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NEWS NOTES

Center of Military History Issues New Publications

The Center of Military History has published a pamphlet on U.S. Army operations in Kosovo and a booklet on the reorganization of Army units undertaken after the invasion of Iraq. *Operation JOINT GUARDIAN: The U.S. Army in Kosovo* describes the efforts of the U.S. Army to restore peace to the troubled Serbian province of Kosovo in the aftermath of the 1999 NATO air campaign that ended a period of violent attacks against members of the ethnic Albanian majority and forced the withdrawal of Serbian forces. Authored by R. Cody Phillips at the Center of Military History, the text focuses on events in 1999 and also examines historical antecedents and the subsequent evolution of the Army's mission in Kosovo through 2005. The Center issued this 58-page pamphlet as CMH Pub 70-109-1.

Transforming an Army at War: Designing the Modular Force, 1991-2005, examines the development of the Army's new modular concept of unit design, under which the Army is changing from an organization centered on divisions of over 10,000 soldiers to one based on brigades of fewer than 4,000. After briefly discussing the evolution from 1991 to 2003 of key ideas on which the new structure would be based, the account focuses on the creation between 2003 and 2005 of modular designs for various levels of Army command, a process in which Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker was an active participant. Center historian William M. Donnelly wrote the 90-page booklet, which was issued as CMH Pub 70-108-1.

Army publication account holders may obtain these new releases from the Directorate of Logistics—Washington, Media Distribution Division, ATTN: JD-HQSVPAS, 1655 Woodson Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63114-6128. Account holders may also place their orders at <http://www.apd.army.mil>. The Government Printing Office is offering *Operation JOINT GUARDIAN: The U.S. Army in Kosovo* for sale for \$4.75 at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>. It also plans to sell *Transforming an Army at War: Designing the Modular Force, 1991-2005*, but it has not yet set the price.

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Cover Illustration: East Face of Fort Jefferson, Florida
(Photo by Jack R. Boucher, 1962, *Historic American Buildings Survey Collection*, Library of Congress)



The Chief's Corner

Dr. Jeffrey J. Clarke

This has been a busy and successful quarter for the Army historical community. Dr. Lee Harford's U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) history office presented a second extensive military history detachment (MHD) training course, with the able assistance of Maj. Doug Hendy's 44th Military History Detachment and with the strong support of the Center of Military History. The Center is again working with other Army offices to deploy several military history detachments to the combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of the newly mobilized units will replace detachments scheduled to return home, while others will expand the Army's historical coverage of operations and commands. We have also continued to supplement those detachments with unaffiliated Army Reserve historians and civilian historians from the Center. Our objective is simple: Given the deployed Army's continued inability to collect and retire electronic operational records in any systematic fashion, trained historical officers and our own historians must undertake the task if we are to maintain any capacity to write accurate accounts of our soldiers' gallant service in these countries. The primary sources that these deployed historical officers collect and the massive oral history programs they manage must provide the foundation for our future products.

Thanks to the hard work of our deployed historians, and the professionalism of our soldiers in general, the results have been encouraging. During the past six years the Center has secured voluminous records of operational units and commands, as well as extensive collections of oral histories from key Army leaders and warfighters. Early this year Center historians and archivists, led by Mark Reardon and Frank Shirer, began analyzing this material for the

first time. Their work has enabled us to identify not only those organizations that are reasonably well represented in the existing collection but also those that are not. Based on these findings, the Center has begun a major effort that will continue through Fiscal Year 2008 to target those formations whose records are missing from our holdings. Last month, for example, Center collection teams traveled to Fort Riley and Fort Lewis to fill the information gap for the 1st Infantry Division and the I Corps, and we applied Global War on Terrorism funds to provide USARC with the basic hard- and software for its MHD training endeavors so that more records could be collected in the field. The appointment of Lt. Col. Shane Story, who has served at the Center since November 2003, as the new Multi-National Force–Iraq historian will also assist in the overall collection effort. Finally, the planned expansion of the Center's electronic capabilities at Fort McNair will allow us to work directly with unit records managers, with the prospect of obtaining more immediate access to operational records from field locations.

In closing, I wish to recognize the significant collection efforts being made by historians and archivists at the Army Heritage and Education Center, the Combat Studies Institute, and the Army's many command history offices. The materials they have obtained include both invaluable collections of personal papers saved by key commanders and more specialized collections of functional staffs and commands. Our intention, as embodied in the Army history program's *Strategic Plan, 2007–2011*, is to organize these materials electronically wherever they may be located so that in the future our research historians can readily identify and exploit them, producing the historical products needed by the Army to learn the most from their experiences in the field.

Once again, thanks for everything you do for our Army at War.

*“THERE HAS BEEN
BUT ONE PRACTICE
AMONG NATIONS AS
TO THE DEFENCE OF
PORTS AND HARBORS,
AND THAT HAS
BEEN A RESORT TO
FORTIFICATION.”*

– Joseph G. Totten



Joseph G. Totten by Robert W. Weir

AMERICAN GIBRALTARS

ARMY ENGINEERS AND THE QUEST FOR A SCIENTIFIC DEFENSE OF THE NATION, 1815–1860

By Todd A. Shallat

The massive fortifications that the United States built to protect its coastline from a foreign invader after the War of 1812 mirrored the expansive era in which they were initiated. It was an “era of good feelings” among Americans, said an 1815 Boston newspaper, a rare time of nationalist fervor when engineers were highly regarded as agents of modernization. Internationally, governments competed for status with grandiose public works. France had for more than a century led the world with its massive public construction projects and its training of highly qualified military engineers. Since the reign of French King Louis XIV (1643–1715), Europeans had marveled at the military strength of the complex fortifications French engineers built to protect their nation’s oft-challenged land frontiers and at the grandeur and beauty of the royal residence and administrative center erected at Versailles. Engineers trained in the French Royal Corps of Engineers played major roles in both the American and French Revolutions. The Bourbon monarchy, restored after Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo, again in 1820 launched a very ambitious pro-

gram of government-financed canal and road construction. It was administered by an elite scientific corps of Army-trained builders and planners.¹

Britain, the industrial powerhouse of early nineteenth-century Europe, took another approach. Great names in British construction—Thomas Telford, William Jessop, John Rennie, John Loudon McAdam—were mostly self-made masons and millwrights who thrived in a capitalist culture of pragmatic entrepreneurs. Profit-making corporations funded by private investors built British canals. Having no international land frontiers and possessing the world’s strongest navy, Britain invested less on fortification construction than did France.²

As the United States contemplated undertaking large-scale civil and military construction projects in the early federal republic, it walked a cultural line between the approaches of the two leading powers of Europe—between British-style capitalism and maritime strength and the more regimented, land-based, and scientific tradition imported chiefly from France. Closely tied to the British economy, Americans had nevertheless departed from the British example



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Detail of Simon Bernard by Edouard Baille

by allowing private builders to float government bonds. And while private American firms generally shared the British admiration for self-made builder-mechanics, the U.S. government developed a more genteel class of builders equipped with excellent technical and mathematical skills at the U.S. Military Academy in New York. Much of the instruction conducted there in the first half of the nineteenth century relied on translations of French textbooks, and some advanced materials were presented in the original French. The United States relied largely upon these scientifically trained military engineers to design and build

coastal fortifications and other large federal construction projects.³

To lead the effort to design and build a modern system of coastal fortifications, the U.S. government engaged the prominent French military engineer General Simon Bernard. Bernard had demonstrated sufficient talent as a military engineer in Napoleon's army to be retained by the army of the restored Bourbon monarchy, despite his support for Napoleon after the latter's return from Elba. Bernard's success as a builder owed much to his formal scientific education. As a youth, too poor to pay for a stagecoach, he had walked about 200 miles to Paris to enroll in the *Ecole central des travaux publics*, later renowned as the *Ecole polytechnique*, from which he graduated second in the class of 1797. Bernard went on to build roads for Napoleon's army and to work on the defenses at Antwerp, Belgium, one of Europe's great fortified cities. Summoned to Napoleon's quarters during the Austerlitz campaign, Bernard outlined a plan to attack the Austrian capital that impressed the French emperor. Discovering that Bernard was uncomfortable in the army of King Louis XVIII, American Secretary of War William Crawford invited the French engineer to the United States. Because the U.S. government had cause to fear the militarily resurgent British, the Army Engineer Department wished to develop a "walled seacoast" of fortified harbors. Bernard was to make this a reality. In November 1816, in the wake of the burning of Washington, President James Madison, with the authorization of Congress, appointed the French general as the assistant chief of

the Army Corps of Engineers, with the pay and emoluments of a brigadier general.⁴

Bernard went to work, often uncomfortably, with a varying group of American engineer and naval officers who formed a five-member Board of Engineers for Fortifications, two seats on which were reserved for engineer and naval officers assigned to the region under immediate consideration. After making a series of detailed surveys, this board transmitted to Congress in February 1821 a report that would become the basis for the nation's first true system of coastal defenses, along with a well-argued rationale for its adoption. The plan called for the construction of fifty fortifications at a cost of nearly \$18 million to protect major American ports and maritime access routes, together with strategically important coastal locations that might be susceptible to naval attack. The report divided the proposed works into three priority levels, with the eighteen sites in the first class estimated to cost over \$8 million alone. The plan proposed initial investments of over \$1 million at one to five forts at each of the five locations it viewed as most critical to the nation's coastal defense. Ranked in order of the appropriations, these priority sites were New York Harbor; Hampton Roads, Virginia; Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island; the Mississippi River delta; and Boston Harbor. President James Monroe endorsed the plan, arguing in his second inaugural address that fortifications were "the best expedient that can be resorted to to prevent war."⁵

Cost containment and revenues from enhanced commerce were

hardly Bernard's foremost concerns. "When a nation undertakes a work of great public utility," Bernard and two engineer associates told Congress in 1826 that "the revenue is not the essential object to take into consideration: its views are of a more elevated order: they are all, and, it may be said, exclusively, directed toward the great and general interests of the community."⁶ National security and prosperity were the great objects of public construction. "Revenue," Bernard maintained, could be "a secondary object."⁷

FORTS AT HAMPTON ROADS

Fort Monroe, near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, became a towering expression of that grand approach. Viewed as Bernard's Gibraltar, Fort Monroe may have been the world's largest independently standing fortification—a 63-acre coastal stronghold, not just a fort but a military port city with a locked canal, bridges, wharves, workshops, barracks, a hospital, lighthouse, artillery school, 600 peacetime troops, and 380 guns. It would be a symbol of "preparedness," wrote one of the fort's future commanders, "a monument to the foresight of its founders and a guardian of the Nation."⁸

The planned location at Old Point Comfort, where English colonists had fortified the maritime passage called Hampton Roads, was strategically positioned near the mouths of two vital waterways—the James River and the Chesapeake Bay. Effectively meeting all of the board's critical defense site criteria, a fort there would protect cities, coastal shipping, and the mouths of navigable rivers.



1. Old Point Comfort. 2. Fortress Monroe. 3. Water Battery. 4. Hampton Roads. 5. Rip Raps. 6. Chesapeake Bay. 7. Sewall's Point. 8. Craney Island. 9. Elizabeth River. 10. Norfolk. 11. Portsmouth. 12. Dismal Swamp. 13. Atlantic Ocean. 14. Cape Hatteras, N.C. 15. Nansemond River. 16. James River. 17. Newport News. 18. Hampton. 19. Mill Creek. 20. Land approach to Fortress.

Fortress Monroe, Virginia, and Its Vicinity

It could deny an enemy a foothold in the Chesapeake region. Most important, the fort with its battery of forty 32-pounders would shield the U.S. Navy, which the Board of Engineers listed first among the requisites for coastal defense. Bernard also wanted an offshore battery on a mid-river shoal and fortified “arsenals” on the lower James and Charles Rivers for constructing American ships. In all, the Board of Engineers estimated that the fort and supporting battery would cost American taxpayers some \$1.7 million, over \$800,000 for the fort at Old Point Comfort and \$900,000 for the mid-river

battery. This was an unprecedented request at a time when Congress was reducing Army troop strength from 10,000 to 6,000 men in a drive to cut federal spending. Still the Bernard board called seacoast fortifications “a real and positive economy” that would reduce the number of troops needed to repel an attack. The cost of these fortifications, insisted Bernard, was “a trifling sum, if compared with the magnitude of the advantages which will be procured and the evils which will be averted.”⁹

President John Quincy Adams agreed that forts were an investment in “the quiet” and

“happier existence” of generations to come. In 1826 Adams endorsed a supplement to Bernard’s 1821 report on fortifications that focused on protecting American coasts from an effective blockade of its ports and took account of the defense requirements of recently acquired Florida. In five years his board’s national fortification plan had grown from fifty to ninety forts.¹⁰

By then the estimates for the ultimate cost of Fort Monroe itself had risen by roughly 40 percent to \$1.16 million. Summer cholera disrupted construction. Stone was scarce, labor erratic.



