end

of the campaign, his men came to view Napoleon as not only heroic and inspired, but as the man who gave them access to food and plunder.

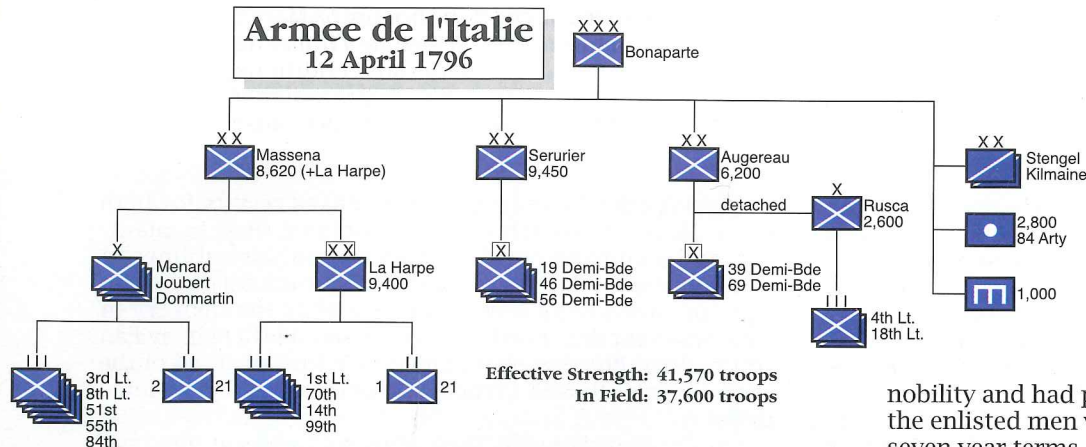
On the other side, morale was a weak point for the entire Austrian army. A mixed ethnic force led by class-conscious officers was not conducive to breeding patriotic fervor. Indeed, the official Austrian view held morale was irrelevant to combat power.

Napoleon was therefore able to win his first Italian campaign with a ragged, outnumbered army through the superior use of maneuver, fire support, command control and morale. He also won it because the Austrians proved unable to excel at any of those same functions. Most of all, victory came from his peculiar genius and his ability to synchronize BOS to achieve a synergy that generated combat power far in excess of the material and manpower resources of his army.



Twelve-pounder gun. Nicknamed "the Emperor's Beautiful Daughters."

## Armee de l'Italie 12 April 1796



were still wearing uniforms issued two years earlier, which had been reduced to rags or mixtures of civilian and military clothing. Boots and shoes were in short supply, as well as weapons and horses. About 1,000 troops in Augereau's division had no muskets. Lack of fodder reduced the cavalry force available to only 3,500 gaunt mounts; and that same shortage also reduced the mobility of the artillery and transport services.

Supply was the most critical deficiency of the army. Napoleon brought his own senior commissary officer, Chauvet, with him to Italy, but he died at the start of the campaign. That left the *Armee de l'Italie* to be served by seven different civilian contractors, who supplied bread, forage, medicinals, meat and draught animals. Those men ranged from honest and efficient to corrupt and worthless, and all their efforts were reduced by the inability of the Directory to properly fund military expenditures.

The lack of food and pay were the two biggest complaints of the men. Republican armies often fed themselves by foraging, but by this time the area around Nice could no longer feed many. Lacking proper depots, the *Armee de l'Italie* was forced to disperse itself to sustain its men at even a subsistence level. Thus both men and horses were nearing starvation early in 1796. The rations available at the start of the campaign were only sufficient to feed 15,000 troops for a month. Equally damaging to morale was the lack of pay. When Napoleon arrived his troops hadn't been paid in months, and then only in worthless paper assignats. Those shortages, combined with winter weather, inactivity and uninspired leadership had reduced French morale to the breaking point. Several units had rebelled or refused to obey orders, and desertion rates were increasing.

French tactical organization in the *Armee de l'Italie* wasn't standardized; there were four primary maneuver divisions and two smaller ones. A total of 17 demi-brigades of infantry were available, composed of about 50 battalions and 30,000 troops. The primary weapon of the infantry was nominally the 1777-pattern "Charleville" 17.5mm musket, but many obsolete and non-standard weapons were also in use.

The weak cavalry force consisted of two small divisions that were retained under Napoleon's direct control. Though the French artillery was nominally one of the strongest parts of the republican armies due to Jean Gribeauval's reforms and superior training, that wasn't the case here. The best artillerymen had been sent to other fronts, while the shortage of draft animals and the hilly terrain reduced the mobility of the guns. Fewer than 60 medium caliber cannon were

available: about 42 eight-pounders and 14 six-inch howitzers, supplemented by two dozen four-pounder infantry guns. A battalion-size force of sappers was available, but they had no pontoon bridge sections or siege equipment.

## The Austrian Army

The Austrian army in Italy was a conventional force of long-service professionals; most of its officers came from the minor

nobility and had purchased their commissions, while the enlisted men volunteered or were conscripted for seven year terms. It was a heterogeneous army due to the multi-ethnic nature of the Hapsburg Empire, with units made up of Moravian, Bohemian, Austrian, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian and Croatian troops. Language was therefore a problem.

The army was well supplied and equipped, but it was tied to a fixed supply depot system that reduced its mobility and drained many troops to protect the lines of communication back to Austrian home depots. Unlike the French, the Austrian high command didn't regard the morale of its troops as a major factor in campaigning, and thus spent little effort trying to motivate the men. Austrian soldiers were paid and fed regularly, but the Frederickian outlook of their commanders viewed them as mere ciphers (derided by the French as "walking muskets").

Though the Austrian army was well trained in standard linear infantry tactics, it was weak in light infantry and slow in maneuver. They relied on dense, linear formations that could deliver firepower in company and battalion volleys. The standard infantry weapon was the 18.3mm 1784-pattern musket, though the handful of light infantry used the 1779-pattern rifle. Austrian artillery, in three-, six- and 12-pounder varieties, was plentiful though not well employed. But Austrian cavalry was considered the finest in Europe, even if not always used to best effect.

The Austrian forces in Italy received strategic direction from the emperor's military advisors, the Aulic Council, who issued orders from Vienna. Gen. de Beaulieu's command consisted of four infantry divisions (d'Argenteau, Wukassovitch, Liptay and Sebottendorf), for a total force of about 35,000. There were 34 infantry battalions holding about 24,500 men; 33 cavalry squadrons with 4,290 troopers, and about 216 artillery pieces (2,000 men); though of all those combat arms only about 28,200 were actually available for operations. Thirteen squadrons of Neapolitan cavalry, about 2,000 troopers, were also attached to Beaulieu's command.

Gen. Colli had been dispatched to lead the field army of Piedmont, which consisted of three infantry and one cavalry division (17,000 men and 60 cannon). Though Piedmont had about 101,000 men under arms in its army and militia, most were tied down in static defense of fortresses and Alpine passes, leaving few for active campaigning. The Piedmontese despised their Austrian allies, and revolutionary ideology from France had already begun to undermine their morale. Acting as an auxiliary force tying together Colli's army to Beaulieu's was a small Austrian division (3,000 men) under Gen. Provera, composed of four border battalions and a one squadron of cavalry.

Both the Austrian and Piedmontese forces were deployed in dispersed garrisons and outpost positions, stretching about 80 miles from Cuneo to the neutral republic of Genoa. The central reserves, one infantry and one cavalry division, were too far to the rear at Alessandria. All told, Beaulieu and Colli had about 47,000 men and 200 guns in Piedmont and Liguria to oppose Napoleon. They were well supplied with food and ammunition, and in addition to holding a number of fortified positions, the hilly terrain favored the defense.

## Defeat of Piedmont (9-28 Apr)

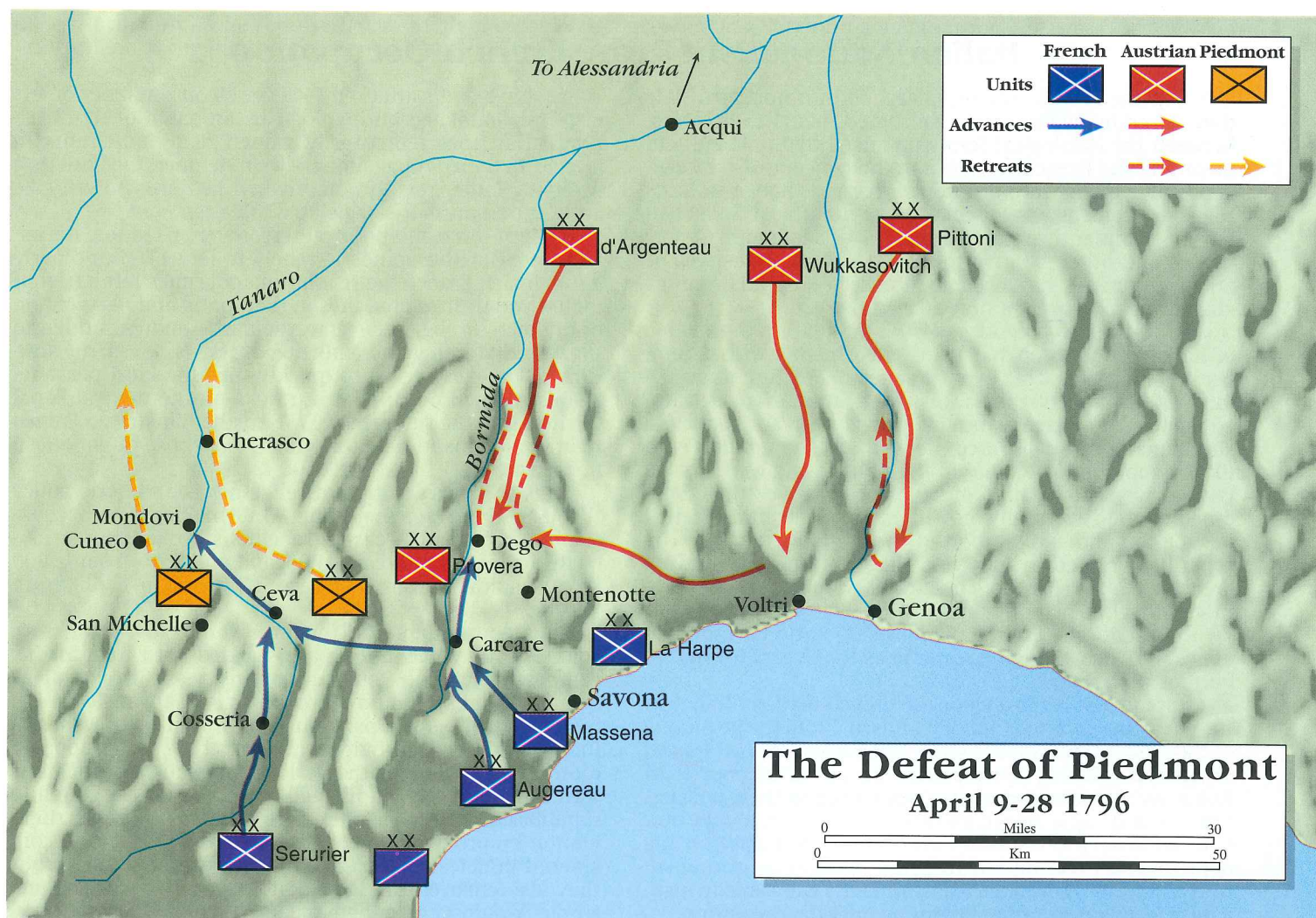
Napoleon quickly assembled his division commanders in Nice and informed them of his intent to attack within 48 hours. But that was sheer bombast for dramatic effect; he couldn't possibly launch an offensive until he'd concentrated the army and moved it closer to the enemy. Instead, he spent the next two weeks trying to improve the morale of his threadbare troops by issuing a little back pay from Directory funds entrusted to him, and expedients such as raising loans from local merchants and selling impounded property (£17,000 total, about five days pay for the entire army). Those measures were insufficient, but they gave the troops some hope the new general's promises were more than just words.

Napoleon also hoped to raise morale by promising his men victory in the coming campaign would gain them food and looting privileges in Piedmont. He also used the time to restore discipline in the

army by quelling mutinies in several regiments and by relieving incompetent officers. In his first 20 days in command Napoleon wrote 123 orders. During early April the army moved up the coast to assembly areas near Savona. He planned to start the campaign on 14 April.

To sustain the *Armee de l'Italie*, Napoleon realized he needed to win a quick victory that would secure supplies for his hungry men and give his generals confidence in his leadership. He therefore chose as his primary target the army of Piedmont under Colli, which was strung out between Cuneo, Mondovi and Ceva.

The Kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont, ruled by the House of Savoy, had been at war with France since September 1792. It was Napoleon's intention to knock it out of the war in one short, sharp campaign, thereby gaining access to the fertile plains of Lombardy. He intended to accomplish that through a strategy of central position, by seizing the key road junctions at Carcare and Ceva. His taking of those towns would drive a wedge between the forces of Colli and Beaulieu, because only Provera's auxiliaries were holding the center of the 80-mile-long outpost line. He would then hold off the bulk of Beaulieu's army with a small blocking force while he massed the rest of the French army to smash Colli's dispersed force. To confuse the enemy as to the true objective of the French offensive, Napoleon developed a deception plan with brigade-size diversionary feints toward Cuneo and Genoa. Once Piedmont was neutralized



and his army resupplied, Napoleon felt he would be in a position to engage Beaulieu's main army. It was a bold and daring plan.

The terrain in the initial area of operations was rugged, with elevations in the Ligurian mountains averaging 1,300 to 1,600 feet. It was a place ill-suited for cavalry or the movement of heavy artillery. At the start of the movement the weather was mild with temperatures averaging 50° to 60° F, and it rained about one day in three.

Surprisingly, Beaulieu pre-empted Napoleon on 9 April by moving elements of three infantry divisions to encircle an exposed French brigade at Voltri, near Genoa. The sluggish Austrian offensive failed to capture the French unit, but it did effectively widen the gap between Colli's and Beaulieu's forces. In the center d'Argenteau moved elements of his division toward Sassello, with only a flank guard in the Bormida valley.

Though surprised by the Austrian move, Napoleon shifted rapidly to exploit the resultant gap between the two enemy forces. While La Harpe's division held Savona and delayed the Austrians, he moved Massena's and Augereau's commands west through the 10-mile long Cadibona pass toward Carcare, while Serurier's division marched north through the 20-mile long Tanaro River valley toward Ceva. Napoleon's army occupied Carcare on 12 April, then split up: Massena's division moved north to engage d'Argenteau's advance guard near Montenotte, while Augereau went west to engage Colli's flank guard

near Millesimo. Napoleon travelled with Massena's column.

Massena executed an aggressive and successful flank attack against d'Argenteau's force at Montenotte, and that Austrian force routed; 2,000 of them were captured at the cost of only 26 French casualties. Enough Austrian muskets and boots were also taken to equip many of the ill-clad and unarmed French infantry. Satisfied with events on that front, Napoleon ordered Massena to pursue d'Argenteau's fleeing remnants up the Bormida valley and to establish a blocking position at Dego. But due to uncertainty about the overall enemy whereabouts, he decided to keep a large central reserve of La Harpe's division and Stengel's cavalry. That done, he turned his attention to his primary goal: destroying Colli's army.