Fortress Monroe, February 1862

The engineers saved money with slave labor and, for a time, with large gangs of military convicts. They flattened arches and cut back on the brickwork, but still the expenditure soared. By 1834 costs had exceeded \$1.7 million, and the outer defenses were still not complete. Planned by Bernard with help from Parisian draftsman Guillaume Poussin, the structural design reflected French models of military architecture: stout polygons of brick and stone with tiers of embrasures (recessed windows) and casemates (bombproof chambers) for guns. Flattish, largely symmetrical, and enormous, Fort Monroe resembled a seven-pointed star. Its seven bastions—the points of the star that jutted out from the structure—were designed so that an enemy approaching the fort would cross through a killing ground of murderous crossfire. An attacker would also have to contend with a curved battery

guarding the spit of land to the north. A land attacker would face high walls, earthen embankments, and a dangerous moat.¹¹

To besiege such a place so near to American population centers, which could quickly mobilize against an attacking land force, would surely be suicidal, but what if an invader slipped up the James River to the south? What if an enemy fleet evaded the fort's heavy guns?

Army engineers addressed that concern with a plan to install 216 guns at a battery called Fort Calhoun about a mile offshore. There was no suitable island, only a shoal three fathoms deep. To Bernard it seemed like a simple matter to raise the shoal's surface above high tide with a riprap and encasing the stones with cement. But the fort, an elliptical castle, was heavier than expected. The more the engineers built up the foundation, the more it shifted and sank. By 1834 Fort

Calhoun's price tag had jumped from \$817,000 to \$1.3 million with no clear end in sight.¹²

Meanwhile the swells hammered Old Point Comfort, eroding the beach. While an unstable wall, rough water, weak cement, and unreliable labor drove up the cost of construction, the forts at Hampton Roads remained a valuable school of practice for some of the Army's best engineers. Chief Engineer Col. Walker K. Armistead and Bvt. Lt. Col. Joseph G. Totten, who would later serve as the Army's chief engineer, worked with Bernard on planning the difficult project. Lt. Col. Charles Gratiot, a War of 1812 hero who would be plagued by scandal and eventually dismissed from the position of chief engineer by President Martin Van Buren, finished Fort Monroe's outer walls while pocketing a double allowance for also looking after Fort Calhoun. Capt. Andrew Talcott, a gifted astronomer, spent six years directing construction, aided by 2d Lt. Robert E. Lee, the future Confederate general. Talcott was followed by future Mexican War hero Bvt. Maj. John L. Smith and U.S. Military Academy superintendent Lt. Col. René De Russy.

One lesson learned at the Hampton Roads forts was the danger of favoritism, or the appearance of favoritism, in the award of government contracts. In 1818 Army Chief Engineer Bvt. Brig. Gen. Joseph G. Swift granted a stone contract to Elijah Mix of New York. Mix was the brother-in-law of the War Department's chief clerk, Christopher Vandeventer, a man very close to both Swift and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun. A House

committee investigation discovered that the lucrative contract had never been advertised and, on that basis, censured the engineer officers involved for a “*singular* neglect of duty.”¹³ In 1826 a court-martial convicted engineer Maj. Samuel Babcock on charges of neglect of duty and making false statements relative to his supervision of a \$60,000 federal contract with Kentuckian John Bruce for the removal of snags from the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. President Adams remitted the sentence, deeming Babcock’s mistakes unintentional, and made light of problems at the War Department. “It may be confidently stated,” Adams informed Congress in 1826, “that the moral character of the army is in a state of continual improvement.”¹⁴

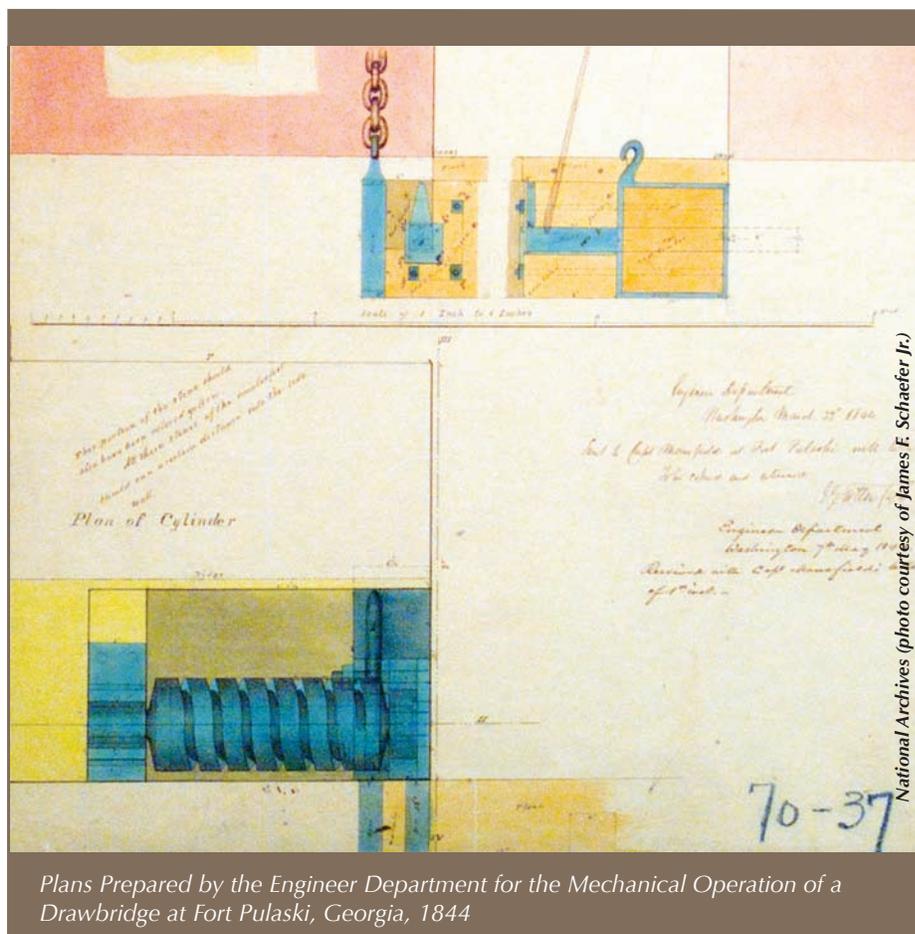
But the complaints persisted. In 1827, while the Engineer Department was busy explaining the rising cost of contract labor at Fort Macon, North Carolina, Calhoun’s enemies found enough votes in the Senate to revive the Elijah Mix contracting investigation. After forty days of critical testimony the department suspended the contracting system, replacing it temporarily with purchases of stone made on the open market. Even after the engineers in the early 1830s returned to the more cost-effective low-bid system, engineer Capt. William H. Chase managed in 1834 to procure masonry brick work and embankment construction at the future Fort McRee, Florida, at the entrance to Pensacola Harbor without advertising for proposals. It was a problem inherent in an Army ordered to manage some forty-one construction projects with only thirty-three engineer officers.¹⁵

AN EXPANDING CONSTRUCTION MISSION

Despite the complaints about its contract management, the Engineer Department continued to recommend ever more extensive fortification proposals. In 1836 the War Department sent Congress a plan drafted by Colonel Totten calling for a walled seaboard of 124 batteries, redoubts, and full-scale fortifications with 12,000 guns and a peacetime garrison 6,000 men—a \$30 million investment. The lynchpins of this fortification system were large and complex works that would be built, or were already being built, to plans and specifications prepared in Washington by Bernard, Totten, and a select group of other engineer draftsmen. These plans drew on diverse

architectural traditions to respond to the physical peculiarities and limitations of their sites.¹⁶

Fort Pulaski, Georgia, was so enormous that the Engineer Department dug a canal to transport the stone. Built slowly over a span of eighteen years on Cockspur Island below Savannah, the fort cost roughly \$1 million for construction, repair, and maintenance between 1829 and 1861. It had brick walls 30 feet high and 7–11 feet thick. Ceiling pipes funneled the rain through a water filtration system into huge cisterns. Arched artillery chambers were roofed with thick layers of lead and sand. Fort Sumter, South Carolina, built on a man-made island in Charleston Harbor, was a tall five-sided work trimmed with granite and crowned with brickwork. Fort Jefferson, Florida, a more ambitious



Plans Prepared by the Engineer Department for the Mechanical Operation of a Drawbridge at Fort Pulaski, Georgia, 1844



Historic American Buildings Survey Collection, Library of Congress, Photo by C.E. Peterson, c. 1934

Magazine and Casemates, Fort Jefferson, Florida

example of the simple casemate design erected on the largest of the Dry Tortugas 75 miles west of Key West, consumed forty million bricks, although it was never completed. Elsewhere the forts were networked to force an attacker through withering gauntlets of fire. Fort Jackson, Louisiana, a brick star on a timber foundation built in the soft mud below New Orleans between 1822 and 1832, was the largest of five forts guarding the approaches to that city. An equal number of forts would ring New York Harbor by 1860. Bernard's plan for Boston Harbor added the later-named Fort Warren with more than 300 guns on George's Island and a 20-gun battery on Hog Island to the forts on Castle Island and Governor's Island that had defended the approaches to Boston in the War of 1812.¹⁷

The construction of these elaborate projects was complicated by the fact that the hardest places in which to build—swamps, cliffs, beaches, unstable islands,

and wave-pounded shoals—were often ideal locations for fortifications. Such was the case with Fort Adams, Rhode Island, at the entrance to Narragansett Bay. Built on a rocky peninsula outside Newport, the fort covered hilly terrain with a mix of architectural styles. Its V-shaped battery on the landward side harkened back to the classic fortification style developed by King Louis XIV's leading engineer, Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban (1633–1707). The innovations of French military architects Louis de Cormontaigne (1696–1752) and Guillaume Henri Dufour (1787–1875) were well represented in the fort's pointed bastions and elongated walls. Where ships entered the channel, a tall wall of guns sat right on the shoreline—a feature popularized by Col. Jonathan Williams the U.S. Army's chief engineer from 1802 to 1812 and by the source of his inspiration, French field marshal and fortress builder Marc René, marquis de Montalembert (1714–

1800). Another French influence was a network of underground galleries with explosives and listening chambers to foil a tunnel attack. Sophisticated, innovative, exceedingly strong, and capable of overwhelming an invader with its 468 cannons, Fort Adams has been termed by architectural historian Willard B. Robinson “perhaps the most complex ensemble of military architectural forms in the United States.”¹⁸

Just who might test these kinds of defenses was a question most engineers did not address. Nine-term Congressman John Rhea of Tennessee believed that a brave militia could scare off any attacker. “When will war be,” Rhea demanded in 1822, “and with whom?” A French invasion was most unlikely, and the British were growing dependent on American cotton and grain. In 1830 Ambrose Spencer of Albany, New York, rose in the House of Representatives to call the seacoast defenses a “lavish and useless expense.”¹⁹

That the fort-building continued despite the declining threat of invasion speaks volumes about America's coming of age as the Western Hemisphere's commercial power. Pirates, however, clouded that future. In the 1820s a mixed collection of French, African, East Indian, Portuguese, Latin American, Spanish, and Yankee pirates plagued both cotton freighters and the Havana sugar trade. They were aided by the willingness of revolutionary Latin American governments to grant privateering commissions in an effort to weaken Spanish shipping. In 1822 pirates savaged the brig *Aurilla* from Baltimore as

it rounded Florida en route to New Orleans. Its captain and crew were systematically robbed, the women were raped, and one passenger suspected of concealing money was stabbed and thrown into the sea. A month later the *Mary*, sailing from Philadelphia, met a worse fate in the same general location. The lone survivor saw tortured sailors “in the last agonies” of death. One crew member had been “nailed to the deck through his feet,” his body “spiked to the tiller.” Begging for his life, the captain had his arms hacked off at the elbows. Then the pirates filled his mouth with turpentine-soaked oakum and set his bloody body on fire.²⁰