Meanwhile Augereau pushed back a Piedmontese brigade at Millesimo before running into a roadblock: an Austrian border battalion from Provera's division held the Castle Cosseria, which dominated the Tanaro River valley. Though he might have bypassed the small detachment, he decided to launch a hasty attack against the fortified position on 13 April. The effort failed and cost Augereau 900 casualties (14 percent of his force). Napoleon was furious and ordered artillery to support a renewed attack; but the castle's defenders didn't surrender until they ran out of water and ammunition on 14 April. One of Colli's divisions had tried to fight its way through to Provera, but were cut off by three regiments of French

## Italian Nationalism & the French Occupation

When the French initially marched into northern Italy they found many there who welcomed them as liberators. Between the ideological ferment caused by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the concept of nationalism was evolving into a potent force for change in Italy. Hapsburg control over Lombardy was superficial; Milan had only been under their control since 1713. Piedmont, Genoa, Venice and other city states were the corrupt vestiges of an anachronistic system. Thus northern Italy was ripe for change when Napoleon first arrived there.

And at first, Napoleon was willing to entertain the idea of Italian republicanism. For instance, he met with a number of local nationalists in Milan in May 1796. But his acceptance of Italian nationalism was strictly utilitarian: he wanted the local populace to provide troops, food and money to supplement his small force. He also felt cooperation with local sympathetic Italians would make for an easier occupation. Even the creation of new states such as the Cispadine Republic was really only intended to facilitate French occupation and exploitation of the conquered areas. The republics created in Italy, just like the ones created by French victories elsewhere in Europe, were designed to promote French hegemony and not the civic welfare of their own populations. French promises of national independence were lies, though it sometimes took years for that to become apparent.

Certainly the biggest error the French made in Italy was the persecution of the Catholic Church. From the beginning of the French Revolution, radical Jacobin leaders had viewed organized religion, particularly the powerful church of Rome, as a potential source of resistance to their policies. Church lands were seized and the clergy forced to take new vows of loyalty to the state, with those who refused being deported. Repression led to active resistance, and small town clergy in the Vendee and Normandy were able to instigate effective peasant rebellions against the revolution.

Jacobin leaders attacked the Church on a number of levels. They launched an ideological campaign of de-Christianization that temporarily gained many adherents in France. In their propaganda they condemned the Pope as a foreign counter-revolutionary when he dared to criticize anti-Church measures legislated in Paris.

Military force and political terror were used to exterminate most of the domestic rebels in late 1795 and early 1796. Inside France the revolutionary armies left a trail of looted and burned churches in their path, and persecution of organized religion became standard conduct. Added to the wanton looting and extortion of Italy's riches, the anti-Church policies served to quickly turn the local peasants against French occupation. Attacks on the neutral Papal territories in the summer of 1796 further illustrated French military actions in Italy were for the purpose of conquest, not liberation.

Thus their persecution of religion was an idiotic policy that gained the French nothing while making their occupation more difficult. Peasant rebellions broke out continuously across Lombardy in 1796, and on 14 April some 400 French soldiers were massacred by Italian civilians in Verona.

Napoleon understood the anti-Church measures were counter-productive, but he also needed hard cash for his campaign: seizing Church property was an expedient means of gaining funding. Nor did he take any measures to really control his troops: he had promised them riches in Italy and felt he had to deliver. For his own part, Napoleon didn't think much of either Italian nationalism or religious traditionalism. He supported the creation of satellite republics in as much as they were vehicles for French domination by proxy. In sum, those short-sighted and ill-considered policies produced some short-term benefits, but they also ensured the hegemony of the later Napoleonic empire would be as ephemeral as that of the Hapsburgs.

cavalry after Cossieria fell, giving up 6,000 prisoners and 30 cannon.

Massena occupied Dego on 14 April and succeeded in capturing the remnants of d'Argenteau's division: 5,000 men and 19 guns. But Massena's hungry troops quickly lost control and looted the town, as they'd been promised they would be allowed to do. Massena himself got sloppy, distracted by a village girl, and failed to post pickets. At 3:00 a.m. the next morning the hung-over French were surprised by Austrian infantry from Wukassovitch's division, who retook Dego while routing Massena's disorganized command. Napoleon had to race back 10 miles from Cossieria and commit the reserve. Dego was taken again, this time by La Harpe's troops, around 2:00 p.m., but at the cost of another 1,000 French casualties. Wukassovitch's division retired northward up the Bormida valley toward Acqui. Beaulieu, whose army had lost nearly a third of its strength in the last four days, decided to retire to the Po River to cover Milan. Colli was thus left on his own.

Having dealt with Beaulieu's counterattack, Napoleon again turned his attention to Colli's army. After the fall of Cossieria, Augereau linked with Serurier's approaching division and together they pushed back Colli's outposts toward Ceva. Augereau launched a premature attack there on 16 April, which failed. This time adding Serurier's men, he planned a deliberate assault with 24,000 troops on 17 April, but Colli withdrew his 13,000 men seven miles to the west to a new defensive position at San Michelle. Serurier's command bumped into the new position on the morning of 18 April, only to be repulsed. A more deliberate effort planned for the 19th collapsed due to lack of

artillery support and some French units stopping to loot. Napoleon then called a halt to regroup.

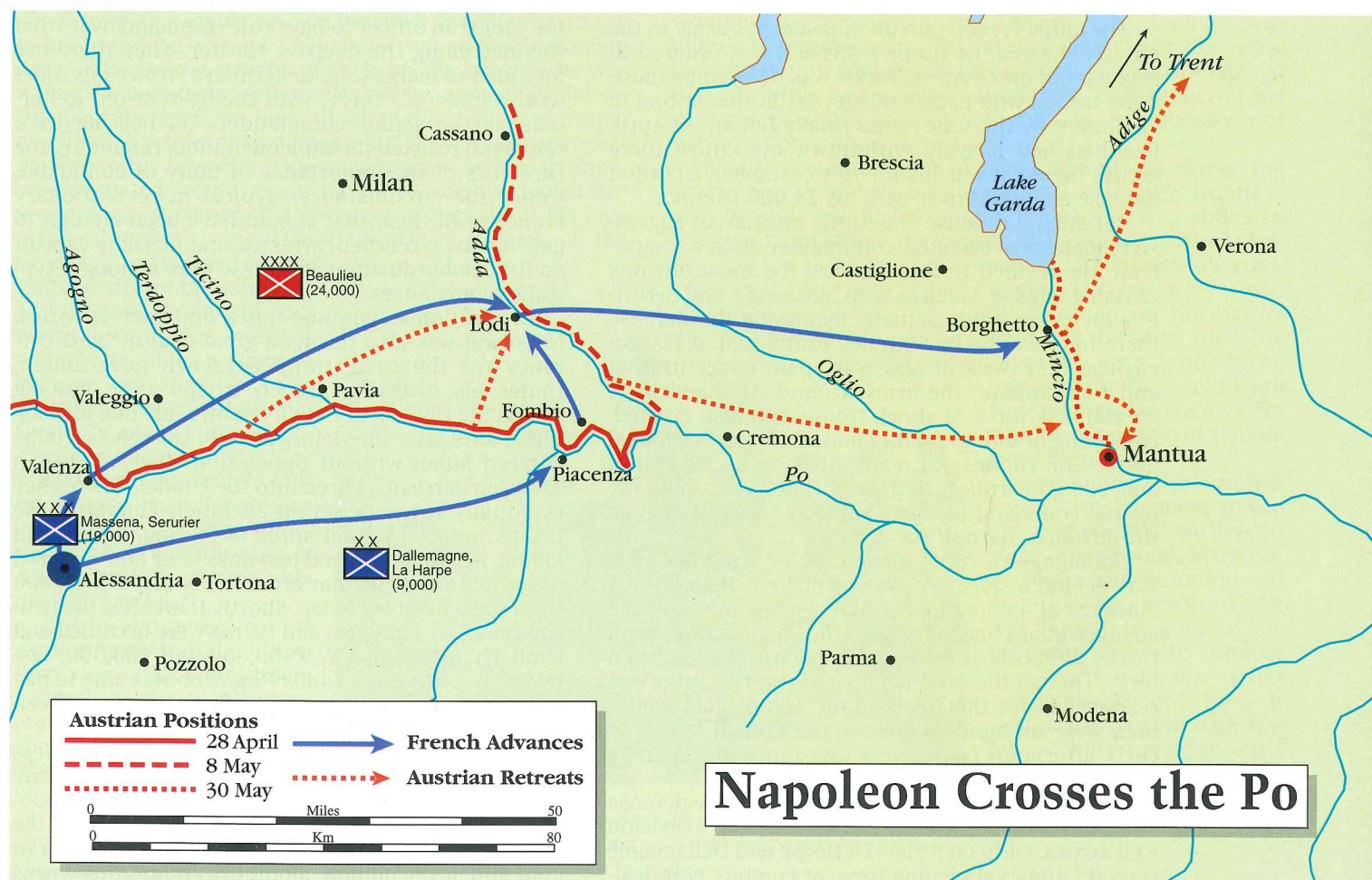
Though he held a good defensive position where he was, on the night of 20 April Colli decided to retreat to his depot at Mondovi. French cavalry pursued the Piedmontese and in the process Brig. Gen. Stengel was killed. Napoleon appointed Murat to take command of the dead officer's cavalry division.

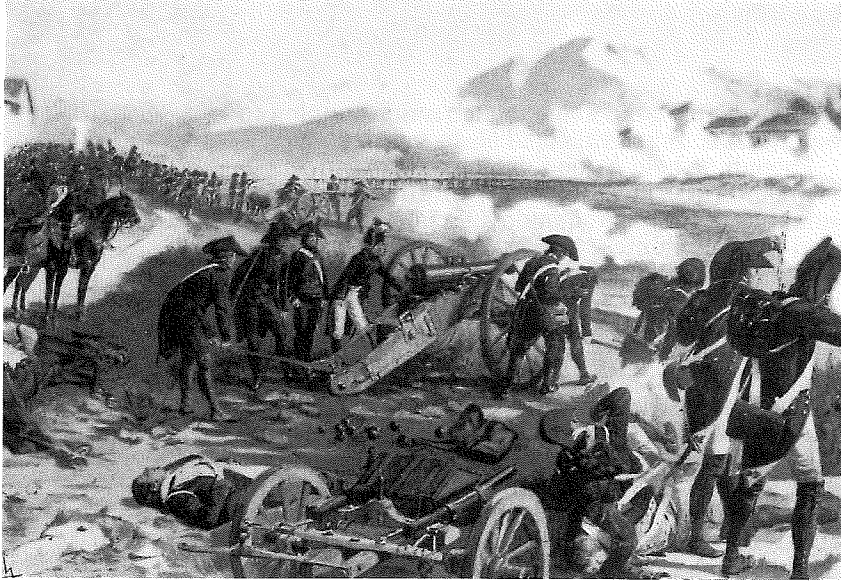
Colli's army lost cohesion during its five mile retreat and failed to establish a viable defense at Mondovi. Serurier's division was hot on their heels, and he launched a hasty frontal attack on the town on 21 April that, for once, succeeded. Colli's force was scattered with heavy losses. Mondovi, with its well stocked arsenal, fell into French hands and the troops went wild for 24 hours. At least the threat of starvation had been reduced.

After a one-day hold-over in Mondovi, Napoleon began the pursuit of Colli's remnants. Though beaten, that army still had over 11,900 effectives, and the Piedmontese might have held out if Beaulieu had shown any sign of coming to their aid, but he didn't. Two days later Colli asked for an armistice, but Napoleon continued to advance into Piedmont, seizing Cherasco and cutting the last lines of communication with Beaulieu's army. Admitting defeat, King Victor Amadeus of Savoy agreed to the Armistice of Cherasco on 28 April, whereby he agreed to quit the war. Napoleon had achieved his first objective.

## Pursuit to the Po (28 Apr-30 Jun)

Success in Piedmont brought Napoleon recognition from Paris and reinforcements from Kellerman's *Armee des Alpes*: specifically, the 9,000 man division





*Lodi: where Napoleon personally sited several of the French cannon – thus earning the nickname “the Little Corporal.”*

of Vaubois was detached to join his command. In addition, Napoleon ordered the 6,800 men of Macquart's division, previously deployed west of Ormea, to join the main army. Despite having suffered about 6,000 casualties (about 1,000 dead) in the first phase of the campaign, Napoleon was therefore still able to muster almost 35,000 troops in a concentrated force.

In contrast, Beaulieu had lost about 20 percent of his force and no reinforcements were immediately available to him. After the defeat of Piedmont his primary goal became to merely emplace his army behind the formidable Po River obstacle in the hope of holding there.

The initial French pursuit of Beaulieu's army to the Po wasn't rapid. La Harpe's division was ordered to seize Acqui on 28 April, but he was delayed by mutinous troops who hadn't taken part in the looting in Piedmont. By the time Acqui finally fell on 30 April, Beaulieu had already withdrawn his entire force across the Po. It was his intent to establish a cordon defense along the river with his 24,000 troops.

But such a defense was futile against an aggressive, maneuver-oriented commander such as Napoleon. He decided to feint toward the most obvious crossing sites at Valenza with Massena's and Serurier's divisions, while actually bypassing the defense there to cross the Po 50 miles to the east at Piacenza. The first week of May was spent concentrating and reorganizing the army around Alessandria. A special task force of shock troops was also created, consisting of four grenadier battalions (3,600 troops) under Col. Lannes, a cavalry division under Murat, and a 24-gun artillery battalion. That force, under the overall command of Gen. Dallemagne, was to act as the advance guard of the army.

Dallemagne's force moved up to Stradella on 6 May behind a screen of cavalry pickets, then left for Piacenza at 4:00 a.m. on 7 May. Five hours later the advance guard began to cross the Po into the neutral Duchy of Parma at Piacenza by means of a captured ferry. Though the Austrian division under Liptay was responsible for that sector, only 150 of his cavalrymen were on hand to oppose the French move. By early afternoon La Harpe's division had begun to cross the Po to reinforce the bridgehead.

By the time Beaulieu realized his river line defense had been turned, the French had Augereau's division well across. Early on 8 May, La Harpe and Dallemagne routed Liptay's screening force at Fombio. Frantical-

ly Beaulieu started moving his entire army east to reinforce Liptay, but then decided to abandon Milan and retire behind the Adda River. In a minor skirmish on 8 May, La Harpe was accidentally shot and killed by his own troops and Berthier was briefly sent to command the pursuit. Napoleon was able to get Massena and Serurier to quickly move their divisions across the Po, but again the initial pursuit wasn't rapid enough and the main Austrian body crossed the Adda at Lodi.

On 10 May the French approached the bridge at Lodi and Napoleon decided to storm the crossing in the face of the strong Austrian rearguard. Austrian Gen. Sebottendorf had a Croatian infantry regiment supported by a dozen field pieces covering the bridge, and their combined fire was enough to repulse the first French attempt. A number of key French officers led the charge, including Berthier, Massena and Dallemagne. The bridge was eventually taken at the cost of 350 of Napoleon's best troops.

Meanwhile some of the French cavalry had crossed the Adda and begun to turn the flank of Sebottendorf's rearguard. The Austrian regiment defending the bridge was thus virtually destroyed, losing 153 killed and 1,700 captured along with all their artillery. Though Lodi was an impressive opposed river crossing operation, it was also an impetuous display of bravado; good troops were sacrificed due to the impatience of a commander who wouldn't wait for a turning movement to succeed.

Just prior to the action at Lodi, Napoleon had received distressing instructions from his civilian superiors in the Directory. Though impressed with his quick victory over Piedmont, they were suspicious of popular generals and had decided Napoleon was too junior an officer to have sole command over what was becoming the decisive theater. They therefore intended to merge Gen. Kellerman's *Armee des Alpes* with Napoleon's force, with the 61-year-old Kellerman as the senior commander. On hearing that, Napoleon resisted its implementation, reminding the Directors of the importance of unity of command. Under the circumstances typical in revolutionary France until then, that should have been enough to get Napoleon relieved, arrested and possibly executed for insubordination. But these were no longer typical circumstances.

In addition to winning quick and easy victories, Napoleon was also raising a great deal of hard currency for the cash-strapped French government. Under his direction French troops were moving across the rich north Italian countryside like locusts. Three days after the victory at Lodi, Massena's troops entered Milan without opposition (the 2,000 man Austrian garrison retired into the citadel, where they eventually surrendered on 29 June). Though those troops went on a brief spree of looting, raping and killing, Napoleon arrived two days later and restored order. In return for that order he extorted £800,000 from the citizens of Milan. Shortly thereafter the neutral Duchies of Modena and Parma were occupied and similarly forced to pay £400,000 and £80,000, respectively. With those funds Napoleon was able to pay his men in silver, which was the first time they'd been paid in cash since 1793.

The pay raised the morale of the army and deepened the growing sense of loyalty the soldiers already felt for their victorious and generous leader. Napoleon's generosity with war booty also extended to the Directors; he eventually sent them £1.8 million in gold and silver bullion, along with numerous works

of Italian renaissance art, including pieces by Michelangelo. Soon the Directors changed their minds, deciding to leave him in sole command in Italy. Napoleon was also given more reinforcements from Kellerman's army in the form of another 9,000 man division.

Napoleon spent 15-21 May in Milan, overseeing the looting and dealing with the Directors. During that time the formal peace agreement was received, allowing the *Armee de l'Italie* to gain shorter and more secure lines of communication. Reinforced and resupplied, Napoleon led the 30,000 man main army out of the city on 22 May to take up pursuit of Beaulieu. A force of 5,000 was left behind in Milan to finish the siege of the citadel, and other small detachments were positioned in outlying towns to maintain the lines of communication. But no sooner had the main force left than the Italian peasants, disgruntled by French anti-clerical policies, revolted in Milan and Pavia. In the latter place Augereau's 300 man depot unit surrendered to a force of some 30,000 angry citizens.

A furious Napoleon left Berthier to continue the advance with the main army while he rushed back with 1,500 of Lannes' grenadiers and Murat's cavalry to deal with the uprising. His troops successfully stormed Pavia on the afternoon of 26 May, and afterward he allowed them to rape, murder, burn and pillage for several hours. He also had the French cap-

tain who'd surrendered the depot summarily tried and executed. As a further lesson to the Italians, Napoleon ordered Lannes to destroy the village of Binasco, burning all the houses and shooting all the men.

Leaving others to finish the mop-up operations in the rear, Napoleon then hurried back to rejoin the main army that had meanwhile crossed into the neutral Republic of Venice on 28 May. Beaulieu's army sat immobile behind the River Mincio, with Lake Garda on its northern flank and the fortress of Mantua to the south. Once again Beaulieu tried to defend a lengthy river line with a dispersed covering force; and once again Napoleon used rapid and unexpected maneuver to gain overwhelming mass at a chosen point.

On 30 May, Lannes' grenadiers stormed across the bridge at Borghetto on the River Mincio, brushing aside the Austrian *10th Fusilier Regiment*. Most of Beaulieu's scattered forces retreated north along the eastern side of Lake Garda back to Trent. One of his divisions retreated south into the fortress of Mantua, reinforcing the garrison there to over 12,000 men and 316 guns.

It was in the fluid situation after the crossing of the Mincio that Napoleon was almost captured. On the morning of 1 June he and his staff were surprised by Austrian scouts in the town of Vallegio, and he

## Napoleon's Battlefield Heroics

It was in this first of his Italian campaigns that Napoleon began building his reputation for battlefield boldness, audacity and invincibility. The accolade "Little Corporal," of which he at first approved, was intended to convey an image to his troops he was one of them as well as their commander — that he was worthy of their loyalty because he was willing to share their perils in combat. Incidents of Napoleon rushing into the front line at Lodi and Arcola were propagandized to reinforce that image. But there were few repeat performances of such reckless valor after Arcola, as Napoleon began to become convinced he had a destiny worth surviving to enjoy. Proof of a growing caution about his own personal safety comes from his establishment of the Guides, a unit created specifically to ensure his safety on and near the battlefield, and which eventually merged with the Republican Guard to become first the Consular Guard and then the Imperial Guard, a super-elite, corps-sized organization. That having been noted, there's still no doubt Napoleon was indeed a brave soldier, something he'd already amply demonstrated during his days at Toulon.

But as the new sense of caution grew in Italy, it was increasingly his subordinate generals, such as Massena and Augereau, who almost routinely began to risk their lives in front line combat to be as certain as possible their leader's will would be carried out. It's revealing that in 22 years of cam-

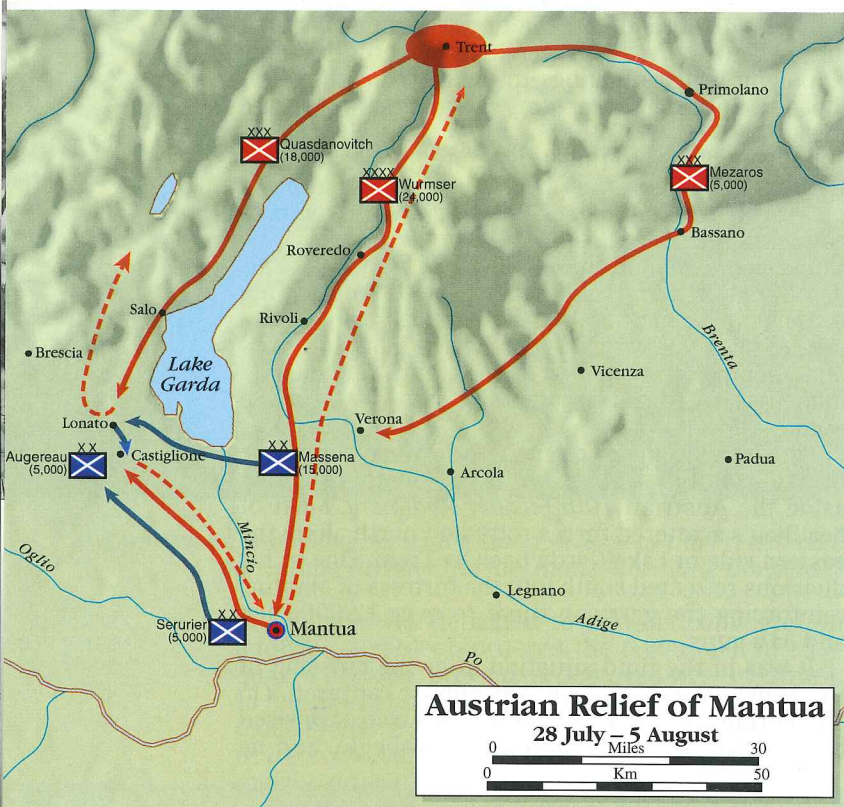
paiging, Napoleon was only wounded twice: from a bayonet in the thigh at Toulon in 1793, and a minor hit in the foot at Ratisbon in 1809. By comparison, Lannes was badly wounded five times between 1796 and 1799, taking several bullets otherwise headed for Napoleon. Over the years, in fact, many of Napoleon's aides were killed or wounded at his side while he remained unscathed. This aspect of his career is probably best viewed, then, as a combination of both caution and good luck.

What's certain is that at this stage of his career the young Napoleon was possessed of a seemingly limitless energy while on the battlefield. His unwavering ability to personally influence the course of fighting was the inspiration of Wellington's comment: "His hat was worth 50,000 men on the battlefield." At the same time, the Austrian commanders he opposed in this campaign were almost universally lethargic in conduct and remote from their men.

Years later, as his health and energy declined, so too did Napoleon's battlefield vigor. The bloody, attritional slugfests at Borodino and Waterloo were resolved that way largely because of his declining ability to conduct operations with his earlier vigor. Napoleon himself would later lament: "One has but a short time for war." But in Italy in 1796-97, in the prime of his youth and exuberance, he carried all before him.



*The Battle of Arcola. Napoleon leads the charge to capture the bridge. Moments later he was knocked into the river and nearly drowned.*



was forced to beat a hasty retreat. Following that incident Napoleon decided to form an elite bodyguard, the *guides à cheval*, a force of 200 cavalry under Capt. Bessieres. Later two battalions of Lannes grenadiers were also added to the guides.

Once Beaulieu began retreating toward Trent, the French spread out over the Lombard plain. An attempt to storm Mantua on 31 May by Serurier's division failed. He was then ordered simply to blockade the place with his 9,000 troops, and by 4 June the city was isolated. Since the French lacked siege artillery and adequate engineers, they had to rely on starvation to reduce Mantua. Massena's division was therefore posted as a screening force along the River Adige to provide early warning of any Austrian relief force approaching from the Tyrol. On 5 June an armistice was signed with Naples, and the few remaining Neapolitan troops were thereby withdrawn from the war against the French.

Satisfied Beaulieu's army had been neutralized for the time being, Napoleon used the month of June to extort further land, money and wealth of all kinds from the neutral states of northern Italy. Murat was sent to occupy Genoa. Vaubois' division was moved to occupy the Duchy of Parma, then pushed south to take the port of Livorno. The small British naval depot there was successfully evacuated just prior to the French occupation of the town on 27 June. Lacking effective military defenses, Pope Pius VI was soon forced to ask for an armistice and, in return, Napoleon demanded £1.36 million from him. Rome was forced to cede Bologna, Ferrara and Ancona to France, which were combined with occupied Modena and Reggio to form a new Cispadine Republic.

Those fund raising expeditions acquired about £2.4 million in cash and served to intimidate the neutral states of Italy from aiding Austria. Enough horses and artillery were also taken to organize a small siege train, which was dispatched to Serurier's division at Mantua.

By the end of June 1796, then, the *Armée de l'Italie* had shifted to the strategic defensive since it now had extensive conquests to maintain. Though the supply difficulties that had initially plagued the French had been somewhat relieved, the lack of a proper siege train and trained engineers meant Mantua could not be quickly reduced. The French had to try to slowly starve out the garrison while fending off any relief forces sent from the Tyrol. In addition to the Austrians, Napoleon had to contend with a restive Italian population of over 5 million who were resentful of the French occupation. Inactivity on the Rhine front allowed the Austrians to detach Gen. Count Dagobert Wurmser's 25,000 man force from there on 18 June and send it to reinforce the remnants of Beaulieu's army in Trent. By the end of June, Wurmser had assembled 47,000 troops in that place and was ready to go over to the offensive.

## The First Austrian Relief Attempts (1 Jul-15 Sept)

Wurmser was able to get the Austrian forces in Trent reorganized and moving south by 1 July. In a complicated plan, he decided to split his forces: he would lead the main body of 24,000 troops down the eastern side of Lake Garda while Gen. Peter Quasdanovitch took another 18,000 along the western shore, with the two forces rejoining once south of that water body. At the same time, Gen. Meszaros' division of 5,000 men was sent down the Brenta valley to occupy Viacenza and approach Mantua, which they believed to be on the verge of surrender. Wurmser assumed the threats from multiple directions would cause the outnumbered French to break off the siege and retire toward Milan.

Aware of the Austrian movements, Napoleon dispatched Augereau's division to establish a blocking position on the southwest corner of Lake Garda while Massena's division set up similarly on the eastern shore. In the hope of concluding the siege of Mantua before Wurmser arrived, the French also tried to storm the fortress on 17 July, but failed again. Napoleon realized his outnumbered army wouldn't be able to continue the siege and fight off the relief columns at the same time.

The Austrians moved slowly, taking nearly a month to go the 35 miles down the Adige River valley to Roveredo. There the advance guard bumped into Massena's outposts on 28 July and began to push them back toward the valley. Meanwhile Quasdanovitch's force took Salo on the same day after a 75 mile move across the mountains. Under pressure from Wurmser, Massena abandoned Verona on 29 July, leaving the city to be occupied by Maszaro's division approaching from the east. The position was desperate, with 47,000 Austrians about to link up on the south side of Lake Garda.

Though Napoleon was worried about those developments, he wasn't eager to retreat. Instead he abandoned the siege of Mantua on the night of 31 July, ordering Serurier's division to rejoin the main army. The garrison of Mantua sallied to capture the abandoned French siege train, but starvation and lethargy kept them from doing anything to aid Wurmser.

Napoleon had decided to concentrate his army to defeat in detail the still-divided enemy relief forces by again using the strategy of central position. His first target would be Quasdanovitch's force on the west side of the lake, since he threatened to cut off the French line of communication to Milan. Augereau

eau's division and Kilmaine's cavalry were shifted eastward to slow Wurmser's advance while the rest of the army massed near Lonato.

Wurmser was able to link up with Meszaro's detached division near Verona, and with single-minded purpose reached Mantua on 1 August. Having raised the siege, Wurmser then began marching northwest to crush Napoleon's army between the two pincers of his offensive. Just as success for the Austrians seemed at hand, Napoleon's concentrated army struck Quasdanovitch at Lonato. Massena was able to defeat part of that dispersed group, capturing most of Gen. Ocksay's division. Meanwhile, just five miles to the south, Augereau was able to stop Wurmser's advance guard at Castiglione. With Quasdanovitch retreating north and Wurmser stopped in his tracks, Napoleon used 4 August to reorient his army toward the other half of the enemy pincer.

He massed nearly 30,000 troops against Wurmser's 25,000 at Castiglione on the 5th. His battle plan was excellent, with pinning attacks to be mounted by Massena and Augereau's divisions while Serurier's unit hit the flank of the Austrians. Instead, though, poor synchronization and tired French troops marred the execution of the plan. But the elan of individual French leaders, such as Lannes at the head of two grenadier battalions, and Col. Marmont leading a battalion of horse artillery, finally carried the day. Wurmser's army was defeated with the loss of 3,000 men and 20 cannon.

The French were too tired to pursue, and Wurmser was able to retreat to Mantua. After reinforcing and resupplying the garrison, he retired north to Trent. The superior Austrian cavalry kept Murat at bay, inflicting several sharp stings to the pursuers. But within a few days the French had resumed the siege of Mantua and retaken Verona. The first Austrian attempt to relieve Mantua had been a partial success in that the garrison was resupplied, but at a cost of 16,000 casualties in the relieving force.

Victory brought only new demands on the *Armee de l'Italie*. By late August the long-awaited French offensive in Germany had finally gathered momentum, and the Directory wanted Napoleon to move forces north to establish contact with Moreau's *Armee du Rhin et de la Moselle*. Though Napoleon was dubious of the operation in light of the limited force at his disposal, he decided to commit Massena and Vaubois' divisions to attacking north toward Trent while Augereau screened the River Mincio, and Sahuget continued the siege of Mantua. (Serurier had been sent back to France on 1 August due to illness.)

Meanwhile Wurmser had managed to regroup his forces at Trent and had been ordered to make another attempt to relieve Mantua. Leaving Davidovitch with 14,000 men to defend Trent, on 1 September Wurmser began to march down the Brenta River valley with 20,000 troops.