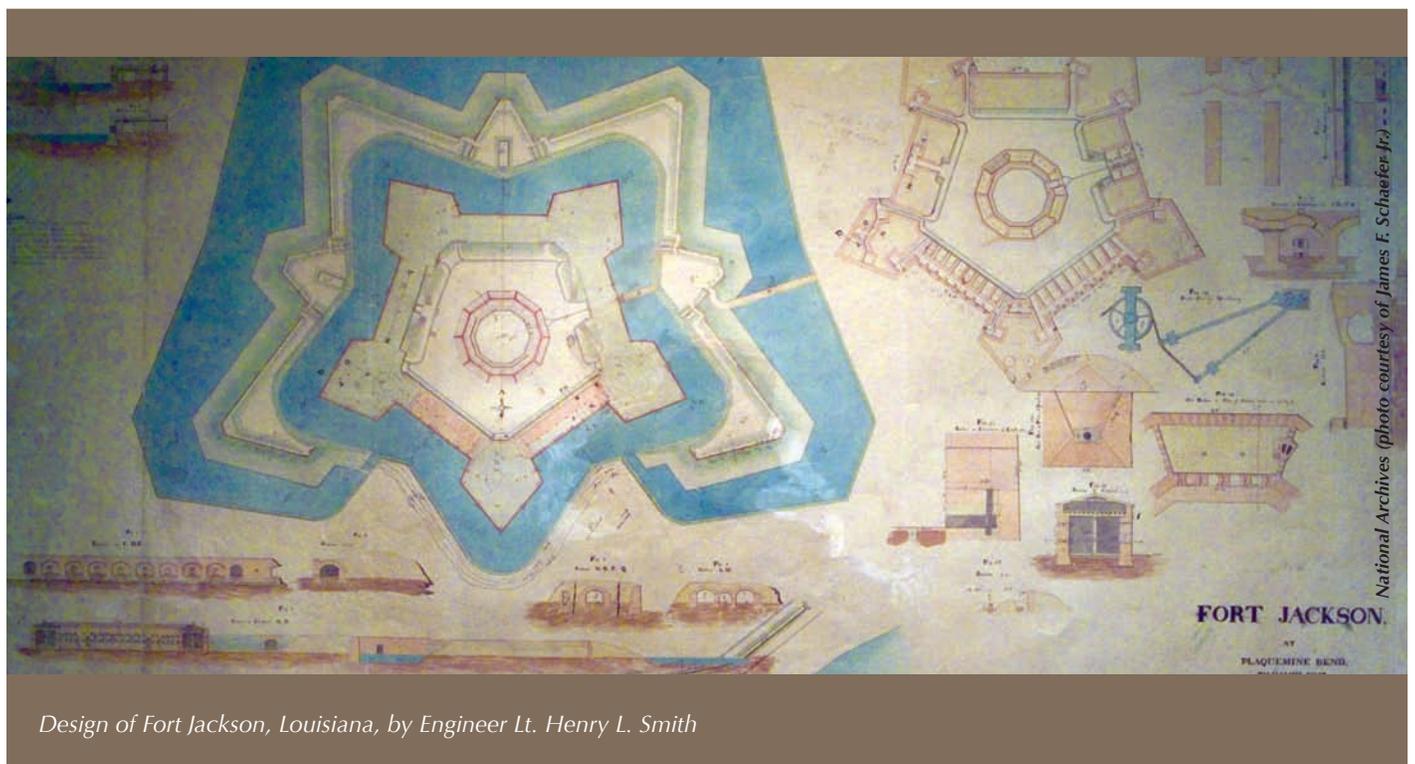
Shocked mariners demanded protection. In 1823 the Navy sent an armada into the Caribbean, and the Corps of Engineers studied harbor defenses along the Florida Keys. But Congress did not fund the coastal defense plans for the Straits of Florida until the 1840s.

In the interim the engineers fortified St. Augustine and Pensacola. Exploring the watery maze of Florida’s coastal rivers, they searched for a way to divert traffic from the murderous passage south of the keys.²¹

The engineers’ hope to improve the navigation of Florida rivers and to build a canal between them to provide a navigable passage across Florida reflected a larger mission that the government had given the Engineer Department. General Bernard and Colonel Totten surveyed the navigational status of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in 1821, and in 1824 Congress passed an act appropriating funds to improve their navigation. President Monroe gave the Engineer Department supervision of that work. In the next dozen years Congress passed a regular series of national river and harbor acts appropriating funds for the improvement of various routes for

waterborne commerce, and these led to the assignment of a growing number of Army engineer officers to supervise this important work. Engineer officers also worked on the extension of the Cumberland Road from Wheeling, Virginia, to Illinois, the most important of several federal road construction projects undertaken in the 1820s and 1830s.²²

The national economic downturn which followed the Panic of 1837 and the Army’s focus on the difficult Seminole Wars in Florida led Congress to drastically reduce funding for these transportation projects a decade and a half after their initiation. Most of the presidents who served in the 1840s and 1850s opposed federal funding of internal improvement projects on constitutional grounds, so few federal appropriations for this purpose were approved in the two decades before the Civil War. The waning of the nation’s commitment to a federal system of



Design of Fort Jackson, Louisiana, by Engineer Lt. Henry L. Smith



Fort Jefferson, Florida, by Bvt. Brig. Gen. Seth Eastman

roads, canals, and other internal improvements constructed by the Army Engineer Department was accompanied by setbacks to progress on fortification planning and construction. Bernard was called back to Paris in 1830. Destined for high positions in the new government of King Louis Philippe, Bernard returned to America briefly the following year to settle his affairs and resign, leaving the engineers with an uncertain future. Cherokee removal and the Seminole uprising sapped money from fortifications in the decade following his departure. Meanwhile the Corps of Engineers lost its mission to conduct surveys for transportation projects through the Board of Engineers for Internal Improvement. Beginning in 1831 the War Department gave responsibility for public works surveys to a newly independent Topographical Bureau headed by Maj. John J. Abert. The authority to assist corporations by loaning out transport experts, a key power that the board had exercised, also

passed in 1831 to Major Abert. In 1838 that authority was revoked.²³

The engineers' coastal defense work continued, however, because national honor and security seemed to depend on a fortified coastline. And it survived because of pressure from rivals abroad. Britain and France, still the most prominent powers on the Atlantic horizon, were turning away from laissez-faire economies and providing public subsidies for shipbuilding. Once the British launched steamer service between London and New York in 1838, foreign commercial competition grew more severe. Challenging the British beginning in the 1840s, the federal government in the next decade and a half invested some \$14 million in contracts with American postal steamers. As it did so, the government even rethought its curtailment of federal public works projects. On 30 August 1852 President Millard Fillmore signed the only substan-

tial national river and harbor appropriation bill to be adopted in that decade.²⁴

By 1860 much of the grand scheme of road, rail, and navigation projects that the Army engineers had planned for the nation had come to fruition through private investment, often aided by public subsidies. Gradually the republic had built a nationwide transportation system. It was not a federal system, as Calhoun had advocated as secretary of war, but it did unify and strengthen the nation, making America more prosperous and cosmopolitan. Port improvements and new links to the heartland bound the far-flung republic into a vigorous market economy. Spreading west and south from the northeastern seaboard after 1825, this "market revolution" transformed subsistence farmers into producers of cash crops for international markets. It consolidated manufacturing, especially in New England where less skilled factory workers were displacing craftsmen. It enabled Europe to become increasingly de-

pendent on American cotton and stimulated the mass production of garments in standardized sizes and cuts. As steamers cut the distance to Europe and cargo ships tripled in size, the nation's foreign trade increased nearly tenfold from \$186 million in 1820 to \$1.6 billion in 1858.²⁵

The influence of the Army on the great forces remaking the nation is easy to overstate. Schooled primarily in French engineering concepts at the U.S. Military Academy, Army builders were mostly wary of improvisation. Guarded and cautious, they embraced some radical concepts and rejected others depending on the source of the innovation or on the perceived threat to engineer jurisdiction and the personalities in power.²⁶

THE LEADERSHIP OF GENERAL TOTTEN

The remarkable career of Col. (later Brig. Gen.) Joseph G. Totten, who served as the Army's chief engineer from 1838 until his death in 1864, showed how access to technical data gave engineers policy power. By the end of his long career, Totten was Army science incarnate—a chemist, a Smithsonian regent, a founder of the National Academy of Sciences, a fort builder, and a war hero who was eulogized (along with geologist Edward Hitchcock and chemist Benjamin Silliman) as one of three great scientific figures of his day. Portraits show a grim crusader, stout and powerfully built. Contemporaries called him “conservative,” “inflexible,” “uncompromising,” even “old in

subordination” by the time of the Civil War. But Totten also had a genius for fortification construction, a subject on which he could be a world-class innovator. Even his detractors—and there were many—would have conceded his brilliance in that field.²⁷

Totten's fortifications—expensive and scientific, consistent with the massive tradition but also impressively innovative—were windows to a profession that shunned improvisation and cautiously experimented before embracing radical change. Big forts had always been controversial. “They are, in truth, like chained monsters,” said Commodore Matthew C. Perry. Even the great fortress at Gibraltar was said to be helpless beyond the range of its guns. In 1851 Perry joined a



Fort Adams, Rhode Island, c.1980

Naval War College Museum, Newport, R.I.

number of skeptics who said the size and expense of America's coastal defenses had swollen beyond all proportion to the declining threat of attack. Some were convinced that the railroads, if properly networked, could quickly assemble enough troops to block any invasion. Floating batteries could guard the harbors. Gunboats and ironclad steamers could patrol inlets and bays. Navy Lt. Matthew F. Maury, meanwhile, doubted that any foreign army could threaten the United States. "Imagine an army, the best equipped, it may be, the world ever saw, that should attempt to beleaguer one of our strongholds." That scenario, Maury argued, seemed increasingly unlikely. In an era of soaring confidence in the nation's military prowess, the most Americans could imagine were sneak attacks on harbors in hit-and-run shellings or raids.²⁸

But Totten insisted that the threat of a major foreign attack justified further investment in the forts that he and Bernard had so largely designed. Responding point by point in 1840 and again in 1851, Totten, no stranger to combat, envisioned Philadelphia and New York besieged by British squadrons, Pensacola captured, and American seaboard commerce raided and blockaded, with an enemy striking and burning at will the coastal centers of population. A navy, said Totten, would be "useful" but not sufficient in a war of lightning attacks. The United States would need 20 or 30 warships at every harbor—which it clearly could not afford—to provide seaborne security against a British Navy with some 189 sailing vessels and steamers, in-

cluding 38 of the world's most sophisticated ships of the line. Because the enemy would also possess the deadly advantage of surprise, the defending fleet, Totten contended, would have to be equal or superior to its attacker at every vulnerable point. Gun for gun, moreover, forts were more cost-efficient. Totten pointed to statistics that showed the average cost for warships of the smallest class was \$6,000 per gun. The largest American steamers cost ten times that amount per barrel. Forts, at \$3,000 per gun, were not only less expensive but also easier to maintain.²⁹

Totten employed a barrage of statistics to dissect other challenges and alternatives to fortifications—big guns, iron battleships, railroads, floating batteries, torpedoes, mines, fire boats—and disposed of them all with laconic aplomb. How about the new gunpowder shells that exploded on impact? Had not the advent of shell-firing artillery given battleships the advantage, making the masonry fort obsolete? Surely not, said Totten, who in 1840 and again in the 1850s constructed masonry and brick target walls at West Point to demonstrate his point scientifically. Shells broke up against the targets without even making a dent. Ironclad warships? Again Totten cited the great cost of iron plating and also a British experiment in which a heavy cannon had destroyed a wrought-iron derrick with solid shot from a distance of more than 500 yards. Railroads? Telegraphs? These innovations, Totten conceded, might help a militia defeat an invasion, but landlocked troops with field pieces

would be a feeble defense against an enemy's rifled cannons.³⁰

In this way, the chief engineer appealed to a penurious Congress and a cautious secretary of war, convincing them that continued investment in fortifications was the nation's most cost-effective means of defense. Secretary of War Charles Conrad in 1851 concluded "that neither the increase of our population nor the facilities afforded by railroads and telegraphs tend, in the least degree, to diminish the necessity of these works. On the other hand, it is admitted by all that the introduction of war steamers, which greatly facilitate the attack on all places accessible by water, renders it more necessary than ever to fortify them against such attacks." While neither Conrad nor Congress endorsed in its entirety the \$24.3 million program of new or additional construction at 135 fortification sites proposed by Totten in 1851, both approved the largest and most important of those projects.³¹

"There has been but one practice among nations as to the defence of ports and harbors, and that," said Totten, "has been a resort to fortification."³² As for America's coastal defense system, it had been "misunderstood and misrepresented," but the chief engineer was certain "there is no system superior to it on any coast, either in general adaptation to its ends, in its details of design, or in its manner of execution."³³ Indeed, now that the empire was continental, the nation needed more of the same. In 1851 Totten called for the construction of 28 forts on the Pacific coast at a total cost of

over \$15 million, and Congress soon appropriated funds to initiate the construction of modern defenses on Alcatraz Island and at Fort Point at the entrance to San Francisco Bay. The Crimean War, which demonstrated that Britain and France had the capacity to send large forces to distant shores, strengthened congressional support for fortification construction. Between 1854 and 1861 the nation spent an unprecedented \$14.9 million on these coastal defense projects.³⁴