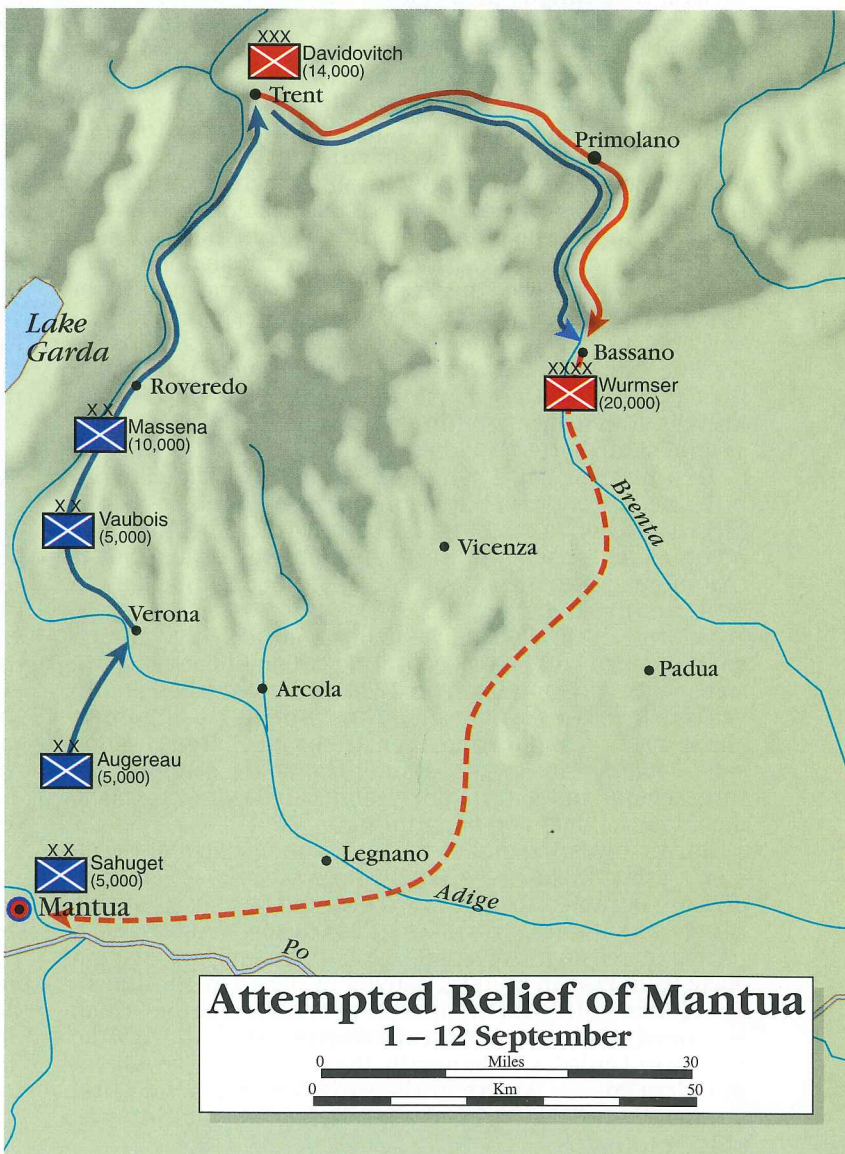
Unencumbered with large baggage trains, Massena's 10,000 marched up the 35 mile long Adige River valley in a mere three days. Brushing aside Davidovitch's covering force at Rovereto, they entered Trent on 5 September. He was soon joined there by Vaubois and Augereau's divisions, giving Napoleon about 33,000 men in the area. At that point his forces were just 175 miles from Moreau's in Germany — the closest the strategic French pincers ever came to closing.

Napoleon soon learned about Wurmser's force moving down the Brenta River valley, and he realized those Austrians were trying to work around behind

his army to get to Mantua. Rather than retreating back down the Adige River valley as the Austrians expected, he decided to leave Vaubois' division in Trent while taking Augereau's and Massena's down the Brenta in pursuit of Wurmser. It was a daring decision to split his forces deep in enemy territory, especially since the Brenta valley offered little forage for the French troops.

The French nevertheless marched rapidly along the river valley, moving about 40 miles in two days. Augereau's division caught up with Wurmser's rear-guard near Primolano on 7 September and smashed through their hasty defense. Wurmser was stunned the French could have moved so quickly over such rough terrain. The next morning Napoleon attacked his army and defeated it at the Battle of Bassano. There Col. Lannes' grenadiers broke the Austrian line, and Murat exploited the opening with his cavalry. An entire Austrian division surrendered.

The Austrian army fell apart, losing 35 cannon and most of their engineers in the retreat. Once again, however, Wurmser remained single-minded about reaching Mantua, even though his army had been defeated. Collecting the survivors of Bassano and Meszaro's division, about 16,000 troops, he decided to make a break for Mantua in the confusion still reigning after the earlier battle.



Since they'd now lost most of their equipment, the Austrians were for once able to move rapidly. Wurmser's group moved about 75 miles in five days, slipping into Mantua on 12 September. Though Napoleon desperately tried to catch him before he made it there, the blocking force along the Adige River and around Mantua failed in their task. Wurmser had once again succeeded in breaking through to the besieged fortress, but at the cost of most of his army in turn being imprisoned inside its walls. Now 23,000 Austrian troops and 21,000 civilians were concentrated within the small city, ringed by French troops and swamps. Wurmser launched a strong attack on

15 September with 18,000 men to try to break the siege lines, but failed at a cost of 2,000 troops.

### **Third Relief Attempt (16 September-21 November)**

After the failure of the second Austrian attempt to relieve Mantua, the French gained a little breathing space. They still had to deal with peasant rebellions throughout Lombardy, and Napoleon encouraged pro-republican Italians to form the *Legion Lombarda* to help the French maintain their lines of communication. Without consulting the Directory, he also set

## **Alternative Outcome Analysis — The Naval Dimension**

Surprisingly, none of the major accounts of Napoleon's campaign in Italy mention the naval dimension provided by British participation. That omission is even more peculiar given the fact one of Napoleon's great enemies, Horatio Nelson, was only a few miles offshore.

In April 1796, 37-year-old Capt. Nelson was already a veteran naval commander. At the time he led a detached squadron of the British Mediterranean fleet consisting of two ships-of-the-line, two frigates and two sloops. His mission was to cruise off the coast of Liguria and the French Riviera, harassing French coastal lines of communication and assisting the Austrian army in any way possible. Communication with Beaulieu's army was actually good, with coordinating meetings held regularly aboard ship.

The Royal Navy in 1796 dominated the waters off Italy with a fleet built around 18 ships-of-the-line. A force of 6,000 British troops had occupied the islands of Corsica and Elba in 1794-95, thereby establishing forward bases for that fleet. A forward depot was also established on the mainland at Livorno.

The only potentially serious threat to British dominance of those waters was the French Mediterranean fleet at Toulon. But those ships had been neglected since 1793 and had only 15 poorly trained and under-equipped ships-of-the-line available. Outclassed and outgunned, the French fleet in 1796 was no match for Nelson, and the French knew it. Napoleon therefore kept some 6,000 troops and several static batteries along the coast.

Despite their naval superiority, the British actually did little to interfere with Napoleon's *Armée de l'Italie*. Nelson met with Beaulieu at Voltri on 11 April, when the Austrians occupied that coastal town. The meeting was cordial, but at that moment Beaulieu didn't feel he needed British help to deal with the French.

On the 25th, Nelson's squadron attacked a French coastal convoy off Loano, capturing two gunboats and five transports. A month later, on 31 May, they attacked another French convoy off Oneglia. After British naval gunfire suppressed a supporting French coastal battery, some sailors and marines went ashore to spike the cannon, capture several more transports and seize some cargoes, including artillery and ammunition.

But that was the end of Nelson's actions against Napoleon's army. In June the British fleet sat idle as Vaubois' division occupied their forward base at Livorno. As spring turned to summer, British attention in the Mediterranean turned increasingly toward Spanish diplomatic activity and away from French military activity in Italy. On 19 August, Spain entered the war on the side of France, and the British became apprehensive Madrid's fleet would link with the French in Toulon. Consequently the Royal Navy moved out of Italian coastal waters in the early fall, evacuating first Corsica then Elba. By December, Nelson's squadron was back at Gibraltar.

In that way British naval superiority in the Mediterranean remained largely irrelevant to Napoleon in Italy, and Nelson did nothing to aid Beaulieu's retreating army. That was unfortunate for the coalition, because if British and Austrian leaders had demonstrated only a little bit more imagination and strategic grasp they would have understood they had the tools at their disposal to deliver a telling blow against the *Armée de l'Italie*.

That is, after the fall of Milan the two allies could have agreed to cooperate in the reconquest of Lombardy. A simultaneous Austrian overland attack from the Tyrol and a British amphibious landing at Genoa would have taxed a French army that also had to blockade Mantua. While Wurmser marched the bulk of his army into Lombardy, the British fleet could have been used to transport a 5,000 man Austrian division from Trieste to Genoa (about 10 days sailing time). Ostensibly neutral, Genoa had already fired on British warships to curry favor with the French. That *cassus belli* could have been used as an excuse to occupy the port in mid-July. Consisting of British and Austrian infantry, Royal Navy marines, perhaps some Neapolitan cavalry, and the guns of Nelson's squadron, such a joint task force could have held the city against the paltry French coastal forces then in the vicinity. Small raiding forces could have moved inland to destroy French depot units left behind in the cities of Piedmont and Liguria.

Napoleon could hardly have ignored such a force operating in his rear areas for long. In fact, he would have been on the horns of a dilemma. If he moved the 120+ miles back to Genoa — about five days marching — Wurmser's army would overwhelm the weak French covering forces around Mantua. But if he ignored an allied lodgement at Genoa, it would continue to grow in size and Piedmont might re-enter the war. British naval superiority could ensure allied forces in the port would remain supplied, and they could always be evacuated in the event of a large-scale enemy attack. It's unlikely the French would have been able to overturn such a lodgement easily or quickly, and certainly not with Wurmser's army breathing down their necks.

Finally, a lodgement at Genoa would have been a magnet for the French and Spanish fleets to attack, which ultimately would have played into the British desire for a decisive sea battle. At the least, greater British aggressiveness along the coast would have reduced the reinforcements reaching Napoleon's army and given hope to the Austrians they were not alone in the fight. But the Austrian high command no more appreciated British naval capabilities than the British could grasp the kind of highly mobile continental warfare Napoleon was practicing in Italy. Though British naval superiority would ultimately restrict France to being only a continental power, it failed to inhibit Napoleon's aggression from eliminating one after another of his coalition enemies.

up the Cisalpine, Cispadena and Transpadena Republics. Efforts were made to inhibit Naples, Venice and the Papal States from doing anything to threaten the French hold over northern Italy. Though none of those efforts produced major results, they did allow the invaders to keep a tenuous control over the region with only 41,000 troops. The end of the pro-royalist revolt in the French region of Vendee allowed the Directory to send Napoleon a dozen veteran battalions (about 9,000 men) in October.

Anticipating renewed Austrian attempts to break through to Mantua, Napoleon redistributed his forces. He created a two division covering force, with Vaubois' 10,000 man division at Trent and Massena's 5,000 man unit at Bassano. He ordered Kilmaine to continue the siege of Mantua with 9,000 men; and he also set out a cavalry screen and Joubert's infantry brigade along the Adige River. He then moved his headquarters to Verona, with Augereau's 5,000 man division as his primary reserve.

The respite was short. Moreau's army was defeated in October, which allowed the Austrians to transfer more forces to the Italian front. That in turn allowed the creation of a new army of 29,000 near Trieste with Baron d'Alvintzi in command. Another force of 14,000 under Davidovitch, then forming north of Trent, was also put under d'Alvintzi's command. Once again Austrian strategy involved a pincer operation by forces that couldn't support each other. But the new Austrian general was aggressive and wasted no time; he started his offensive on 2 November.

At first Napoleon thought the only significant threat came from d'Alvintzi's forces in the east; but Davidovitch defeated Vaubois' division to reoccupy Trent on 4 November. That routed French unit fled south down the Adige River valley with Davidovitch in pursuit. Nor did Massena succeed in holding up d'Alvintzi himself at Bassano; he was obliged to

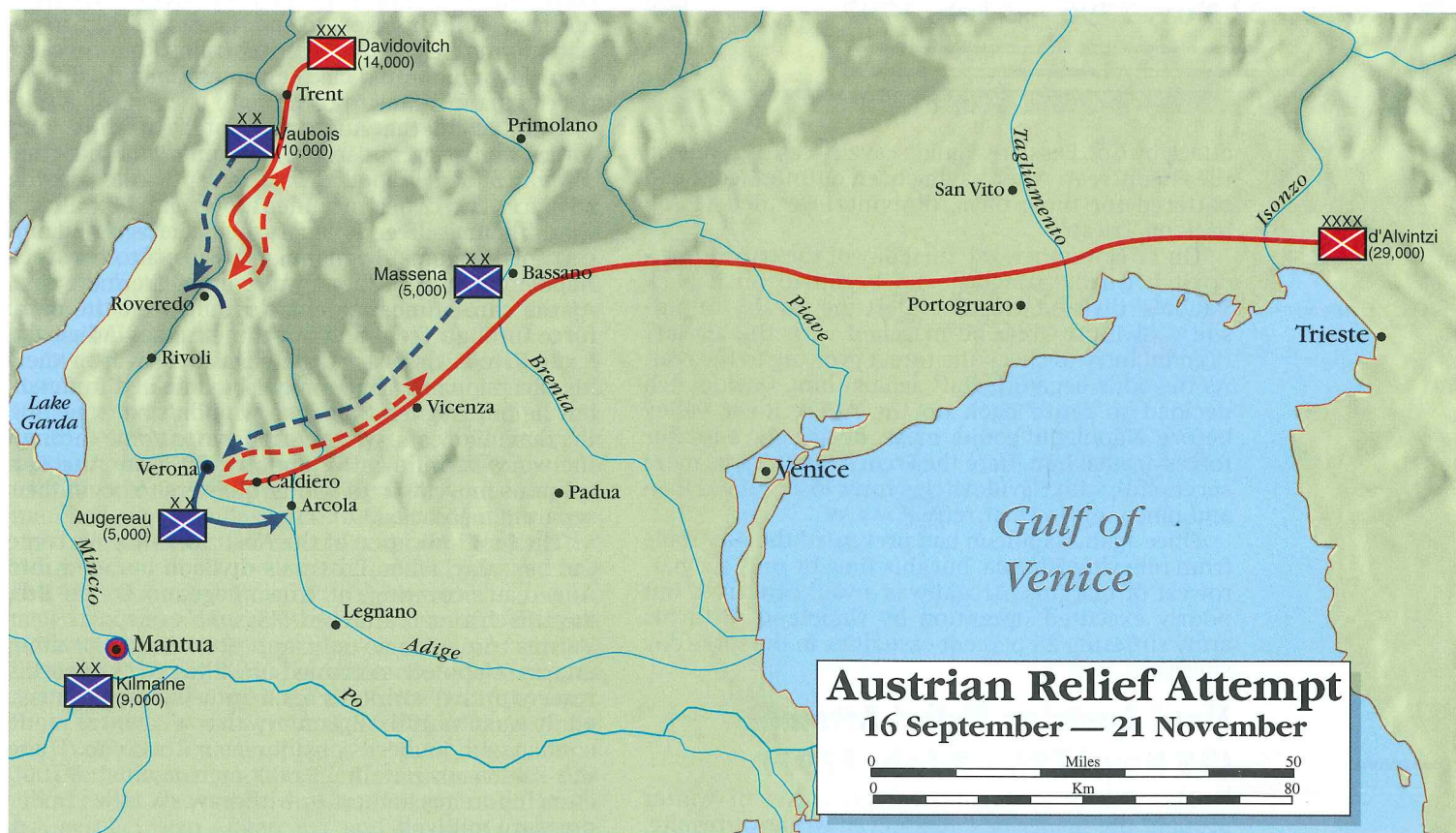
retreat to Verona. The *Armee de l'Italie* was thus once again between the jaws of two converging pincers, and again Napoleon used the strategy of central position, this time with Verona as his pivot.