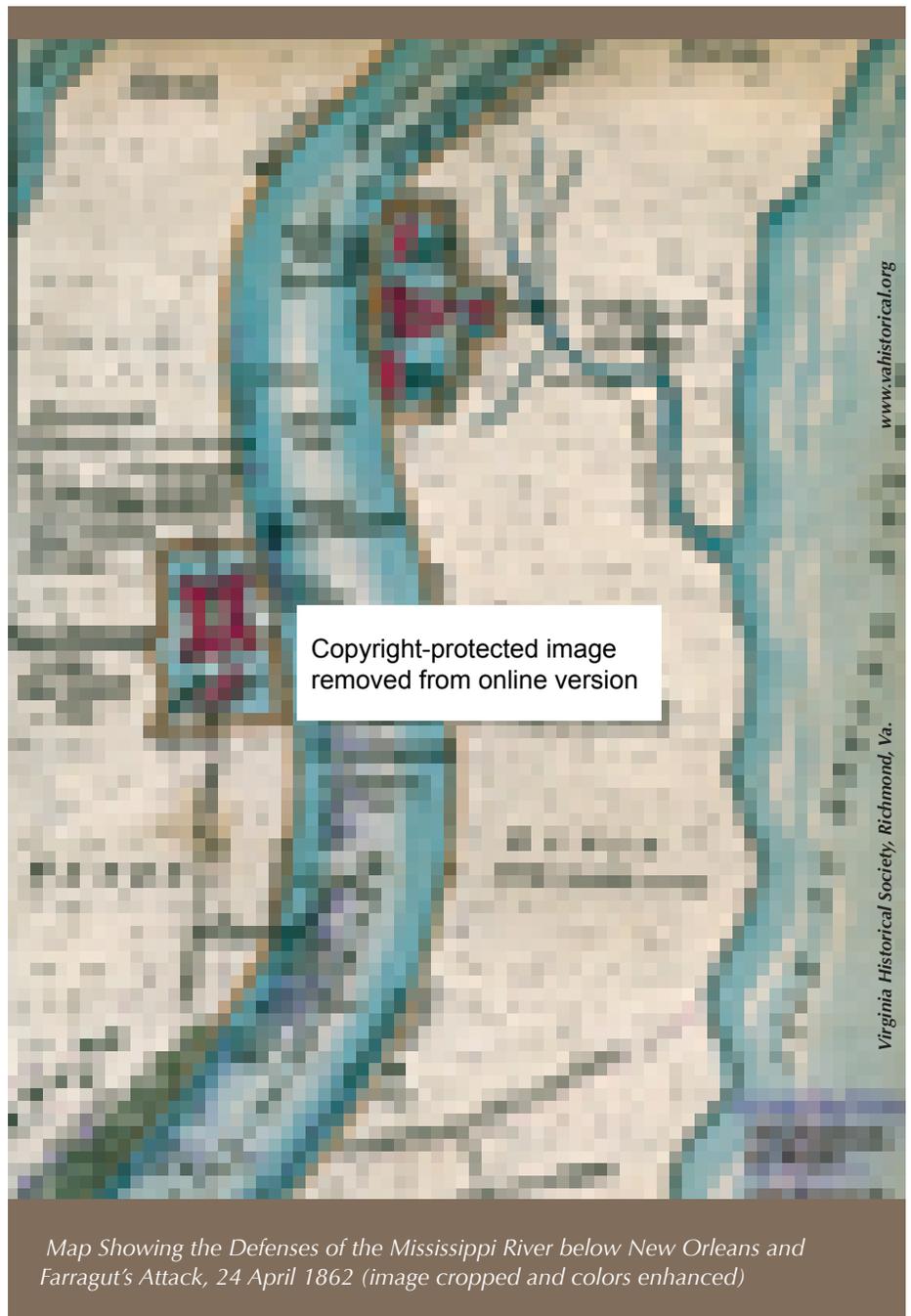
CHALLENGES TO THE FORTIFICATION PROGRAM

During the Civil War the coastal defenses that were challenged recorded somewhat disappointing results. In light of the fact that Commodore (later Admiral) David Farragut's naval attack on New Orleans ran the gauntlet of Forts St. Philip and Jackson with little loss, that the same naval leader's fleet stormed past Forts Gaines and Morgan at the entrance to Mobile Harbor, that Forts Monroe and Calhoun were helpless to stop a destructive naval attack by a Confederate ironclad steamer descending from Richmond, and that the thick masonry walls at Forts Sumter and Pulaski were shattered by artillery fire, it is tempting to write off the fortifications developed by General Bernard and his American associates as monuments to obsolescence by the 1850s. Robert S. Browning's *Two If by Sea*, the best and most detailed study, said Totten was trapped by his long exposure to a static artillery threat and thus oblivious to the rapid mid-century improvements in that arm. In *Fortress America*

historian David A. Clary judged the Engineer Department a prisoner of its commitment to coastal fortifications, unfazed by contrary evidence.³⁵

The study of professional culture offers another perspective. When Europeans found imaginative ways to defend the coastline—towers, casemates, shell explosives, shoal batteries, iron wharves, and iron-plating—the Engineer Department was

quick to respond. But shop-born Yankee invention baffled the organization. In 1844 the West Pointers had scoffed at Samuel Colt's electrically fired "torpedo" mine—not only because the secretive Colt had refused government testing but more specifically because "military experience," as Totten saw it, "has enacted as an inflexible law that no device, however plausible, shall be admitted to confidence



Map Showing the Defenses of the Mississippi River below New Orleans and Farragut's Attack, 24 April 1862 (image cropped and colors enhanced)

as a military resource, except as it shall make its way by success in actual war.”³⁶ It was not that the Army was against underwater explosives per se. Engineers had and would use them with some success on dangerous rocks in the Ohio River and New York Harbor, but Totten was not one to gamble on unscientific invention, and he resented civilian attempts to second-guess the decisions of Army engineers.

On the eve of the Civil War, Secretary of War John B. Floyd of Virginia, a future Confederate, used the climate of scientific progress to tar the now technically conservative and predominantly northern officers of the Corps of Engineers. In 1859 he sent to Congress a critical memoir by 1st Lt. James St. Clair Morton, a dissident engineer. Morton seemed to compare the military conservatism of some of his fellow West Pointers to that of the medieval knights who had resisted the advent of firearms. He observed that the gun, much like the torpedo, had once been deprecated as “an unmanly, uncivilized, unchivalrous ... means of destruction.” “Professional men,” Morton concluded, “are rarely the ones to invent, or the first to adopt or patronize an invention. The nature of their training disinclines them to novelty and change.”³⁷

In truth the builders wanted to build, and there was nothing inherently backward about their professionalism. Indeed their ability to select the most useful features from competing European traditions of military architecture inspired forts praised in their day for radical breaks with

convention—for their batteries bristling from castlelike towers that dominated the coastline, their smoke ventilation and water filtration systems, their splinter-resistant walls of rough-cut rubble and concrete, and their American-style artillery chambers that minimized a gunner’s exposure to fire.

Tower batteries, for example, were gun platforms and emplacements that defied the French tradition of the low-profile fort. Adapted from the Italian Martello tower and the writings and drawings of Montalembert, towers in America were built on Totten’s assumption that land batteries, judiciously placed, would always be stronger than navies but that forts should still be taller and hold more concentrated ordnance than ships to more effectively keep an enemy from bombarding the shore. Six tower bastions ringed hexagonal Fort Jefferson, Florida, on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas, a stronghold designed for 450 guns. The engineers also erected a turretlike Martello tower at Tybee Island, Georgia. Howitzers on square towers covered the flanks of Fort Taylor, Totten’s great work on Key West.³⁸

Still historians have mostly pictured the 1840s and 1850s as decades of dashed defensive expectations. Recounting the momentous events that brought on the secession crisis, the historical literature paints the Army engineers as good soldiers in bad situations and as men of broad cultivation mired in parochial times. That was how historian Forest G. Hill saw the antebellum Corps of Engineers in *Roads, Rails, & Waterways*, a history of Army transportation

projects. Waterway programs, said Hill, were “brought to a standstill” when President Franklin Pierce vetoed an omnibus river and harbor bill in 1854. Thereafter, the Engineer Department was “buffeted about” by tight-fisted politicians. Builders without a mandate and planners unable to plan, the Army engineers, Hill continued, “were not able to make improvements in an economical way or to develop systematic procedures.”³⁹ Engineers could only count shipwrecks, beg money for unfinished projects, and wait for the return of the activist government that had made good use of the Army during the era of the general surveys.

Fortification engineering survived skeptical administrations and inconsistent Congresses. By 1861 some four-dozen formidable masonry fortifications and smaller defensive works protected the key coastal ports and maritime approaches of the United States. Congress had by then appropriated some \$31 million for the construction of these works, apportioning a total of \$4.5 million to Forts Monroe and Calhoun at Hampton Roads and more than \$1 million each to Fort Warren, Fort Adams, Fort Delaware, Fort Sumter, Fort Taylor, Fort Jefferson, Fort Morgan, and Fort Point. Reflecting the political equilibrium between North and South in the antebellum republic, some 53 percent of the fortification funding had been directed to defenses in the future Confederacy.⁴⁰

The ability of the Engineer Department to promote frontier defense and maritime improvement through science, while continuing to develop and articulate a vision

of national modernization, had an impact that would long outlive the viability of its forts or the sufficiency of its antebellum harbor improvements. Army engineers would continue to refine the government's zeal for public improvement into tangible proposals and goals. When the new Republican Party in 1856 rallied behind the presidential candidacy of former Lt. Col. John C. Frémont, who had served for eight years as an Army topographical engineer, federal river and harbor improvements became a plank in the party's platform. Again in 1860 the party of Lincoln, probusiness and promilitary, linked commerce to patriotism and industry to government with the promise of engineering assistance for railroads across the West.⁴¹ Republicans called for the creation of the mercantile nation that the Army engineers who had built the fortifications projected by Bernard and Totten had advocated all along.

When raw federal recruits fled in panic during the first battle at Bull Run in July 1861, the chaos seemed to confirm what the Army engineers had long suspected: The Union, like modern warfare, was dependent on system and order. Discipline, regulation, science, and professionalism—these, said the engineers, were the foundations of a victorious army, the bedrock of a rational state. Although forts planned in an earlier era were less effective during the Civil War than their designers had hoped, and historians have made much of that fact, the engineers' vision of progress through science and regimentation remained central to the industrial warfare that enabled the Union to achieve victory in

war and that would underlay the nation's subsequent growth.⁴²



THE AUTHOR

Dr. Todd Shallat is a professor of history and director of public history at Boise State University, where he has taught since 1985. His book *Structures in the Stream: Water, Science, and the Rise of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (Austin, 1994) won the Society for History in the Federal Government's Henry Adams Prize for the best book on an aspect of the history of the federal government published in 1994. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching named him Idaho Professor of the Year in 2002. This essay is based on research that was sponsored by the Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

NOTES

1. Anne Blanchard, *Les ingénieurs du roy de Louis XIV à Louis XVI: Étude du corps des fortifications* (Montpellier, France, 1979); idem, *Dictionnaire des ingénieurs militaires, 1691–1791* (Montpellier, France, 1981); Todd Shallat, *Structures in the Stream: Water, Science, and the Rise of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (Austin, 1994), pp. 14–23; Elizabeth S. Kite, *Brigadier-General Louis Lebégue Duportail, Commandant of Engineers in the Continental Army, 1777–1783* (Baltimore, 1933); Paul K. Walker, *Engineers of Independence: A Documentary History of the Army Engineers in the American Revolution, 1775–1783* (Washington, D.C., 1981), pp. 11–22, 177–200; Marcel R. Reinhard, *Le Grand Car-*

not: Lazare Carnot, 1753–1823 (Paris, 1994); Reed G. Geiger, *Planning the French Canals: Bureaucracy, Politics, and Enterprise under the Restoration* (Newark, Del., 1994).

2. Shallat, *Structures in the Stream*, pp. 23–31.

3. Ibid., pp. 2–3, 23; Robert S. Browning, *Two If by Sea: The Development of American Coastal Defense Policy* (Westport, Conn., 1983), pp. 60–63; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore, 1966), pp. 90–102.

4. *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 3: 742; William H. Carter, “Bernard,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 51 (September–October 1912): 147–55; Joseph H. Harrison Jr., “Simon Bernard, the American System, and the Ghost of the French Alliance,” in John Boles, ed., *America: The Middle Period; Essays in Honor of Bernard Mayo* (Charlottesville, Va., 1973), pp. 145–67. See also Thor Borresen, “Simon Bernard and America's Coastal Forts,” *The Regional Review* 2 (February 1939): 3–9.

5. Browning, *Two If by Sea*, pp. 26–35 (quotation, p. 35); *American State Papers*, Class 5, *Military Affairs*, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1832–61), 2: 308, 310. The members of the Board of Engineers who signed the 1821 report were General Bernard; Navy Capt. Jesse Duncan Elliott, who had commanded vessels in the capture of York (now Toronto), Upper Canada, and in the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813; and Bvt. Lt. Col. Joseph G. Totten, an Army engineer officer who had graduated from the Military Academy in 1805.

6. Simon Bernard, William Tell Poussin, and William Howard, “Report of the Board of Internal Improvement on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” 23 Oct 1826, in *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Report*

from the Secretary of War with That of the Board of Engineers for Internal Improvement, Concerning the Proposed Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, H. Exec. Doc. 10, 19th Cong., 2d sess., 1826, p. 66.