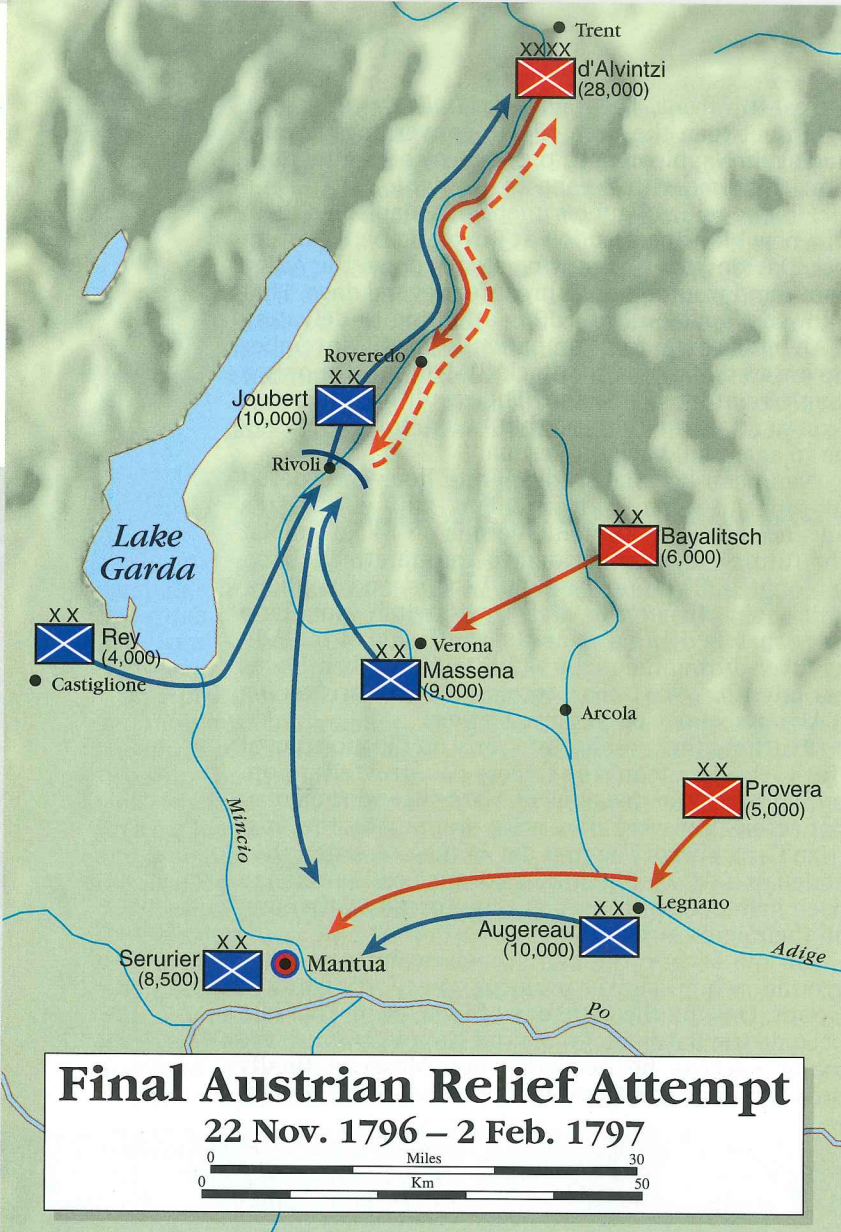
First he rallied Vaubois' men and established them in a new blocking position at Roveredo on 8 November. Davidovitch was moving slowly down the Adige valley and wouldn't be a threat for several days. That allowed Napoleon to turn his attention to defeating d'Alvintzi's main force. Impatiently, on 12 November he ordered Massena to attack d'Alvintzi with only a single reinforced division. The result was a French frontal attack at Caldiero that failed, forcing Massena to again fall back on Verona.

Napoleon became so desperate he even ordered his wife Josephine to leave Milan. With d'Alvintzi's advance guard just outside Verona on 14 November, the future emperor decided to counterattack. Leaving only 3,000 troops to hold Verona, and Vaubois' still shaky division to stall Davidovitch, Napoleon force marched 18 miles on the south side of the Adige River during the night of 14/15 November. It was his intent to cross near Arcola, thereby threatening d'Alvintzi's lines of communication.

Reaching the crossing site early on the morning of the 15th, Napoleon's engineers constructed a pontoon bridge. The divisions of Massena and Augereau got across but were then soon stopped by the Austrian flank guard. The first day of the new battle thus ended as a draw: d'Alvintzi's advance on Verona had been halted, but the French were forced to abandon all their gains at nightfall.

On the second day the French again took some ground while slowly wearing away d'Alvintzi's troops. Only on the third day of fighting in what had become the Battle of Arcola did Napoleon score the major success he needed, when Massena finally broke through the Austrian flank, and a diversionary





attack by Col. Bessieres' guide cavalry caused panic in the enemy rear. After having been outnumbered and battered for three days, d'Alvintzi decided to fall back on Trieste.

On 17 November, the final day of the battle, Davidovitch finally attacked and began to push back Vaubois' division. Napoleon left the cavalry to pursue d'Alvintzi while he marched with the already tired infantry to check the threat growing to the rear. As the odds began to shift against him, Davidovitch decided to retire back up the Adige River valley before Napoleon could mass decisively superior forces against him. Here the French pursuit was more successful, with Davidovitch's force losing 1,500 men and nine guns in their retreat.

Once again Napoleon had prevented the Austrians from relieving Mantua, but this time by only the narrowest of margins. Arcola was a well conceived but poorly executed operation by Napoleon, with his army suffering 25 percent casualties in the three day slugfest.

## Final Austrian Relief Attempt (22 Nov. 1796 - 2 Feb. 1797)

The victory at Arcola and the onset of winter brought the *Armee de l'Italie* seven weeks of respite.

During December the French received about 8,000 replacements, enough to bring all the divisions back up to strength. Unsatisfied with Vaubois' performance in the previous months, Napoleon replaced him with 27-year-old Brig. Gen. Barthelemy Joubert. Serurier returned from convalescent leave to resume command of the besieging division at Mantua. A new 4,000 man division was also formed from replacements and given to 28-year-old Brig. Gen. Louis Rey. Additionally, the French artillery units were re-equipped with new 12-pounder guns and reinforced to 78 pieces.

Though Napoleon anticipated yet another Austrian attempt to relieve Mantua, he couldn't be certain which avenue of approach they would try to use. They had already come in along both sides of Lake Garda and down the Brenta valley-Vicenza axis; so he had to guard against those three already known pathways. He assigned Rey's small division to watch the least likely sector on the west side of Lake Garda. Joubert's 10,000 man division he ordered to construct defensive positions in the Adige River valley covering the east side of the lake. He set Augereau's division to maintain a covering screen along the lower Adige, centered on Legnano. He designated Massena's division at Verona the primary reserve.

French forces, guarding multiple approaches while continuing the siege of Mantua, were spread thinly. But Napoleon's plan was to mass his forces quickly against whatever turned out to be the critical threat. To aid in that scheme he also improved his courier system.

The Austrian army in the Tyrol also used December to regroup while it received 11,000 replacements. The main body under d'Alvintzi thus came to have 34,000 troops in the Brenta valley, while Provera had another 9,000 at Padua. Realizing the French had only stopped the previous relief attempts with difficulty, the Aulic Council ordered d'Alvintzi to make one last, supreme effort to end the siege. Peace negotiations were close, and the Austrians knew possession of Mantua would be a key determinant in the territorial dispositions to come.

Once again the Austrians opted to split their forces and use converging columns. But this time d'Alvintzi also hoped to use deception to aid the advance. Two divisions under Provera and Bayalitsch would launch diversionary attacks across the Lombard plain against Legnano and Verona to convince Napoleon the main threat was coming from the east. At the same time, d'Alvintzi would lead the main force through Trent and down the rugged Adige valley to Rivoli. It was a calculated risk: d'Alvintzi knew his diversionary groups might be defeated in detail, but he hoped even Napoleon wouldn't be expecting the main blow of a winter offensive to come through the worst terrain. On 7 January 1797, the Austrian columns moved out of winter quarters to begin their separate marches.

The first indication of the Austrian offensive came the next day, when Provera's division bumped into Augereau's covering force near Legnano. On the 9th, Bayalitsch's men attacked Massena's outposts near Verona. Since they only appeared to be probing attacks, Napoleon remained unwilling to commit his reserve until d'Alvintzi's main body had been detected. It wasn't until 12 January that d'Alvintzi made contact with Joubert's position near Roveredo. There the Austrians put in 28,000 men against 10,000 French, forcing Joubert to withdraw six miles under pressure to Rivoli.

When Napoleon learned of the Austrian advance through the Adige valley, at 3:00 p.m. on the 13th, he realized it was the main effort. Rushing to join Joubert at Rivoli, he also ordered Rey and Massena to bring their divisions. Only 3,000 troops were left to hold Verona against the Austrian probing forces. Thus d'Alvintzi's supporting attacks were a failure: they didn't deceive Napoleon or fix French forces in place; they only deprived the Austrian effort of 15,000 men at the critical point.

Napoleon arrived at Rivoli at 2:00 a.m. on 14 January and immediately ordered Joubert to stand fast, informing him help was on the way. Though outnumbered nearly three to one, Joubert's men held the high ground at Rivoli and the critical pass at Osteria gorge.

D'Alvintzi planned to attack with three divisions (Liptay, Koblos and Ocksay - 12,000 men) in the center to pin Joubert's division, while two other divisions (Lusignan and Wukassovitch - 8,000) made wide flanking marches to get behind the French and cut off their reinforcements. Once the French were pinned and cut off, a reinforced division (Quasdanovitch - 7,000) would punch through Osteria gorge. It was a good plan that could have worked, but for the presence of Napoleon. Unfortunately for d'Alvintzi, his counterpart wasn't about to wait to be crushed by superior numbers.

When Napoleon was informed at 6:00 a.m. that Massena's division was approaching from the south, he ordered Joubert to launch a spoiling attack into the Austrian center. Joubert's 10,000 briefly pushed back the 12,000 enemy facing them before being stopped. Just as those hard-pressed Frenchmen were beginning to waver, Massena's division arrived to bolster their center. The crisis in the fight arrived at 11:00 a.m., when Lusignan's 4,000 man division finally worked its way around from the west to cut the road south of Rivoli. Sensing victory, d'Alvintzi committed Quasdanovitch's 7,000 men, and his grenadiers seized Osteria gorge. But before the trap could be fully closed, Napoleon hurled Massena's and Joubert's divisions at their center, and this time the Austrians gave way.

Massed artillery and a cavalry charge routed the three Austrian center divisions. The French went on to retake Osteria gorge, then Napoleon turned to catch Lusignan's division between Massena's reserve brigade and Rey's division arriving from the south. Lusignan's 4,500 man command surrendered at 5:00 p.m., as their general abandoned them to escape across Lake Garda in a small boat.

Just as the Battle of Rivoli was reaching its culmination, Napoleon received word Provera had crossed the lower Adige River, slipped by Augereau and was heading for Mantua. He decided to let Joubert finish at Rivoli while he headed south with Massena's men to intercept Provera. While Napoleon and Massena marched the 30 miles back to Mantua, Joubert successfully pursued d'Alvintzi's remnants back up the Adige valley. In all, the Austrian main body had lost half its troops and most of its equipment.

On the same day, 15 January, Augereau's division skirmished with Provera's men on the approaches to Mantua, inflicting 2,000 casualties. But the Austrians again slipped past the French cordon. On 16 January, Provera actually got within sight of Mantua, prompting Wurmser to attempt a sortie to link up. But Serurier's defense around the fortress repulsed that effort, and Provera's division soon found itself trapped between Augereau's and Massena's advanc-

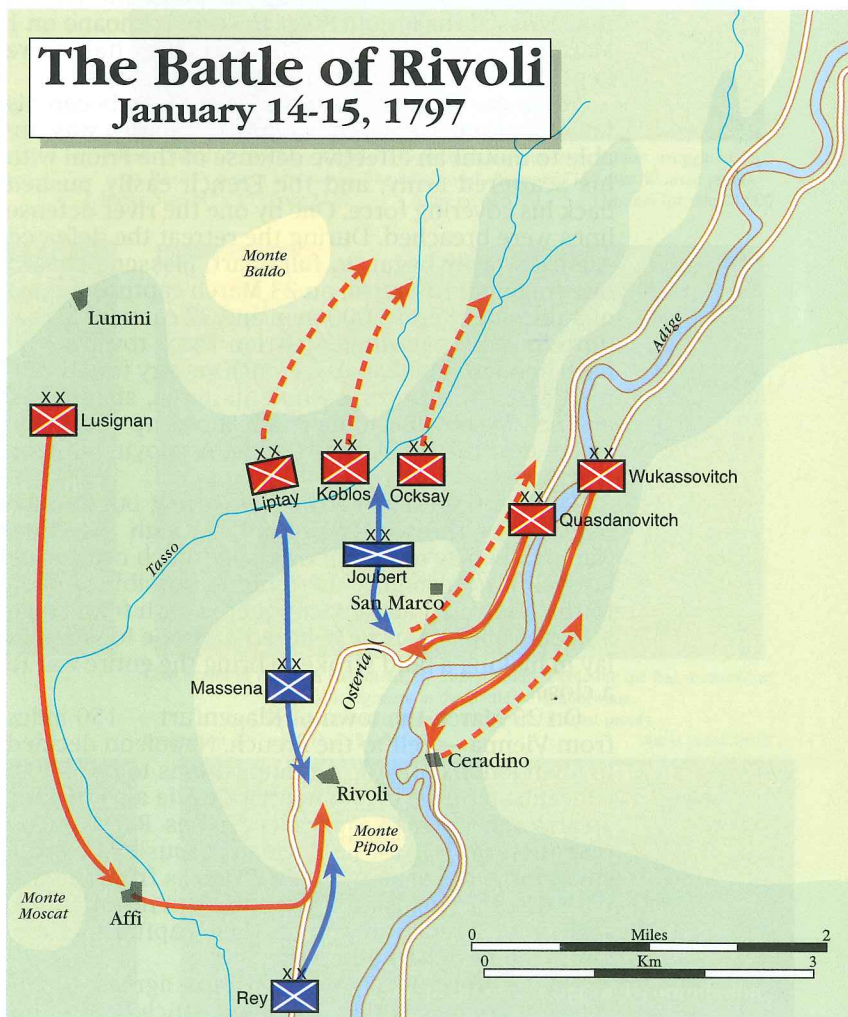
ing commands. Provera and his entire division of 6,700 men surrendered. The fourth and final Austrian attempt to relieve Mantua had failed at a cost of 25,000 casualties.

By 1 February, French forces under Joubert had retaken Trent, and the Austrians in the Tyrol were in such disarray there was little chance of any further relief attempts. Recognizing the inevitable, Wurmser agreed to surrender the fortress of Mantua on the 2nd. After eight months — the longest siege of the Napoleonic era — the Austrians surrendered 30,000 troops. Another 18,000 of their soldiers, along with some 9,000 civilians, had also died in the siege, mostly from disease.

## Invasion of Austria (3 Feb.-16 Apr. 1797)

The fall of Mantua changed everything in Italy. In Paris the French Directors finally understood Italy was indeed the decisive theater, not Germany, and they therefore began to give priority to strengthening their forces there. Napoleon would receive 25,000 reinforcements, including the divisions of Bernadotte and Delmas. But that shift would take time, and Napoleon had learned losing the initiative could be lethal. He understood, with Mantua captured, the only way to finally secure his conquests in northern Italy was to invade Austria and force them to the peace table.

Before he could mount such an invasion, however, he had to rest and reorganize his tired army, which



had by that time been fighting almost continually for 10 months. He also had to wait for the winter weather to improve enough to allow movement through the Alpine passes.

While the bulk of his army rested, Napoleon also decided to scour his rear areas before mounting the invasion of Austria. Though ostensibly neutral, the Papal States were providing refuge to a number of the Austrians who'd fled after the Battle of Rivoli. The Pope was also trying to encourage Naples to re-enter the war against France. Napoleon therefore decided to teach the Pope a lesson in brute force; so he invaded Romagna early in February, with 32-year-old Gen. Claude Victor's 9,000 man division. The Pope could offer only token resistance, and the cities of Ravenna and Ancona were quickly occupied by the invaders. Pope Pius VI was forced to accept the Treaty of Tolentino on 19 February, wherein he agreed to pay an indemnity of £1.2 million.

By late February, then, Napoleon was ready to invade Austria. D'Alvintzi had meanwhile been replaced as commander by the more competent Archduke Charles, who had about 50,000 troops spread thinly between the Tyrol and the Frioul. The *Armee de l'Italie* had grown to about 78,000, split into two maneuver groups. Napoleon directed Joubert, with 15,000, to slowly advance north from Trent to protect the flank from any Austrian attacks out of the Tyrol. The main army under Napoleon consisted of 43,000 men in four infantry divisions (Massena, Guieu, Bernadotte and Serurier). The primary objective, Vienna, was 300 miles away across the snow-laden Alps. To create a jump-off point the French first crossed the Brenta River to seize Primoano on 1 March. The remaining 15,500 French in Italy were kept there as occupation and garrison troops.

When the weather improved, Napoleon began his main push on 10 March. Archduke Charles was unable to mount an effective defense of the Frioul with his scattered army, and the French easily pushed back his covering force. One by one the river defense lines were breached. During the retreat the defeated Austrian army began to fall apart. Massena chased one fragment to Tarvis, on 23 March capturing most of a division there: 5,000 men and 32 cannon. Bernadotte pursued another Austrian force toward Laybach (modern Ljubljana). A French cavalry force occupied Trieste, capturing whole its large, abandoned arsenal. Meanwhile Joubert advanced up the Adige valley into the heart of the Alps, occupying Botzen (Bolzano).

Though the French army was strung out and exhausted by the winter pursuit through the Alps, Napoleon knew the Austrians were much nearer collapse. But he also knew he couldn't possibly hold on to the large area already conquered with fewer than 50,000 troops. Thus he believed his hope for success lay in making a bold stroke to bring the entire war to a close.

On 29 March the town of Klagenfurt — 150 miles from Vienna — fell to the French. Napoleon decided to abandon his line of communications to be able to concentrate three divisions there while also making an armistice offer to Archduke Charles. Receiving no response, on 7 April he decided to push forward a small force to Loeben — only 75 miles from Vienna. With that the Austrians agreed to open negotiations, realizing a French march on their capital was certainly the next step otherwise.

On 18 April 1797 the Austrians agreed to the Peace of Loeben, which Napoleon concluded on his

own, without reference to his nominal superiors in the Directory. Though the settlement wasn't official until the Treaty of Campo Formio was signed in October, it ended active military operations. In the end the French gained recognition of their annexation of Belgium, and their creation of the Cisalpine Republic in northern Italy. Napoleon also threw the Austrian leaders a bone by granting them land from the Republic of Venice in compensation for their territorial losses elsewhere in Italy. The War of the First Coalition was thus brought to a dramatic end by a previously obscure artillery officer.

## Results

In a campaign lasting one year, Napoleon occupied all of northern Italy, while his Peace of Loeben solidified French conquests elsewhere in Europe. The *Armee de l'Italie* had suffered over 45,000 combat casualties, including some 14,000 dead. On the other side, the Austrian army had been humiliated by the fast moving French while suffering over 130,000 casualties, including about 27,000 killed, and losing over 1,600 cannon.

In short, Napoleon made himself and the troops he commanded a force to be reckoned with in Europe. In addition to military glory and land, his conquests acquired substantial economic wealth for himself, his army and the French Republic. During 1796-97 the French plundered and extorted about £8 million in Italy, compared with only £.64 million acquired from conquered territories in Germany during the same period (but in comparison, British trade exports in that time were £30.1 million). In perspective, then, since the regular pay for the *Armee de l'Italie* was equal to about £1.2 million per year, Napoleon's Italian conquests represented a self-financing campaign.

But Napoleon's conquests of 1796-97 were actually ephemeral. After Loeben he left the *Armee de l'Italie* to return to France to command the force forming for the projected invasion of England. Less than a year later French troops marched into Rome and brought Pope Pius VI to France as their prisoner, creating a Roman Republic in February 1798. In November the French broke the armistice with Piedmont to occupy Turin.

That French aggression soon led to the creation of the Second Coalition, which included England, Russia, Austria, Portugal, Naples, the Ottoman Empire and the Vatican. Though the French subsequently overran Naples, a combined Austro-Russian army under Marshal Alexander Suvarov reconquered virtually all of northern Italy between April and November 1799. Napoleon would thus have to return there in May 1800 to defeat France's enemies in another lightning campaign. ☛

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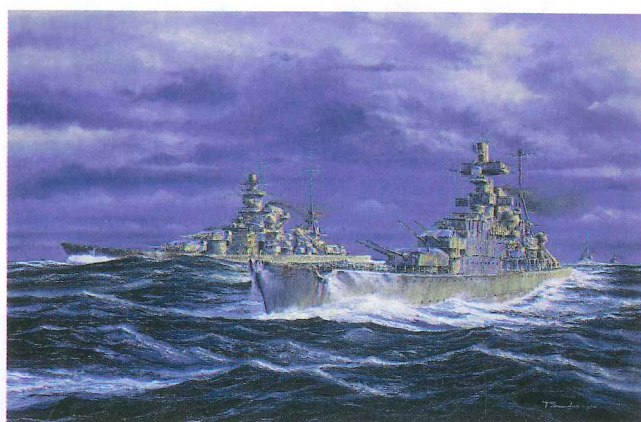
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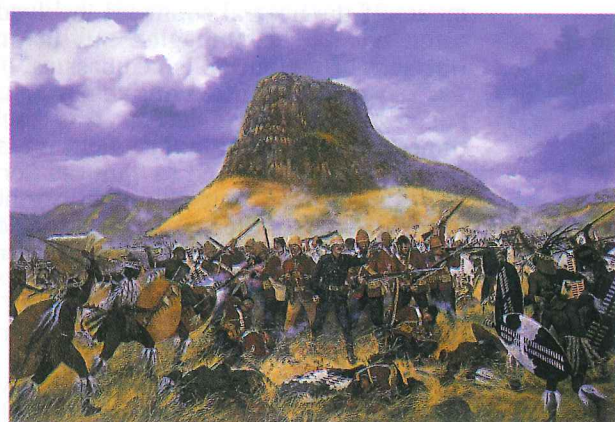


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# The Phoenix Army

by Maciej Jonasz

### 1940

After the 1939 defeat many Polish soldiers fled to the west, mainly to France, to continue the struggle to liberate their homeland from German occupation. They often made their way via still-neutral Hungary, sometimes even crossing the border in good order as whole units. One Polish unit, the *10th Motorized Cavalry Brigade*, moved across the countryside for weeks with all its weapons and equipment and only a few Hungarian officers attached to its headquarters.

Such soldiers eventually moved on to France, Britain or Syria, through the various Balkan countries and under direction of the Polish government in exile in London. At first they moved openly; but as German diplomatic pressure increased on the governments of the neutral countries involved, they more often had to be smuggled out in small groups through the various Polish embassies.

After negotiations among the British, French and Polish governments, a decision was reached to allow the escapees to form independent units that would continue to be deployed to fight the Germans. Naval and some air force units were to be formed in Britain, while army and other air force units would form in France and Syria. Coetquidan in northern France was chosen as the main assembly point for Polish army units. Thanks to the large number of volunteers, many of whom came from Polish emigrant communities living outside the home country even before the war began, the formation of the new units went quickly and efficiently. Since many of the men were already trained and had combat experience, mostly only administrative activities and familiarization with new Anglo-French equipment had to be undertaken.

When the 1940 French campaign began, there were four Polish infantry divisions, an armored cavalry brigade, and a mountain infantry brigade in France, along with another mountain infantry brigade in Syria. Taken together, those units amounted to 85,000 men eager for revenge.

During the campaign, however, the Polish units deployed in the second echelon and, with the exception of a handful of anti-tank companies, entered combat only after Dunkirk. They were, like the rest of the French forces, often badly handled and suffered

*Men of the Polish Carpathian Cavalry Brigade, which rode from Syria to join the British after the fall of France in May 1940.*

heavy casualties. With the exception of the *2nd Rifle Division*, all were destroyed in the new fighting. What follows is a short history of each of the major units raised during the war.

### The Podhale Rifle Brigade

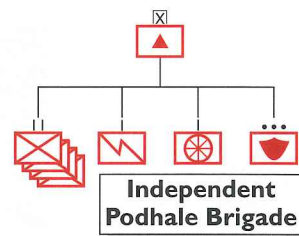
This unit was formed as an *ad hoc* mountain infantry expeditionary unit under command of Maj. Gen. Zygmunt Bohusz-Szyszko, a Russian army veteran of the First World War, a member of the Polish army since 1918, and in 1939 the commander of the *16th Infantry Division*. The brigade consisted of four infantry battalions, one from each regiment of the *1st Grenadier Division*, along with the *1st Battalion* of the *4th Regiment* of the *2nd Rifle Division*.

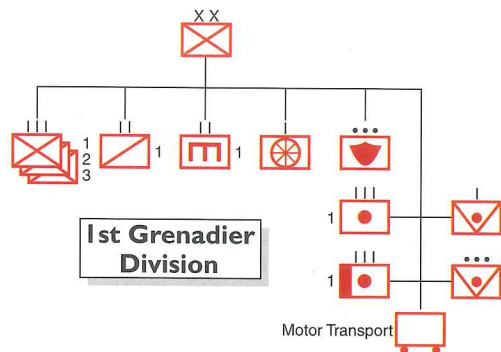
The unit was originally organized to participate in the Finno-Soviet Winter War, but by the time it was ready for combat the two sides had reached a truce. Its second assignment was in the Grenoble region of the Alps, whence it was eventually sent along as part of the Allied expeditionary force to Narvik, Norway. It thus became the first Polish army unit to see action after 1939. In Norway, along with several Polish naval vessels, the brigade gave a good account of itself.

The unit also took part in the closing moves of the French campaign in Bretagne. When that phase of its history was over, Bohusz-Szyszko and his men accepted postings to the Mediterranean theater, eventually ending as part of *Polish 2nd Corps* fighting in Italy.

### 1st Grenadier Division

This division formed in Coetquidan under Brig. Gen. Boleslaw Duch, who'd gotten his first combat experience in World War I in the *2nd Regiment* of the





*Polish Legion* (which became the core of the Polish national army in 1918), and in 1939 fought in the *39th Reserve Infantry Division*.

The *1st Grenadiers* didn't come into contact with the enemy until the German *12th Corps* broke through the French defensive positions along the Aisne River on 12 June 1940. Within days the invaders had pushed southward from there toward the Saar region and the *Grenadiers*, then located along the Marne-Rhine Canal, engaged them south of the town of Lagarde.

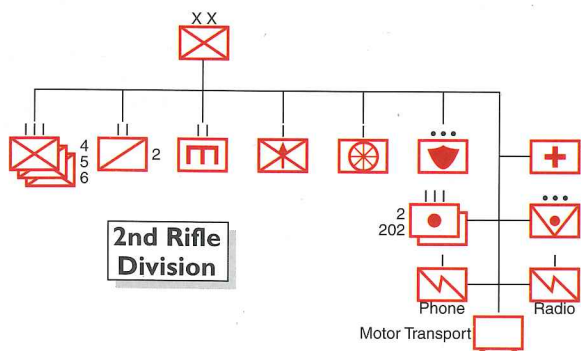
What ensued was a vicious battle around the towns of Vaucourt and Dieuze, during which the *2nd Regiment* lost 80 percent of its men while each of the division's other subunits suffered losses ranging from 20 to 45 percent. Due to those heavy casualties the entire division was officially dissolved on 21 June. Duch managed to escape to Britain and later commanded the *3rd Carpathian Rifle Division* in the Italian campaign.

The heroism with which these Poles fought was commemorated by the people of Dieuze, where in 1947 its main street was renamed *Avenue de la 1-re Division Polonaise de Grenadiers* — Avenue of the 1st Polish Grenadier Division.

## 2nd Rifle Division

This division was formed in France under command of Maj. Gen. Bronislaw Prugar-Ketling, a veteran of the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I, a member of the Polish army since 1918, and a veteran of the 1939 campaign during which he led the *11th Infantry Division*.

The *2nd Rifles* fought in eastern France, finally managing to cross into Switzerland as a complete unit when the situation crumbled completely. The



men, though interned for the duration of the war, were allowed to stay together as a unit, maintaining their combat readiness to be able to fight again if the Germans invaded their new host country.

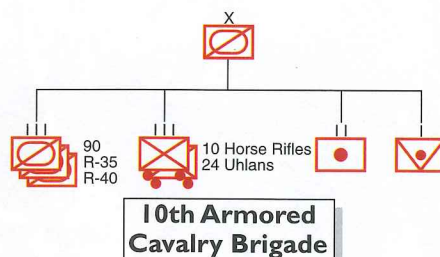
## 3rd & 4th Infantry Divisions

These two divisions were still only partially formed in France when the new fighting began. Though

they never saw action as divisions, several of their subunits were sent to the front independently.

## 10th Armored Cavalry Brigade

This unit was formed to continue the traditions of the aforementioned *10th Brigade* that had operated with such distinction in the 1939 campaign. It was led by the *10th's* original commander, Maj. Gen. Stanislaw Maczek, who'd been the Polish army's most outstanding advocate of mobile warfare prior to the outbreak of the war. In 1942 he oversaw the organization of the *2nd Polish Armored Division* in England, eventually going on to command that formation across northwestern Europe.

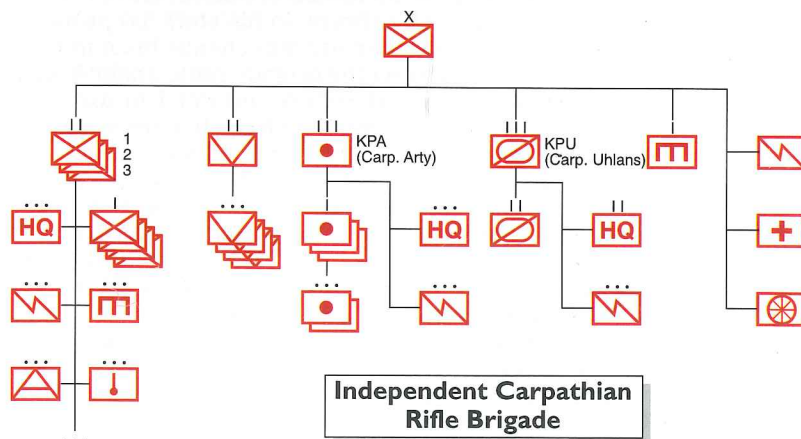


The *10th* wasn't finished reforming when the Germans struck in 1940, consisting of only a 1,700 man battlegroup, including one armored battalion. They took part in the fighting, but were pushed into central France by the time of the surrender. Accordingly, the unit was officially dissolved and the men had to try to find their own ways to Britain via the south of France.