7. Simon Bernard and Joseph G. Totten, Rpt to Bvt. Maj. Gen. Alexander Macomb on “the proposed Canal through the mining districts of New Jersey,” 5 Oct 1823, p. 3, attached to Report of the Commissioners Appointed by the Legislature of the State of New Jersey for the Purpose of Exploring the Route of a Canal to Unite the River Delaware, near Easton, with the Passaic, near Newark, with Accompanying Documents (Morristown, 1823).

8. Richard P. Weinert, Jr., and Robert Arthur, *Defender of the Chesapeake: The Story of Fort Monroe*, 2d ed. (Annapolis, 1978), pp. vi (quoted words of Brig. Gen. Robert E. Callan), 40–45; David A. Clary, *Fortress America: The Corps of Engineers, Hampton Roads, and United States Coastal Defense* (Charlottesville, Va., 1990), pp. 55–60.

9. Clary, *Fortress America*, pp. 38–40 (first quotation, p. 40); Weinert and Arthur, *Defender of the Chesapeake*, pp. 24–30; *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, 3: 306, 309 (second quotation), 310.

10. John Quincy Adams, second annual message to Congress, 1826, quoted in Walter Millis, ed., *American Military Thought* (Indianapolis, 1966), p. 114 (quotation); Browning, *Two If by Sea*, pp. 33–42. The 1826 report is printed in *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, 3: 283–301. It was signed only by Bernard and Totten.

11. Clary, *Fortress America*, p. 56; Weinert and Arthur, *Defender of the Chesapeake*, pp. 31–34; Willard B. Robinson, *American Forts: Architectural Form and Function* (Urbana, Ill., 1977), pp. 99–101.

12. Weinert and Arthur, *Defender of the Chesapeake*, pp. 27–28, 30, 35–36. See also Emmanuel Raymond Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications of the United States: An*

Introductory History (Annapolis, Md., 1970), p. 44. Fort Calhoun, named for Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, was renamed Fort Wool in 1862 in honor of Maj. Gen. John E. Wool, who had gained distinction at the Battle of Buena Vista in the Mexican War and, as commander of the Department of the East in 1861, had dispatched the reinforcements to Fort Monroe that enabled Union forces to retain that stronghold.

13. Clary, *Fortress America*, p. 48. Vandeventer, an 1809 Military Academy graduate, had served as General Swift’s aide-de-camp in 1816 before becoming Calhoun’s chief clerk. See George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy*, 3d ed., 9 vols. (Boston, 1891–1950), 1: 91.

14. Millis, *American Military Thought*, p. 112 (quotation); Leland R. Johnson, *The Falls City Engineers: A History of the Louisville District, Corps of Engineers, United States Army* (Louisville, 1974), pp. 50–54. President Adams remitted the sentence of the court-martial on the ground that Major Babcock’s offenses derived from this fortification engineer’s lack of experience with riverine navigation. Babcock had supervised early work at Fort Delaware in Delaware.

15. Clary, *Fortress America*, p. 49. For Chase’s contracting problems, see James C. Coleman, *Fort McRee: “A Castle Built on Sand”* (Pensacola, Fla., 1988), pp. 26, 32. For the number of concurrent projects during Adams’s time, see, for example, Chief Engineer Macomb’s annual report, 20 Nov 1827, printed in *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, 3: 628–32.

16. *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, 6: 376–96; Browning, *Two If by Sea*, pp. 42, 64–73; Robinson, *American Forts*, pp. 86–123.

17. Browning, *Two If by Sea*, pp. 72–73; Rogers W. Young, “The Construction of Fort Pulaski,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 20

(March 1936): 41–51; Henry E. Barber and Allen R. Gann, *A History of the Savannah District, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers* (Savannah, Ga., 1989), 48–51; Albert E. Cowdrey, *Land’s End: A History of the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (N.p., 1977), pp. 11–12; Robert B. Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts* (New York, 1988), pp. 339–43, 347, 352–53; Marion J. Klawonn, *Cradle of the Corps: A History of the New York District, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1775–1975* (New York, 1977), pp. 48–51.

18. Browning, *Two If by Sea*, pp. 17–19, 72; Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications*, p. 49; Robinson, *American Forts*, pp. 99–103 (quotation, p. 99).

19. Browning, *Two If by Sea*, p. 37.

20. Robert Greenhalgh Albion and Jennie Barnes Pope, *Sea Lanes in Wartime: The American Experience, 1775–1942* (New York, 1942), pp. 139–47 (quotation, p. 144).

21. *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, 4: 13; *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 4: 139–40, 427; D. Gregory Jeane, *A History of the Mobile District, Corps of Engineers, 1815–1985* (N.p., 2002), pp. 19–28.

22. Forest G. Hill, *Roads, Rails & Waterways: The Army Engineers and Early Transportation* (Norman, Okla., 1957), pp. 25–26, 155–80, 220–21; *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, 3: 139, 142, 361–62; 4: 19–20, 168, 170–71, 175–76, 601, 745; 5: 47–49, 51–52, 188–91, 393, 415–18, 662, 699–703; 6: 855–57, 860–61, 896–98; 7: 638–40, 699–709.

23. Hill, *Roads, Rails & Waterways*, pp. 181–98; Raymond H. Pulley, “Andrew Jackson and Federal Support of Internal Improvements: A Reappraisal,” *Essays in History* 9 (1963–64): 48–59; Shallat, *Structures in the Stream*, pp. 127–40; Garry D. Ryan, “War Department Topographical Bureau, 1831–1863:

An Administrative History,” (Ph.D. diss., American University, 1968), pp. 80–85.

24. John G. B. Hutchins, *The American Maritime Industries and Public Policy, 1789–1914: An Economic History* (New York, 1941), p. 325–68; *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 10: 56–61.

25. See, for example, Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York, 1991); K. Jack Bauer, *A Maritime History of the United States: The Role of America’s Seas and Waterways* (Columbia, S.C., 1988), pp. 71–202.

26. Hill, *Roads, Rails & Waterways*, pp. 18–21, 199–210; Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, pp. 87–105.

27. George W. Cullum, *Campaigns of the War of 1812–15 against Great Britain Sketched and Criticised; with Brief Biographies of the American Engineers* (New York, 1879), pp. 79–88 (quoted word, p. 87); Russell F. Weigley, *Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M. C. Meigs* (New York, 1959), p. 105 (quoted phrase). For further analysis of Totten as conservative, see also Philip Shiman, “Engineering Sherman’s March: Army Engineers and the Management of Modern War, 1862–1865” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1991), pp. 80–86. For further analysis of Totten as an innovator and a genius, see John G. Barnard, “Eulogy on the Late Joseph G. Totten,” *Historical Papers Relating to the Corps of Engineers*, Engineer School Occasional Papers, no. 16 (Washington Barracks, D.C., 1904): pp. 112–63, esp. pp. 132, 148. The position of chief engineer carried the rank of colonel until 1863, when it was upgraded to brigadier general. Totten was brevetted a brigadier general in 1847 and a major general on 21 April 1864, the day before he died.

28. John G. Barnard, *The Dangers and Defences of New York* (New

York, 1859), pp. 11–19 (quotations, pp. 12–13); *Letter from the Secretary of War in Reference to Fortifications*, H. Exec. Doc 5, 32d Cong., 1st sess., 1851, pp. 137, 163–64.

29. Joseph G. Totten, *Report of General J. G. Totten, Chief Engineer, on the Subject of National Defences* (Washington, D. C., 1851), p. 17 (quoted word); Mary M. Thomas, “When Is a Fort Not a Fort? Fortifications as Engineering Research Laboratories in Antebellum America” (Paper presented at meeting of the Society for the History of Technology, 1994).

30. Totten, *Report on National Defences*; see also James P. Baxter, *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship* (New York, 1968), pp. 30, 48–63, 92–103.

31. *Letter in Reference to Fortifications*, H. Exec. Doc. 5, 32d Cong., 1st sess., 1851, p. 8.

32. Barnard, “Eulogy on the Late Joseph G. Totten,” *Historical Papers*, p. 127.

33. Browning, *Two If by Sea*, pp. 52–53; *Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Thirty-third Congress*, Sen. Exec. Doc. 1, pt. 2, 33d Cong., 2d sess., 1854, pp. 92, 96 (quotations).

34. Browning, *Two If by Sea*, p. 42; *Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Thirty-third Congress*, H. Exec. Doc. 1, 33d Cong., 1st sess., 1853, pp. 173–74; Clary, *Fortress America*, pp. 46–47.

35. Browning, *Two If by Sea*, p. 106; Clary, *Fortress America*, pp. 98–107.

36. Browning, *Two If by Sea*, p. 99.

37. James St. Clair Morton, *Memoir on American Fortifications Submitted to the Hon. John B. Floyd, Secretary of War* (Washington, D.C., 1859), p. 48, reprinted in *Message from the President of the United*

States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Thirty-Sixth Congress, S. Exec. Doc. 2, 36th Cong., 1st sess., 1859, 2: 496.

38. Willard E. Robinson, “North American Martello Towers,” *Society of Architectural Historian’s Journal* 33 (May 1974): 158–64; Henry W. Halleck, *Elements of Military Art and Science* (1846, reprint, Westport, Conn., 1971), pp. 164–65; Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications*, pp. 40, 42.

39. Hill, *Roads, Rails & Waterways*, pp. 196–97.

40. Congress made no appropriations for fortifications in 1851 or 1852. See *Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Thirty-second Congress*, Sen. Exec. Doc. 1, 32d Cong., 2d sess., 1852, 2: 147. In December 1858 Secretary of War Floyd submitted an Engineer Bureau request for under \$500,000 for fortifications for the fiscal year ending 30 June 1860, but in December 1859 he requested \$1.9 million to cover fort construction in the following fiscal year. For cumulative fortification expenses, see *Amount Expended on Permanent Forts and Batteries*, H. Ex. Doc. 32, 43d Congress, 1st sess., 1874.

41. Thomas D. Odle, “The Commercial Interests of the Great Lakes and the Campaign Issues of 1860,” *Michigan History* 40 (March 1956): 1–23.

42. For military professionalism and the meaning of Bull Run, see Marcus Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America, 1775–1865* (New York, 1968), pp. 3–27. For parallel analyses in the political realm, see Robert Kelley, *The Cultural Pattern in American Politics: The First Century* (New York, 1979), pp. 231–32.



Sergeant York wearing the Medal of Honor, May 1919

CONTINUING THE SEARCH FOR

YORK



By Taylor V. Beattie

Murfreesboro, Tennessee, March 15, 2006

Precise Locale of WW I Hero Alvin York's One-Man Battle Discovered

The [research] team found “dropped ammo and a German machine-gun position marked by cartridges on the ground” as well as German grenades, all of which “sits very closely with what was reported.”¹

—Report from Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), quoting Thomas Nolan, Director, R. O. Fullerton Laboratory for Spatial Technology, MTSU

New York, New York, June 20, 2006

Revisiting Sgt. York and a Time When Heroes Stood Tall

“They’re [Tennessee researchers] not even in the right valley.”²

—Lt. Col. Douglas Mastriano

Stuttgart, Germany, October 21, 2006

Army officer says site of Sgt. York's WW I exploits has been found

“How I see it unfolding is the (other) team will look at our finds, and they’ll be convinced and compelled. . . . It’s undeniable.”³

—Lt. Col. Douglas Mastriano

Paris, France, October 26, 2006

France ‘York Spot’ May Have Been Located

“We don’t have enough evidence to reach any definite conclusion. . . . I don’t see how anyone else could at this point.”⁴

—Thomas Nolan, Director, R. O. Fullerton Laboratory for Spatial Technology, MTSU

Murfreesboro, December 8, 2006

Tennessee Researchers Utilize Scientific Detection, Historic Evidence To Uncover Sgt. York's World War I Battle Site

A research team led by geographer Tom Nolan, a member of the geosciences faculty at Middle Tennessee State University, and Michael Birdwell, an Alvin York scholar and member of Tennessee Tech[nological] University’s history faculty, recently uncovered more than 1,400 artifacts in Châtel-Chéhéry, France, at the site that is believed to be the precise location where Sgt. York earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.⁵

Cookeville, Tennessee, December 15, 2006

Research team from TTU, MTSU discover conclusive evidence of Sgt. York site in France

“The icing on the cake is that collar disk [from Company G, 328th Infantry, York’s unit]. . . . This makes it very clear that we are in the right location.”⁶

—Michael Birdwell, Associate Professor, Department of History, Tennessee Technological University

CBNNews.com, March 25, 2007

Army Officer: Sgt. York Battle Site Located

[Lt. Col. Douglas] Mastriano would like to see the construction of a Sergeant York Historic Trail in the Argonne Forest. He has even mapped out the trail’s route, so visitors could walk in the footsteps of York. He foresees historical markers placed at the appropriate locations marking highlights from the battle.⁷



Even years since *Army History* published the article “In Search of York: Man, Myth & Legend,”⁸ which I wrote with Army Reserve Maj. (now Lt. Col.) Ronald Bowman, the search for the location of Alvin C. York’s famous firefight continues, as evidenced by the selected news headlines and excerpts in the adjoining column. I want to provide now an account of the controversy that has emerged between two competing groups, an explanation for their divergent perspectives, and my own evaluation of the developing evidence.