## The Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade

Immediately after the fall of France only one Polish unit remained intact, the *Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade* stationed in Homs, Syria, under Col. Stanislaw Kopanski. He was a World War I Russian army veteran and had served as the Polish army's chief of operations during 1939. The brigade itself was made up of soldiers who'd fought in the Polish campaign, along with a number of others who joined it by coming over from the French Foreign Legion.

After the capitulation the French commander in Syria, Gen. Eugene Mittelhauser, first declared he would keep the colony and the units stationed there in the Allied camp. That allowed the formation of the brigade to continue, picking up some of those who





*Polish troops serving with the Red Army leave for the front.*

escaped from the European debacle. Even so, Kopanski began making preparations to cross over into British Palestine in case the political situation changed in Syria. That was fortunate, for as time passed and the position of the Vichy regime became more clear, Mittelhauser began to conform to the new, more pro-German view. He therefore refused the request of Kopanski to take his unit out of Syria. Only the threat of an armed breakout, and pressure from some French officers on his staff too proud to take German orders, made him change his mind.

Upon leaving Syria the brigade came under British command and was therefore retrained to use their equipment. It was earmarked to go to Greece early in 1941, but Rommel's successes in Libya dictated it be used instead for the defense of Egypt. As it achieved combat readiness the unit was transported to besieged Tobruk to relieve Australians at Ras el Medaunar. There the Poles spent 110 days engaging in defensive actions and endless patrols in the toughest sector of the Tobruk perimeter.

After Operation Crusader lifted the siege on 18 November 1941, the brigade participated in the pursuit of the retreating Axis forces. It had to break off, though, in response to conflicting orders from corps command that sent the unit's only mechanized formation to Egypt to recuperate, leaving the infantry

(without transport of their own) to slowly slog across the desert to the new Gazala position. Once there, given only minimal artillery support, still with no vehicles available to bring up ammunition, and accompanied only by Bren carriers, the Polish infantry attacked the Italian line, taking 1,700 prisoners after a wild and successful bayonet charge on 15 December. The brigade continued the fight in the North African desert until 3 May 1942, when it was transformed into the *3rd Carpathian Rifle Division* for incorporation into Polish *2nd Corps*.

## 2nd Corps

After the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, and the subsequent beginning of a long period of defeat for the Red Army, Moscow's rulers reached an agreement with the Polish government-in-exile pertaining to the formation of new Polish military units inside the USSR. As soon as the agreement was reached, the Soviets declared an amnesty for the Polish POWs and civilians who'd been deported from their homeland after the 1939 campaign.

The new units to be formed were all under command of Gen. Wladyslaw Anders, a Russian army veteran of the First World War and in 1939 commander of the *Nowogrodzka Cavalry Brigade*. He ended that campaign wounded in action and captured by the Red Army. Subsequently imprisoned, he was moved from dungeon to dungeon of the Soviet political prison system for two years.

Originally there were to be two Polish infantry divisions along with a training and replacement center; but the number of volunteers became so great the new force was expanded to four divisions plus supporting units. But even that limit was surpassed, to the point there were soon problems with the supply of weapons and equipment. By the end of 1941, then, only one of the divisions had actually been armed.

The Soviets, at that point desperate for manpower, wanted to send the division, the *5th*, to the front as soon as it was done arming. But Anders maintained Polish formations could not be committed piecemeal, only as a whole army.

As the war dragged on and the Germans released news of their discovery of the Katyn forest massacre of thousands of Polish officers by the Soviets, and negotiations over the postwar delineation of the Russo-Polish border failed, a diplomatic split occurred and relations between the two governments were broken off. As a result the Polish units then still forming inside the Soviet Union were allowed to leave for British controlled Iraq and Palestine. After the organization of those units into a corps was completed it was transported to the Italian front, where it entered action on the Sangro River, eventually ending the war fighting in Bologna.

It was also during the Italian campaign the corps took part in the Battle of Monte Cassino, where it was committed after the initial wave of Allied assaults had failed to break that key German defensive position on the road to Rome. The fighting on the mountain slopes was so bloody the first line of the song written to commemorate it within the corps went: "The red poppies of Monte Cassino are so because they were raised on Polish blood."

But despite heavy casualties, the Poles pushed on to take the German defense bunker by bunker. Finally, after German strongholds to the east and northeast were taken, their garrison had to withdraw from Monte Cassino to avoid encirclement. A Polish patrol

## 1st Armored Division

The *1st Armored* was sent to France under command of Gen. Maczek as part of the *2nd Corps* of the Canadian *1st Army*. The division's first mission was to close the Falaise pocket together with the Canadian *4th Infantry Division*. But the joint assault suffered heavy losses before it even began, when the second echelons of both units were accidentally bombed by hundreds of Allied planes.

[illegible]

# 1st Independent Parachute Brigade

# The Polish Air Force in the West

The most famous of the Polish fighter units formed in England was the 303 "*Kosciuszko*" Squadron, which fought with utmost distinction during the Battle of Britain. In that fight the pilots of the 303 scored 126 confirmed kills out of the 1,700 total aircraft lost by the Germans. The second most distinguished Polish fighter squadron was the 302 "*Poznanski*," which scored 77 confirmed kills.

As air activity lessened over Britain itself, in February 1943 a 15-man fighter unit designated the "Polish Fighting Team" was sent to North Africa under command of ace Capt. Stanislaw Skalski. During the period 17 March to 10 May, the Team achieved 25 confirmed kills and three probabilities for the loss of just one of their own.

Skalski went on to take command of the Malta-based *601 Fighter Squadron*. It was a tribute to his fighting and leadership qualities, because it was rare for any foreigner to be given command of an RAF unit. Later he led the Polish *133rd Wing* during the Normandy campaign. After the war, unlike many other Polish airmen who agreed to stay in the west, he returned to Poland where he held command positions in that nation's air force.

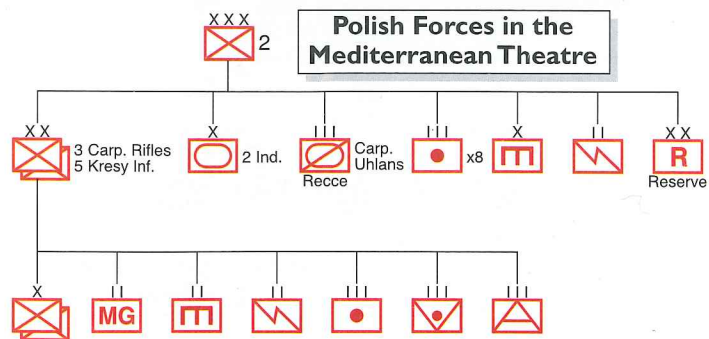
by V-E Day, including fighter, bomber and one night fighter squadron. Those pilots flew a total of over 85,000 sorties, during which they shot down or severely damaged some 1,000 enemy aircraft, including 190 V-1 flying bombs. They also sank 200 enemy naval and transport vessels, and struck numerous ground targets across occupied western Europe. Their losses amounted to 2,011, of whom 1,332 were killed in action and 311 taken prisoner.

There were also several Polish air force units formed on the eastern front, including fighter, bomber and ground attack regiments. The formation of the first began in August 1943, and it was soon designated the *1st "Warsaw" Fighter Regiment*. When *1st Polish Army* was formed, its order of battle included an aviation division that held one fighter, one night bomber and one ground attack regiment.

That night bomber regiment was equipped with Po-2 biplanes that were used by being glided silently the final distance toward German lines with their engine turned off. Often the first the Germans knew of the planes' presence came from the sound of the just-released bombs exploding. Only then would the pilots turn the engine back on to fly away before anyone had a chance to react.

In September 1944 the *1st Polish Mixed Aviation Corps* began forming in Kharkhov in the Soviet Union. Made up of three aviation divisions, with a total of 300 planes, the corps was on the front by January 1945, where it took part in the Berlin offensive.

In total, the Polish pilots in the east flew 5,867 sorties during which they shot down a total of 20 enemy aircraft, destroyed 25 tanks, 1,300 other vehicles, and 700 cannon. Ninety-four of the eastern front Polish aviators were killed, 24 by ground fire.



When Operation Market Garden began, the brigade was assigned to take vital Arnhem together with the British *1st Airborne Division*. Due to bad weather the Poles couldn't be dropped as originally scheduled, finally coming into the fight only after the battle's outcome had already been decided. Landed south of Arnhem, near the town of Driel, they made an attempt to go north to cross the Lower Rhine River to achieve a link up and rescue of the British paratroopers isolated on the other bank. Sadly, there weren't enough assault boats available, and those that were on hand were soon destroyed by enemy fire.

As the battle climaxed, those who'd managed to cross the river evacuated back south along with the survivors of the British division. In all, the brigade lost 23 percent of its men during the operation. Afterward it was shipped back to England and saw no more action during the rest of the war. Gen. Sosabowski had been a staunch critic of the whole Market Garden operation from the very beginning, but his warnings had gone unheeded by the British command. Afterward, he was removed from command of the brigade due to British pressure.

## 19th & 29th Infantry Battalions

Many of the Poles who failed to find a way out of France in 1940 went underground there rather than

surrender to the Germans. Most found refuge in the northeastern regions of France, which already had a substantial number of Polish immigrants, mainly miners who'd settled there to escape Prussian occupation of their homeland during the century before the First World War. As the resistance movement began to take shape, many of those Poles joined French cells or formed their own.

After Overlord, as Allied units swept across France, the Polish underground units declared their wish to continue fighting as regular army formations. At first, since many of the new volunteers were socialists or other kinds of leftists, there were those in the Allied high command who argued for refusing their offer. But as German resistance stiffened again in the autumn of 1944, permission was finally given to form two battalions within the French *1st Army*.

At first the French intended to simply incorporate the new volunteers into their Foreign Legion, but the Poles refused to go into battle under any banner other than their own. They were kept in the rear areas of the French army, where they engaged in running battles against small, marauding bands of German soldiers and some *Werwolf* commandoes. On 17 November 1945 both battalions arrived back in Warsaw. They were the only Polish formations that had fought in the west and were allowed to return home as units.

## 1st "Tadeuzs Kosciuszko" Infantry Division

After the break between the Polish government-in-exile and Moscow, the Polish units forming in the USSR were evacuated to the Middle East. But as the war progressed, the Polish communists residing in the Soviet Union in the spring of 1943 proposed the formation of a new force under their auspices. Stalin accepted, and on 8 May released a statement authorizing the formation of a Polish division to fight within the Red Army. The unit's formation went rapidly, and by 15 July it had been officially entered into the Red Army order of battle. It was named after Tadeuzs

## The Polish Navy

In 1939 the Polish navy had several modern submarines and destroyers. As war became imminent the newest of the latter were sent to Britain, since it was feared German superiority in the air above the Baltic would otherwise lead to their certain destruction. The submarines meanwhile attempted to place a mine barrier at the entrance to the Gulf of Gdansk. But that effort was unsuccessful because their mine-carrying capacity was too small.

As the war progressed, the submarines also left the Baltic for Britain with the exception of a few that were interned in neutral countries. One of those, the *Orzel*, was interned in Tallin, Estonia, where its commander deserted. Under a new commander the boat managed to escape the guarded port and reached Britain after her officers redrew the needed maps from memory. (Their original charts were seized by the Estonians.)

The Polish navy kept expanding throughout the war, with its warships taking part in the fighting from the Mediterranean to the Arctic. It was, in fact, the only arm of the Polish forces to remain actively engaged throughout the entire war from day one to the end. The first of those who died after the 1939 campaign were from the crew of the destroyer *Grom*, which was sunk while taking part in the Narvik expedition.

Other Polish sailors later died when the submarine *Jas-*

*trzeb* was mistakenly attacked by an American destroyer in the North Sea. The Americans didn't stop firing even when the *Jastrzeb* surfaced and her captain hoisted the Polish flag. Only when he raised a white surrender flag did the destroyer cease fire.

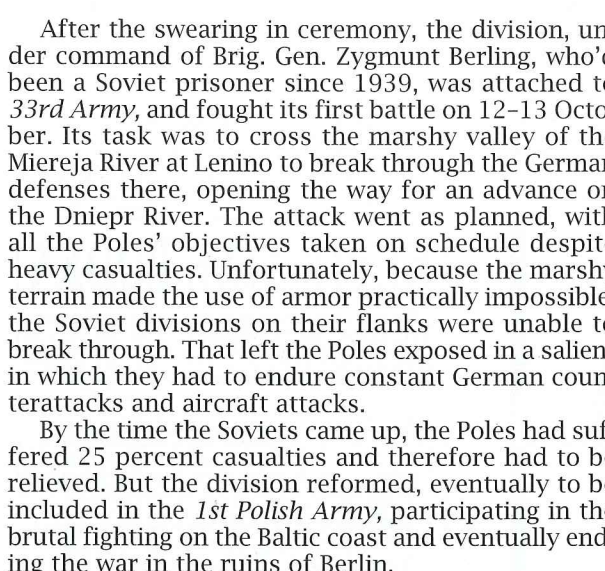
The Polish navy's largest ship, the cruiser *Dragon*, used its guns in support of the Allied D-Day landings until it was severely damaged by German guided bombs. Afterward it was scuttled and turned into part of a breakwater on one of the Allied beachheads.

Two submarines in the Mediterranean, the *Sokol* and *Dzik*, earned themselves the nickname the "Terrible Twins," given them by their British colleagues for their daring actions against the Italians.

The Polish destroyer *Piorun* was one of the warships sent to hunt down the German battleship *Bismarck*. When contact was made, the captain went through identification procedures so the enemy battleship's command would know the Polish navy still existed and fought.

In all, the ships of the Polish navy took part in escorting 787 convoys, sank seven enemy surface warships, two U-boats and 41 transports, while also shooting down 24 aircraft. In that time, 404 Polish sailors lost their lives, four of them ship captains.

**1st Tadeusz Kosciuszko Infantry Division**



By the time the Soviets came up, the Poles had suffered 25 percent casualties and therefore had to be relieved. But the division reformed, eventually to be included in the *1st Polish Army*, participating in the brutal fighting on the Baltic coast and eventually ending the war in the ruins of Berlin.

Even as the *1st Infantry Division* was leaving for the front, other Polish units were being formed in the east. They were first brought together to form *1st Polish Corps*, but the continued steady influx of volunteers necessitated that formation be expanded into *1st Polish Army*. That army officially achieved battle readiness on 19 March 1944, leaving for the front under command of Maj. Gen. Stanislaw Poplawski, a long-time Polish communist and member of the Red Army since 1919.

## COMMAND MAGAZINE

## 2nd Polish Army

By 29 March 1945, *2nd Army* moved into the front lines near fortified Wrocław. On 16 April it stormed across the Nysa River as part of *1st Ukrainian Front* in the Berlin offensive. After breaching the German defenses in front of it, *2nd Army* moved on toward Dresden. As its reconnaissance elements were in sight of that historic city's towers, however, the Poles had to pull back to take part in defeating the German counterattack toward besieged Berlin. When that enemy effort faltered, *2nd Army* was redirected south toward Prague. Together with other Soviet formations, it took part in the final shattering of the once mighty German *Army Group Center* in Czechoslovakia.

Though this unit was originally created as a supporting force within *1st Polish Army*, it often operated independently or attached to various Soviet guard and tank armies. Its first trial was at the Magnuszew bridgehead on the central Vistula. The Soviet units there were under intense pressure from, among oth-



ers, the elite *Hermann Göring Panzer Division*. Though the brigade had to enter combat piecemeal because the bridges over the river couldn't provide for adequate traffic flow, it held on against fierce German attacks before resuming the offensive. Later, as part of *1st Guards Tank Army*, the brigade took part in the breaching of the Pomeranian defense line, then moved to help crush the last German resistance in Gdynia and Gdansk.

## Conclusions

Polish soldiers fought throughout the Second World War, from the first shots fired in Westerplatte to the last in the ruins of Berlin. By the time of the German capitulation there was a total of about 600,000 Poles bearing arms, organized into two armies on the eastern front and two corps in the west, along with numerous independent formations and air force and navy units. Proof of their prowess and determination comes from the fact that all during the war, not even in the 1939 defeat, did one Polish standard ever fall into German hands.

Unfortunately, the achievements and sacrifices of the Polish soldiers didn't secure them a sound political settlement. After the world war ended and the first rumblings of the new Cold War began — and it became obvious Poland was going to be on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain — the western Allied high command did everything possible to keep them, especially the air force personnel, from returning to Poland. When they were finally allowed to go, most left from their bases not like a victorious army

returning home but as individuals cashiered without even a farewell ceremony. ★

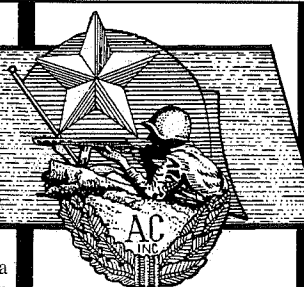
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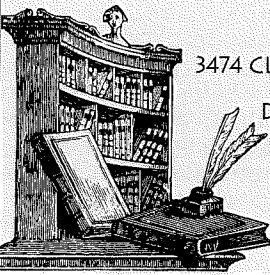
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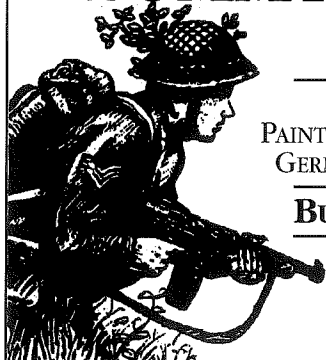
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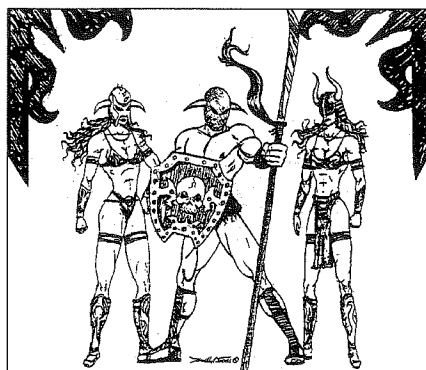
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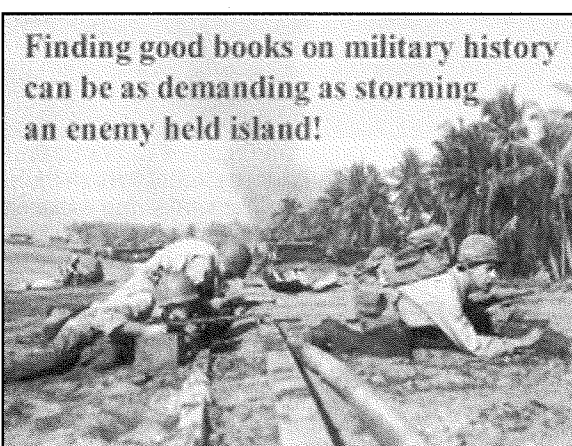
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# ART of WAR

## The Art of Anthony Saunders

by David Higgins



*Gauntlet*, by Anthony Saunders. Portsmouth, August 26th 1940, the lone Spitfire of Squadron Leader Sandy Johnstone breaks the ranks and picks off one of the menacing Heinkels. (Courtesy Cranston Fine Arts)

"We were brought to readiness in the middle of lunch and scrambled to intercept a mixed bag of 100+ Heinkel III's and DO 17's approaching Portsmouth from the south. The Controller did a first class job and positioned us one thousand feet above the target, with the sun behind us, allowing us to spot the raiders from along way off. No escorting Messerschmitts were in sight at the time, although a sizeable force was to turn up soon after. Then something strange happened.

I was about to give a ticking off to our chaps for misusing the R/T when I realized I was listening to German voices. It appeared we were both using the same frequency and, although having no knowledge of the language, it sounded from the monotonous flow of the conversation that they were unaware of our presence. As soon as we dived towards the leading formation, however, we were assailed immediately by loud shouts of

'Achtung Spitfuern! Spitfuern!' as our bullets began to take their toll.

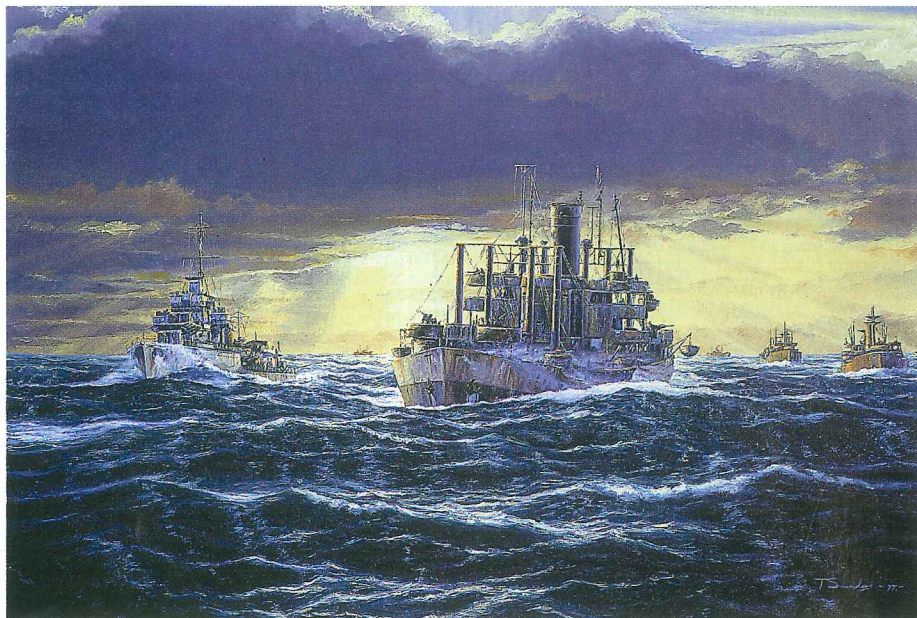
In spite of having taken Jerry by surprise our bag was only six, with others claimed as damaged, before the remainder dived for cloud cover and turned for home. In the meantime the escorting fighters were amongst us when two of our fellows were badly shot up. Hector MacLean stopped a cannon shell on his cockpit, blowing his foot off above the ankle, although in spite of his grave injuries he managed to fly his Spitfire back to Tangmere to land with wheels retracted. Cyril Babbage's aircraft was also badly damaged in action, forcing him to abandon it and take to his parachute. He was ultimately picked up by a rescue launch and put ashore at Bognor, having suffered only minor injuries. I personally accounted for one Heinkel III in the action."

— Sandy Johnstone

After leaving school he attended Colchester Technical College for five years attaining an Engineering Diploma in Electronic Design Engineering, but his passion has been for painting aviation subjects. He joined the team of artists at Cranston Fine Arts in 1995. With a variety of aviation subjects being produced as limited edition prints. One of his best known paintings is *Gauntlet* — a tribute to the men of the "City of Glasgow" auxiliary squadron in the Battle of Britain. His second love was maritime subjects, which he has taken time and much research to produce his first six naval subjects. Ranging from large to small he has tried to include most sizes of ships in his pictures, from *HMS Ashanti*, to *HMS Hood* and *HMS Ark Royal*, and has recently been working on a series of US Naval battlescenes, with his latest commission Iwo Jima, winning particular praise. He has exhibited at various exhibitions; The Guild of Aviation Artists Annual Exhibition 1989-1990, Horizons of Flight Exhibition 1994 (this particular Exhibition awarded him the Award of Distinction), and a variety of Cranston Fine Arts small exhibitions around the world.

Over the past three years Anthony has been constantly working on a variety of naval projects, which have now been released as Limited edition prints. These projects have taken Anthony on several occasions to the U.S. for research and many meetings with ex-Naval servicemen who have helped him with some of the projects. His recent projects have included: *The USS Tennessee during the landings at Iwo Jima*; *USS North Carolina, Saipan Bound*; *The USS Colorado at Okinawa*; and *The USS Indiana- First Tour of Duty*.

Not only has Anthony completed a variety of commissions as well as the above mentioned series of paint-



The Arctic Run, by Anthony Saunders. (Courtesy Cranston Fine Arts)

ings for Cranston Fine Arts, he also has been producing some fine works of British and German Naval vessels of World War Two. Such as *The Narvik Squadron* which depicts the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisanau* along with the *Admiral Hipper*, these German ships wreaked havoc in the waters off Norway which culminated in the sinking of the British aircraft carrier *HMS Glorious*. The other picture shown depicts *HMS Ramillies* and *HMS Warspite* at Normandy. These battleships were the major part of the British Home Fleet, with their massive guns which could deliver gunfire with pinpoint accuracy to 17 miles. They proved invaluable on the day of the biggest seaborne land invasion in history.

His most recently completed project is something special to Anthony. With all his various meetings with ex-servicemen who served in the various navies, he met many Merchant Seamen, and after hearing their various stories, he felt compelled to produce a painting as a tribute to these un-sun heroes. The project was begun in January 1997 and completed in November 1997. The following month it was produced as a print. *The Arctic Run* shows merchant ships forcing their way through adverse conditions bordering on the limitations of human endurance. The allied convoys faced appalling odds of survival in the endeavor to supply war materials to the Soviet Union through the port of Murmansk. ☛



Ramillies and Warspite at Normandy, by Anthony Saunders. HMS Ramillies and Warspite move into position off the coast of Normandy. (Courtesy Cranston Fine Arts)

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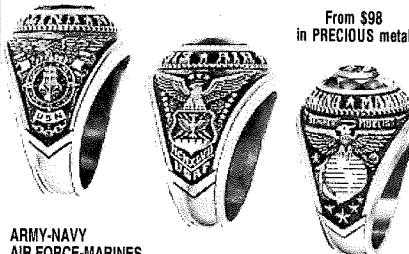
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Captain Thomas Morris accompanied Bradstreet (1764) on his expedi-

tion to Detroit. Being dispatched from Cedar Point on a mission to the French in the Illinois country, Morris was arrested and tortured at the Ottawa village at Maumee Rapids. He saw Pontiac, went to Fort Miami, narrowly escaped being burned at the stake, and finally made his escape through the woods to Detroit. The journals of his experiences upon the Maumee present one of the most thrilling episodes in our early western history.

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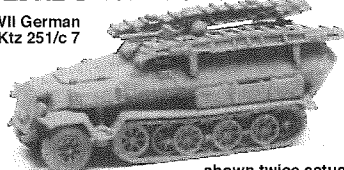
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Boyington started up the squadron virtually from scratch for its third combat tour, filling it with a brand new set of pilots drawn almost entirely from the replacement pool. "Black Sheep" made an appropriate sobriquet for this recently homeless group of fighter pilots. The results for the squadron during two combat tours from September 1943 to January 1944 are legendary: 94 enemy planes destroyed and 30 more probably destroyed. Nearly all of their combat flights took them on long-distance over-water missions into Japanese territory. Ironically, on January 3, 1944, the same day he tied the record of theretofore top-scoring Marine ace Joe Foss with his 26th victory, the Black Sheep's flamboyant leader, Maj. Greg Boyington, was shot down and captured, three days short of the conclusion of his fourth combat tour.

This marked the end of the glory days of VMF 214 with the unit's members being scattered to other assignments. A little over a year later, a new Black Sheep squadron returned to combat on Sunday, March 18, flying against the Japanese home islands from the aircraft carrier *USS Franklin*. The next morning, little more than an hour after launching half of the Black Sheep for a strike against Kyushu, tragedy struck in the form of a Japanese dive bomber. A pair of 250 kg bombs crashed into the *Franklin* creating an inferno unparalleled in the Pacific carrier war. The squadron lost 32 men in the ensuing holocaust and with their ship gutted, the new Black Sheep were out of the war as an organized unit on their second day in combat.

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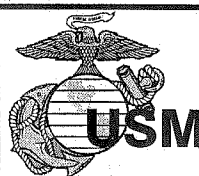
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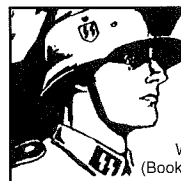
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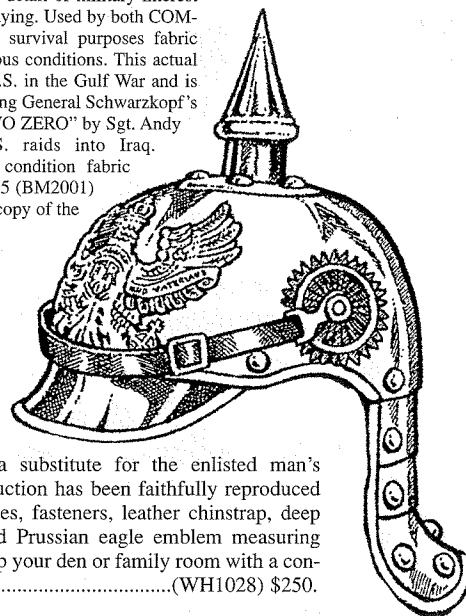
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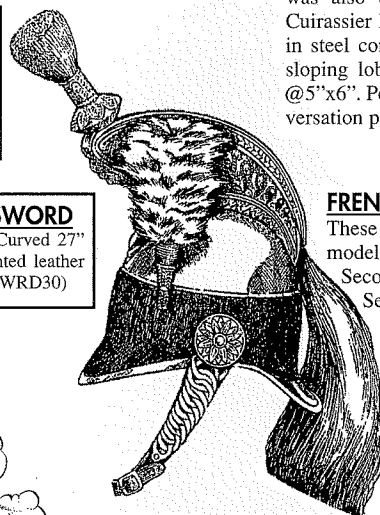
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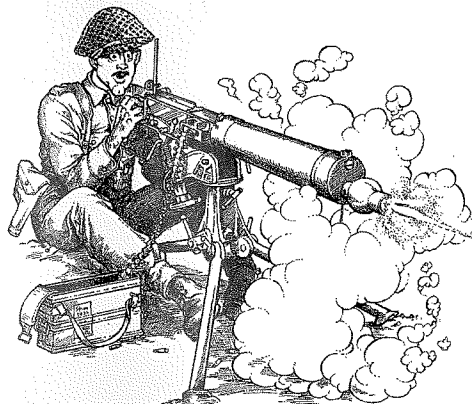


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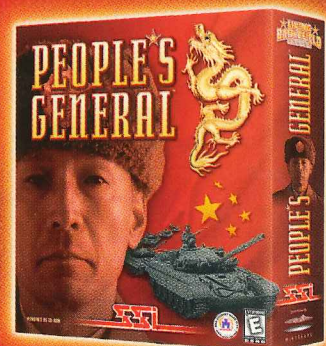
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