THE CONTROVERSY

A lively debate has developed over the exact location of Sgt. Alvin York’s legendary firefight, as two separate research teams have entered the diminutive ravine west of the ancient village of Châtel-Chéhéry, France, carrying out their separate quests for York’s story. Each team walked into the ravine via the small farming road that separates Castle and Parrot Hills.⁹ (Castle Hill is also known as Hill 223.) The narrow road is well worn, having been used for centuries by the villagers to access agricultural fields or to hunt in the Argonne Forest that spills over into the ravine further west. These rival teams, each seeking answers to the mystery associated with



Photo by Jim Deppen

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Nolan, left, and Birdwell, second from right, gather with team members and French officials near the site where the team found a Company G, 328th Infantry, collar disk in November 2006. Châtel-Chéhéry Mayor Roland Desteney, at right, holds the disk.



Photo by Kory O'Keefe

Copyright-protected image removed from online version

Mastriano seeking evidence in the area where his group found four .45-caliber slugs and twenty-one .45-caliber cartridges, October 2006

York's actions on 8 October 1918, entered the ravine at the same point and then migrated to opposite sides of the ravine, giving rise to the argument.

To be sure, after multiple trips to the area prior to June 1999, Ron Bowman and I were convinced that we had narrowed the site down to about a 20-meter swatch of the Argonne Forest. Unlike the two teams active today, we did not employ metal detectors in our search for the site. The use of metal detectors on the historic battlefields of France is strictly regulated and could result in the impoundment of your vehicle, a risk that Ron and I were not prepared to assume. In the end, we could not claim that we had uncovered the exact location of York's actions. However, we were very sure that any soldier occupying our 20-meter area on the morning of 8 October 1918 would have

been within the effective range of then-Corporal York's 1911 .45-caliber automatic Colt pistol or the German machine guns raking the forest floor. Be that as it may, the location of York's feat is now the center of a lively dispute.

In March 2006 the Sergeant York Project, an interdisciplinary team of researchers under the leadership of Middle Tennessee State University geographer Thomas Nolan and Tennessee Technological University historian Michael Birdwell, first announced the discovery of the site of the York firefight. Following a trip to York's ravine the team had just completed, Nolan announced via press release that it had "used geographic information systems (GIS), GPS (global positioning systems), and historic maps and primary documents to uncover the actual location of York's engagement."¹⁰ The archaeological results of their

trip, consisting of a mixed batch of U.S., German, and French shell casings including some U.S. .30/06 cartridges the team believed had been fired by York, were listed on their Sergeant York Project Web site.¹¹

Seven months later, in October 2006, a wholly different outfit—the Sergeant York Discovery Expedition—announced a more impressive discovery related to the exact location of the York firefight. Led by Lt. Col. Douglas Mastriano, an Army intelligence officer then assigned to the NATO staff in Europe, the York Discovery Expedition includes Mastriano family members, other military officers, veterans, and battlefield archaeologists. This research team excavated four .45-caliber slugs and twenty-one .45-caliber shell casings it believed came from the Colt pistol York used to engage and halt a six-man German bayonet

charge. The site referenced was approximately 600 meters north and slightly east of the area reported by Nolan.

Within weeks of the Mastriano group's discovery of York's expended cartridges, the Nolan-Birdwell team returned to the United States from a ten-day expedition to York's ravine. The purpose of this expedition was to validate the group's earlier claim with additional archaeological evidence. And the team did just that. Nolan and Birdwell returned to Tennessee with 1,400 artifacts collected in and around what they believe to be the location of York's firefight (*Map 1*). The most exciting artifact was a nickel-size collar disk (uniform insignia) bearing the number 328 (York's infantry regiment) and the letter G (York's company). Nolan and Birdwell surmised that the collar disk came from one of the men in York's patrol who had been killed or wounded in the firefight.

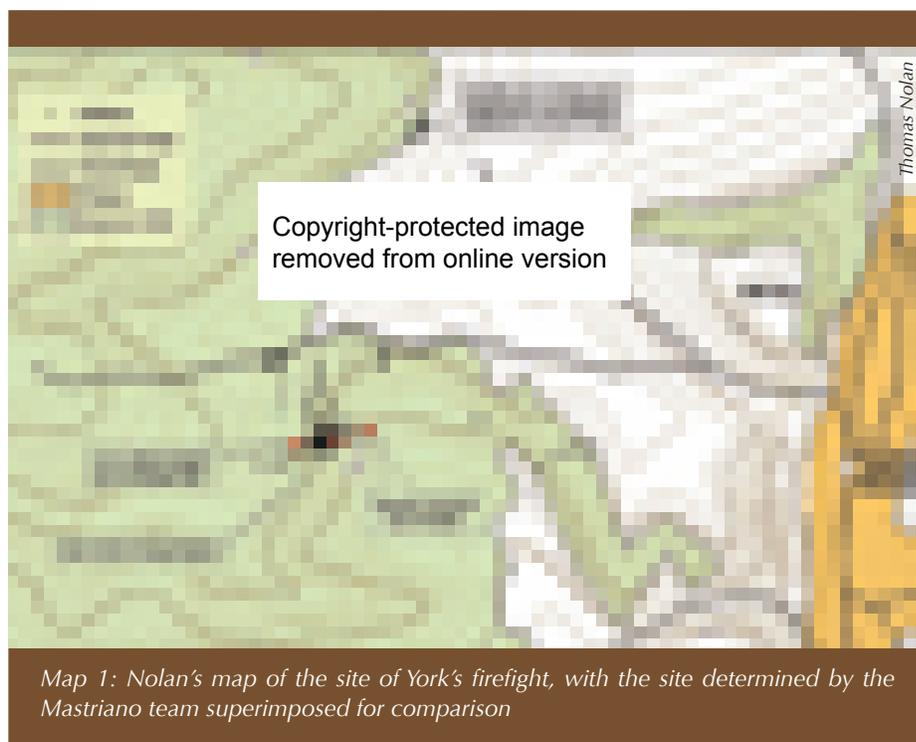
CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES

So how did two competent, disciplined, and focused research teams end up on opposite sides of the ravine, each supported by compelling archaeological evidence? The reason rests with the preliminary research conducted by the respective teams prior to entering the ravine. For geographical reasons that will become apparent, each team focused the bulk of its archival research on one side of the blood argument that raged between the two embattled hills in October 1918. Based on the interpretation of the opposing views, the Mastriano expedition

and the Nolan-Birdwell project ended up on opposite sides of the ravine and the debate. And this is where geography comes into play. It is important to understand that the Nolan-Birdwell project is based in the United States, specifically Tennessee, York's home state, while the Mastriano expedition is based in Europe. As a result, the former has better access to archives holding U.S. military records and Alvin York's personal papers, while the latter has better access to German military archives and York's ravine in France.

The U.S.-based Nolan-Birdwell project conducted the preponderance of its historical research at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. During this research Nolan discovered a 1929 exchange of letters between reserve Col. G. Edward Buxton, who as a major had been York's battalion commander, and Capt. Henry O. Swindler of the Army War College. Evidently, some

eleven years following the firefight in the ravine, Captain Swindler had been tasked to help stage a reenactment of the famous event for a military exposition and carnival held at the U.S. Army War College in Washington, D.C., in October 1929 to benefit the Army Relief Society. None of those involved in the firefight (including York) could identify the exact spot where the events had occurred. Swindler contacted Colonel Buxton, as he had returned to the ravine in February 1919 with York and Brig. Gen. Julian R. Lindsey, York's brigade commander, among others, to retrace York's steps and determine whether York's actions merited the award of the Medal of Honor. Included in the correspondence between Swindler and Buxton was a French map on which Buxton had drawn the route of the patrol and the site of the firefight. Buxton's annotations led the Nolan-Birdwell team to focus on the corresponding section of the ravine.



Some 600 meters to the north of the position identified by the Nolan-Birdwell project, the Mastriano expedition planted its stake in the York spot based on detailed research related to the German side of the story. In our research Ron Bowman and I had been aware of the testimonies of German officers and men about the firefight with Sergeant York that had been collected in 1929 by the *Reichsarchiv* staff in Potsdam, Germany, but that was the extent of our research into the German side.¹² The Mastriano expedition uncovered exhaustive documentation of the disposition of the German forces in the ravine on the morning of 8 October 1918.

The following is an excerpt from the Mastriano expedition report:

York took prisoners from the following four German units:

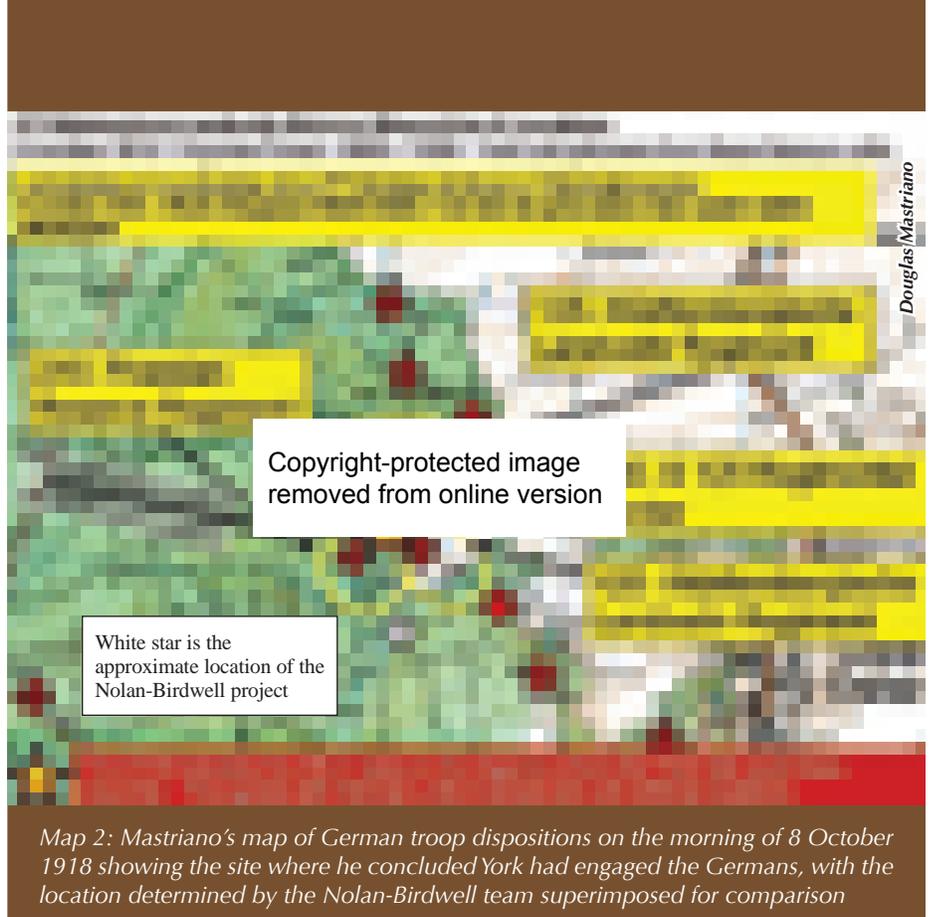
120. Württembergische Landwehr Regiment, 2. Württembergische Landwehr Division

125. Württembergische Landwehr Regiment, 2. Württembergische Landwehr Division

210. Prussian Reserve Regiment, 45th Prussian Reserve Division.

7. Bayern Mineur Kompanie

The location where York earned the Medal of Honor must be in an area that prisoners can be taken from each of the above units. In particular, the specific location must be along the 120th and 125th regimental borders. It was here that the 120th's [1st Battalion commander, First Lt.] Vollmer received the 210th Prussian soldiers and where he



Map 2: Mastriano's map of German troop dispositions on the morning of 8 October 1918 showing the site where he concluded York had engaged the Germans, with the location determined by the Nolan-Birdwell team superimposed for comparison

and the 210th were captured. It was also here that the 125th's flanking machine guns wheeled about to engage the 17 Americans.

The German archives reveal that between 1914 and 1918, there is only one location in the entire Argonne where these units served together.¹³

So given the disposition of German forces on the morning of 8 October 1918, the Mastriano expedition was convinced that there was only one location in the ravine where the firefight could have occurred. Subsequently, the team focused its search efforts on that location (*Map 2*). Without question, the Mastriano expedition had a decided advantage, as its relative proximity to Châtel-Chéhéry permitted frequent trips to the ravine to conduct on-the-ground research.

EVALUATION

It is clear that both research teams uncovered compelling military artifacts that appear to support the respective locations. How could that happen? Ron Bowman and I have been all over that ravine (*sans* metal detector), and the bottom line is this. You can pick a spot anywhere within that patch of the Argonne Forest and make a case for York's presence based solely on the military artifacts scattered about. A large, fairly desperate battle took place in that ravine throughout the day on 8 October 1918. The Germans were caught off guard by an American attack into their flank, forcing them to reposition their defenses on the fly. Subsequently, thousands of rounds were expelled, and equipment was dropped in the confusion. There are military artifacts strewn throughout

the ravine. Some lay where they fell eighty-eight years ago; others have been displaced by forestation, agriculture, and relic hunters that have been combing the area for years. The key to military archaeology lies in the analysis of the relative placement of the artifacts at the site and their association with events that are believed to have occurred there. Disparate odds and ends of military gear and ordinance that can be associated with a particular unit or action are artifacts and, once analyzed in context, can become potential pieces of the puzzle. Those bits and pieces that cannot be associated to the York story constitute little more than battlefield relics.

As for the specific artifacts found in the two locations, the 328th's Company G collar disk discovered by the Nolan-Birdwell project is an intriguing find, but is it conclusive? Mastriano would mitigate the same with his contention that the 120th *Würt-*



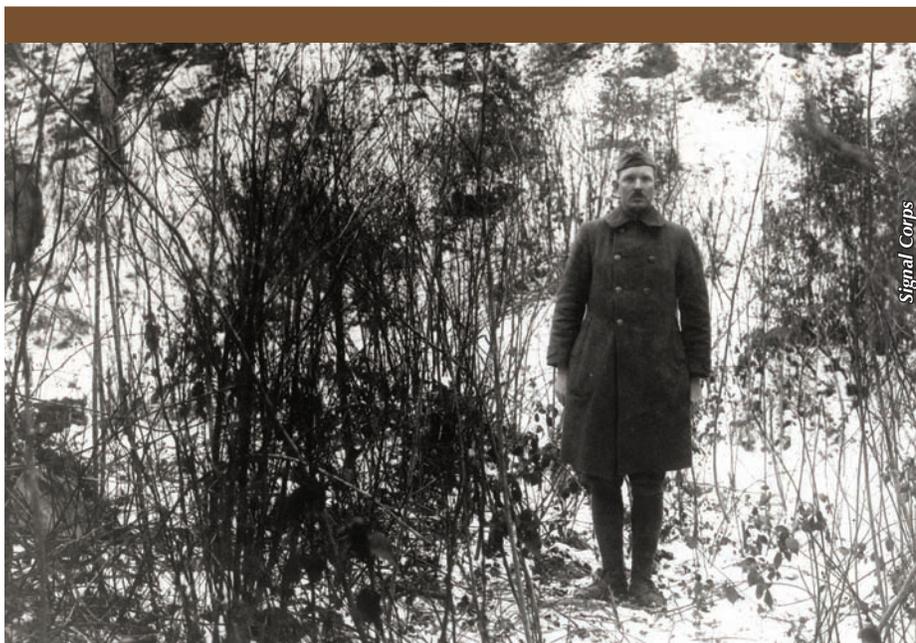
Graves of four U.S. soldiers killed during the firefight that brought renown to York, February 1919

tembergische Landwehr Regiment records indicate that the battle in the area associated with Nolan's finds occurred around 1400 on 8 October. This battle was joined as the German right flank fell back under the orders of cavalry Capt. Karl von Sick. In support of the withdrawal, the German division commander, *General der Artillerie* Anton Franke, ordered his cav-

alry squadron to fill the gap. As the two battalions broke contact, the German covering forces employed reverse slope defense on the ridgelines, including the area where the Nolan-Birdwell project recovered the G collar device.¹⁴ This raises a significant question: Was Company G, 328th Infantry, involved in this battle?

And what about the .45-caliber bullets and cartridges found in both sites? The 1911 .45 Colt pistol was a popular weapon; it was semi-automatic and was a very useful weapon in close quarters. Consequently, those who could get their hands on one would have used it that day, spewing slugs and shell casings throughout the ravine wherever Germans and Americans came in contact. Again, the key here is to associate the type and placement of the artifacts with both American and German historical accounts.

So which research team is in the correct location in York's ravine and therefore on the right side of the argument? The Mastriano expedition report is backstopped by superb German



Sergeant York stands at the site of his heroic deeds, February 1919

archival research and is in keeping with the military situation of the day. In other words, it is supportable from a military standpoint. The conclusions of the expedition report combine documented military history, German unit dispositions, tactical analysis, terrain analysis, and battlefield archaeology to pinpoint key locations associated with Sergeant York's actions within the ravine. Mastriano has presented a riveting and well-documented argument in a report complete with maps and pictures of the terrain and associated artifacts. In addition, his Sergeant York Discovery Expedition has established a Web site where all of the evidence it has gathered may be viewed.¹⁵

Nolan, meanwhile, issued in May 2007 a comprehensive report reflecting a tremendous amount of disciplined research, analysis, and purposeful direction. None of this should be a surprise, as the report constitutes the author's doctoral dissertation. Since completing this document, Nolan has defended it before a graduate school committee

and has received his doctorate from Texas State University at San Marcos, so Nolan's report has withstood a level of academic scrutiny. The overall premise of Nolan's report is as follows:

Geographic Information Science (GIS) and technology can be used to integrate history and archaeology for synthesis and interpretation. This study applies Geographic Information Science and technology to reconstructing the events related to a patrol from G Company, 2nd Battalion, 328th Infantry Regiment of the American Expeditionary Forces on October 8, 1918, outside the village of Châtel Chéhéry, France that resulted in the award of the Medal of Honor to Alvin C. York. Evidence from documentary records, historic maps, and artifacts from a metal detector survey were incorporated in a spatial database. Spatial analysis of the database using GIS provided a more complete picture of events than either history or archaeology individually.¹⁶

I like the methodology and associated research employed by

the Nolan-Birdwell project. The effort has been held within strict protocols and enjoys the oversight and approval of local French government archaeologists. The incorporation of GIS/GPS technology certainly shows merit in the ability to translate known locations from historical battlefield maps to positions on the ground. This is exciting material for the world of battlefield archaeology. I remain skeptical, however, of the location Nolan selected based on maps annotated by Colonel Buxton eleven years after the event. Reserve Maj. E. C. B. Danforth Jr., who as a captain had been York's Company G commander, received a similar request from Captain Swindler and included this caveat in his reply:

My knowledge of the general situation is first hand and, I believe, accurate. The particulars of the actual fight of Sergeant York is, of course, not based on my own observation but has been gained by investigations which I made on the ground shortly after the armistice and from a subsequent study in which I have been interested in making during the last year or two. I am afraid that no one, not even York himself, can give you a very accurate lay-out of the fight but my sketch contains what I believe to have been the situation.¹⁷

Some years ago I obtained copies of Colonel Buxton's and Major Danforth's letters and associated strip maps and, after visiting that spot in the ravine in 2001, concluded that the location was not supportable from a military standpoint. In short, Colonel Buxton's position placed the Germans facing up a steep



Former Sgt. Bernard Early, right, who had led York's patrol and had been severely wounded in the firefight, receives the Distinguished Service Cross from Assistant Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley at Washington Barracks, D.C., during ceremonies that included a reenactment of the engagement, October 1929

slope toward the advancing 28th Division. (The position is marked in the 28th vice the 82d Division sector.) This position would have severely restricted the fields of fire for the German machine guns engaging any targets to the south or east, the direction from which the Americans were approaching. At best, this location could have been used as an interim firing position as the Germans fell back. It would have better served as a site from which the advancing Americans could have engaged fleeing Germans.

In penning this update, I am inclined, as is Ron Bowman, to support Mastriano's location because it agrees with and appears to confirm the position that we had selected seven years ago. And, while we are somewhat biased in this debate, we fully accept that a good deal of investigative work is yet to be done before historical markers are planted on one side of the ravine or the other. We are convinced that the ravine still holds at least one uncovered archaeological indicator that could provide a persuasive edge to the argument over location. While Sergeant York gained the Medal of Honor for his actions in the ravine that foggy morning of 8 October 1918, he also lost his best Army buddy, Cpl. Murray Savage. When the initial burst of German machine-gun fire poured down from the hillside, Corporal Savage, one of the three squad leaders sent around to silence those guns, was killed outright; according to an archival record, he "was buried where he fell." His remains were moved to the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery in May 1921, leaving the scar of a man-

sized hole chunked out of the earth on one side of the ravine. Ron Bowman and I found such a scar on the northern side of the ravine, and perhaps the sweep of an authorized metal detector could reveal a metal button, collar disk, rank or identification tag, or some other piece of personal gear that would provide convincing evidence about the origins of that hole. Such an artifact could link the scar in the ravine to the temporary grave of Corporal Savage, who apparently was buried within feet of where he had been shot during a legendary firefight that lives on in U.S. military lore.¹⁸ The confirmation or denial of what we suspect was the genesis of that unhealed gash hidden in the ravine behind the ancient village of Châtel-Chéhéry could provide a critical piece of the puzzle that both teams seek to solve.

THE AUTHOR

Lt. Col. Taylor V. Beattie (Retired) served as a Regular Army special forces officer in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR in Bosnia; in Operation ASSURED RESPONSE in Liberia; and in assignments in Panama, Germany, Turkey, and Italy. He retired from the military in June 2005 and is currently employed by the Camber Corporation as a business development manager. He holds a bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Delaware and a master's degree in education from the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, Kansas. His article "Corporal Freddie Stowers: An Appointment with Eternity on Hill 188" appeared in the Winter 2003 issue of *Army History*.

★★★★★

NOTES

1. News Release, Middle Tennessee State University, "Precise Locale of WW I Hero Alvin York's One-Man Battle Discovered," 15 Mar 2006, <http://www.newswise.com/articles/views/518792>.

2. Craig S. Smith, "Revisiting Sgt. York and a Time When Heroes Stood Tall," *New York Times*, 20 Jun 2006, <http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F30D15FB35550C738EDDAF0894DE404482>.

3. Nancy Montgomery, "Army officer says site of Sgt. York's WW I exploits has been found," *Stars and Stripes*, European ed., 21 Oct 2006, <http://www.estripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=39951&archive=true>.

4. Jenny Barchfield, The Associated Press, "France 'York Spot' May Have Been Located," 26 Oct 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/26/AR2006102601314.html>.

5. News Release, Middle Tennessee State University, "Tennessee Researchers Utilize Scientific Detection, Historic Evidence To Uncover Sgt. York's World War I Battle Site," 8 Dec 2006, http://www.mtsu.edu/~proffice/audio/2006/Dec08/york_newsconf_dec8_06.htm.

6. News Release, Tennessee Tech University, "Research team from TTU, MTSU discover conclusive evidence of Sgt. York site in France," 15 Dec 2006, http://www.tntech.edu/techtimes/2006/06_12/12_15/YorkEvidence.html.

7. Steven L. Warren, "Army Officer: Sgt. York Battle Site

Located,” 25 Mar 2007, <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/100571.aspx>.

8. See *Army History*, Summer–Fall 2000 (No. 50), pp. 1–14.

9. As Dr. Lucien Houlemare of Châtel-Chéhéry explained to the author, the hill directly south of Castle Hill is called Parrot Hill because local men gather on top of it and parrot, or repeat, the gossip they have heard from their wives. However, the hill is identified as Hohenborn Hill on a map in F. W. Merten, trans., “Testimony of German Officers and Men annt Sergeant York: A Translation of ‘Die Entstehung von Kriegslegenden: Feststellungen über die angebliche Heldentat des amerikanischen Sergeanten York am 8.10.18 (The Origin of War Legends: An Investigation of the Alleged Feat of Sgt York, October 8, 1918),” 1936, p. 27, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., and copy in file 4658, box 40, Entry 310C, Records (“Thomas File”) of the Historical Section, Army War College, Record Group (RG) 165, Records

of the War Department General and Special Staffs, National Archives, College Park, Md.

10. News Release, Middle Tennessee State University, “Precise Locale Discovered,” 15 Mar 2006.

11. The artifacts retrieved in March 2006 were listed on <http://www.sergeantyorkproject.com>, but the data is no longer posted.

12. Merten, trans., “Testimony of German Officers and Men.”

13. Douglas Mastriano and Kory O’Keefe, January 2007, sub: Report on the activities of the Sergeant York Discovery Expedition (SYDE) in the discovery and verification of key locations where Sgt. Alvin C. York’s combat actions on 8 October 1918 earned the Medal of Honor, http://www.sgtyorkdiscovery.com/uploads/The_Sergeant_York_Discovery_Expedition_14_Jan_WEB2.pdf

14. Msg, Lt Col Douglas Mastriano to Taylor V. Beattie, 16 May 2007, in author’s files.

15. The Web site www.sgtyorkdiscovery.com contains a link to the team’s January

2007 report.

16. Thomas J. Nolan, “Battlefield Landscapes: Geographic Information Science as a Method of Integrating History and Archaeology for Battlefield Interpretation” (Ph.D. diss., Texas State University–San Marcos, 2007), pp. x–xi.

17. Ltr, E. C. B. Danforth Jr. to Capt Henry O. Swindler, 5 Aug 1929, copy in author’s files. Danforth’s annotations to the map Swindler provided place York’s firefight on the same side of the ravine that Buxton had identified.

18. Photo Narrative (quoted words), Photo #49192, Grave of Corp. Murrau [*sic*] Savage, 7 Feb 1919, World War I Photos, Box 370, RG 111, Records of the Office of the Signal Corps, National Archives, College Park, Md.; Report of Disinterment and Reburial, 25 May 1921, and Identification Opinion, E. Kensett Vail, 9 Jul 1921, both in Murray L. Savage file, Box 4297, Entry 1942, Burial files, RG 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, Md.

NEWS NOTES

Upcoming Military History Conferences

(News Notes continued from page 2)

The Society for Military History will hold its annual conference from 17 to 20 April 2008 in Ogden, Utah. The conference theme is “The Military and Frontiers,” and papers will explore the military’s relationship to geographic, technological, social, and political boundaries. Further information is available at <http://www.weber.edu/History/WhatsHappening/SMH2008.html>.

The Council on America’s Military Past will hold its annual conference from 14 to 18 May 2008 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The conference will focus on the military history of the American West. Further information on this conference may be obtained by contacting Dale Floyd at caponier@aol.com.

NEWS NOTES

Center of Military History Announces Writing Competition

The U.S. Army Center of Military History is pleased to announce the 2008 James Lawton Collins Jr. Special Topics Writing Competition. The Center invites Army officers in the rank of major or below, including warrant officers, and noncommissioned officers to submit an original unclassified essay about a small U.S. Army unit or team, no larger than a company, engaged in the Global War on Terrorism in Afghanistan. The essay should focus on a discrete action undertaken by the outfit, such as a single patrol, convoy, firefight, or battle; an air support or medical support mission; or an engineer project. It might focus on a provincial reconstruction team project or another civil-military cooperation project, a training mission with the Afghan National Army, or any single activity of a civil affairs, intelligence, or advisory team. The effort discussed need not involve combat.

Papers should generally not exceed 5,000 words and may not have been published or submitted for publication elsewhere. Submissions from multiple qualified authors will be accepted. The essays will be evaluated by a panel at the Center. The winner of the First Prize will be awarded \$1,000; the winner of the Second Prize, \$250. Both awardees will also receive a certificate of recognition signed by the Army's chief of staff, and their essays may be published in *Army History*. Submissions must be received by 1 April 2008. Competition enrollment forms and further information about the competition will be posted at <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/2008Contest.htm>. Questions about the contest should be directed to Jon Hoffman at the Center of Military History. He may be reached by telephone at (202) 685-2360 or DSN 325-2360 or by email at hoffmanjt@hqda.army.mil.

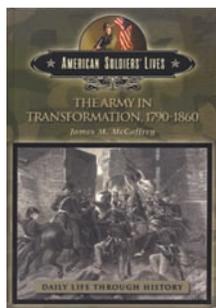
Center of Military History Announces Art Competition

The U.S. Army Center of Military History has announced the 2008 James Lawton Collins Jr. Original Art Competition. The Center invites soldiers of all ranks to submit original pieces of art, to include paintings, watercolors, and sketches, that portray the actions of a small U.S. Army team or unit, no larger than a company, engaged in the Global War on Terrorism. The artwork must be prepared by hand from personal observation in theater, and it may not have been published or submitted for publication elsewhere. Computer-generated or computer-manipulated artwork is not allowed.

Artwork should focus on a discrete action, such as a single patrol, firefight, battle, convoy, air sup-

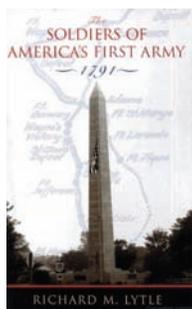
port mission, advisory team operation, medical mission, or engineer support action, but the action need not involve combat. Multiple submissions will be accepted from individual artists. The pieces will be evaluated by a panel at the Center of Military History. The winner of the First Prize will be awarded \$500 and the winner of the Second Prize, \$250. Both awardees will also receive a certificate of recognition signed by the Army's chief of staff. Their artwork will be published in *Army History*, and it may become part of the Army Art Collection. Submissions must be received by 1 April 2008. Competition enrollment forms and further information about the competition will be posted at <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/2008Contest.htm>.

BOOK REVIEWS



*American Soldiers' Lives:
The Army in
Transformation,
1790-1860*

By James M. McCaffrey
Greenwood Press, 2006,
187 pp., \$65



*The Soldiers of America's
First Army, 1791*
By Richard M. Lytle
Scarecrow Press, 2004,
447 pp., \$65

Review by Samuel Watson

Did the experience of soldiering change significantly during the four score years before the Civil War? James McCaffrey implies change in his title, but his evidence and the approach he takes suggest continuity. He provides a survey, focused on enlisted soldiers, with limited analysis and few explicit evaluative conclusions. Nevertheless, the range of his research and citations is outstanding, and readers new to the subject will find *The Army in Transformation* full of information otherwise hidden away in doctoral dissertations or publications without footnotes. The bibliography presents an outstanding array of primary sources, especially those published in historical journals.

The first chapter provides a brief survey of the Army's missions and campaigns between the wars against Ohio Indians during the 1790s and the beginning of the Civil War. Further chapters examine soldiers' daily life, weapons, food, clothing, shelter, and health. McCaffrey discusses recruiting and training but does not address the branch schools of the 1820s and 1830s. He notes the difference between drill and tactics, observing that the word *drill* explained how but not when, where, or why

a unit was to deploy and engage the enemy. But the role of the noncommissioned officer does not receive the attention it deserves. Indeed, one would like to obtain a more precise picture of the careers of both noncommissioned officers and enlisted soldiers. By the latter third of this period commissioned officers were serving an average of more than twenty years, but some historians have argued that the noncommissioned officer corps lacked such continuity and the authority that would derive from it.¹ How experienced and how expert were the Army's enlisted soldiers in this era of officer professionalization, and what role should we attribute to them in the Army's tactical capability in the war with Mexico?

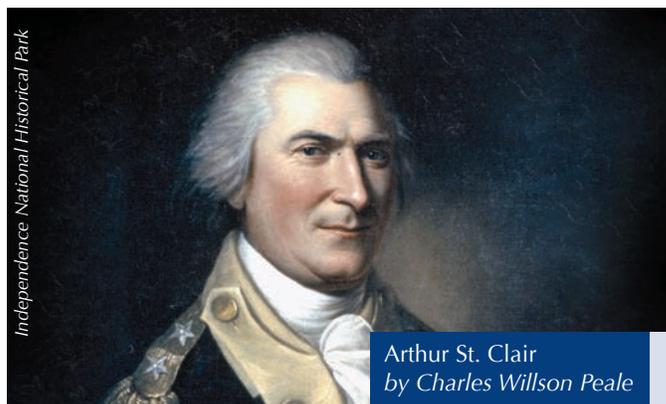
The Army in Transformation focuses on daily life rather than combat, however. Its most interesting sections explore soldiers' views of their officers and antagonists, and to some extent of each other, but McCaffrey does not examine their attitudes toward civilians, which limits his ability to observe potential shifts in soldier *mentalité*. Likewise, he does not offer any conclusions about possible ethnic or religious tensions within the ranks or about the predominant motivation for enlistment and retention. Was it fundamentally economic, or more diverse? This would be valuable information for a social historian, using the Army as a window on American society, and might demonstrate more change than examining the material conditions of daily life.

It is unfortunate that McCaffrey has done so much research but provided so few conclusions. When he does, they tend toward statements of fact, couched as universals. Thus, despite some technological change, little fundamental transformation appears to have occurred in soldier life. If the focus is material conditions, or the essence of contemporary tactics and drill, this would be my conclusion as well, but more explanation would add value to a book priced well beyond its market of newcomers seeking a brief survey. In particular, one could draw together the themes of daily life, discipline, and desertion (which then involved 10 to 20 percent of the enlisted ranks each year) through an exploration of the reform initiatives developed during the 1830s by officers in the field and by the War Department. Some

BOOK REVIEWS

officers sought Christian evangelization, spurring the appointment of post and regimental chaplains; others supported the War Department's efforts to eliminate the liquor ration and to develop a more nutritious daily ration. There were also moves to end Sunday inspections, to appoint officers from the enlisted ranks, to provide pensions from officer contributions, and to create an asylum for elderly and disabled veterans—the root of the Soldiers' Home established in Washington during the 1850s. And senior Army leaders fought intermittent battles to compel regimental officers to cease illegal punishments against enlisted men, albeit with limited success. (McCaffrey probably understates the severity of military punishments and the violence of officers toward enlisted men.) Exploring some of these initiatives would not have altered the de facto picture of continuity but might have drawn forth more insights about soldier motivation and the dynamics of officer-enlisted relations. The evidence might not enable McCaffrey to answer all these questions, but they deserve asking, and a few such hypotheses can add a great deal to a book's intellectual stimulus.

Lack of context and analysis also plagues *The Soldiers of America's First Army, 1791*, clearly a labor of love by its author. Richard Lytle never makes clear why we should regard the force sent against the Ohio Indians that year as the nation's first army. Even if he is dating from the Constitution, the United States, of course, had an army in 1787, which Congress enhanced in 1789 and 1790, in preparation for the Ohio campaign led by Bvt. Brig. Gen. Josiah Harmar in the latter year. That aside, Lytle like McCaffrey has done prodigious research. Unfortunately, he provides no footnotes and no interpretive thesis or evaluative conclusions. He states that James Ripley Jacobs in *The Beginning of the U.S. Army, 1783–1812* (Princeton, N.J., 1947) fostered “false assumptions” (p. 1) about the 1791 force, but fails to explain what those assumptions were. Lytle appears to feel that Jacobs's criticism of the Army's lack of cohesion (“a rabble,” p. 84) was too harsh, but Jacobs's evaluation was borne out by the Army's disintegration and destruction in battle. We can credit the soldiers for volunteering



to serve, but “America's first army” was poorly disciplined, virtually untrained, and fatally lacking in *esprit de corps*, élan, and staying power. Ohio Indians ambushed and destroyed the expedition in one of the worst defeats ever inflicted upon an American military force. The attackers killed more than 650 soldiers—nearly 50 percent of the force, a higher American death toll than in any other battle prior to the Civil War—and wounded another 258. The remnants fled 60 miles in thirty-six hours.

The story of Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair's disastrous expedition against the Ohio Indians in 1791 has been told best, with citations and analysis, by Wiley Sword in *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790–1795* (Norman, Okla., 1985). The principle value of *The Soldiers of America's First Army* is its thorough biographies of the soldiers, including enlisted men, which are about as comprehensive as will ever be achieved. This may justify the price tag for genealogists researching their families or for specialists researching the campaign, but there are no footnotes or endnotes, so maybe not.

Good editors should ensure that authors offer analysis; authors should push their editors to ensure that they do so.

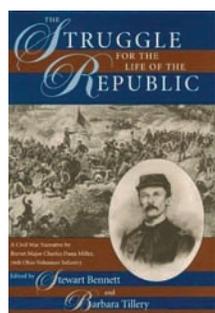
Dr. Samuel Watson is an associate professor of history at the U.S. Military Academy, where he teaches a senior course on the nineteenth-century Army. He is the editor of Warfare in the USA, 1784–1861 (Burlington, Vt., 2005), and is working on several books dealing with civil-military relations

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and constabulary duties on the frontier between 1784 and 1861.

NOTE

1. Dale R. Steinhauer, “‘Sogers’: Enlisted Men in the U.S. Army, 1815–1860” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1992), pp. 346–47. Steinhauer is chief of the Research Division of the Center for Army Lessons Learned at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His dissertation remains the most thorough analysis of its subject.



The Struggle for the Life of the Republic: A Civil War Narrative by Brevet Major Charles Dana Miller, 76th Ohio Volunteer Infantry
Edited by Stewart Bennett and Barbara Tillery
Kent State University Press,
2004, 301 pp., cloth \$34

Review by Terry Beckenbaugh

Thank goodness Barbara Tillery, a Mississippian, developed an interest in a Yankee narrative. Tillery is a co-editor, along with Stewart Bennett, of *The Struggle for the Life of the Republic: A Civil War Narrative by Brevet Major Charles Dana Miller, 76th Ohio Volunteer Infantry*. Charles Dana Miller is Tillery’s great-grandfather, and the manuscript that became *The Struggle for the Life of the Republic* is a family heirloom. Tillery reports that she first used the manuscript for a high school report on the siege of Vicksburg, “but having grown up in the South, I lacked sufficient enthusiasm for a ‘Yankee’ narrative” (p. ix). A more mature Tillery recalled the manuscript some years later and determined to publish it to make it available to a wider audience. Civil War historians should be grateful for her conversion and her work to bring Miller’s narrative to print.

Charles Dana Miller was working in the grain business when he enlisted in Company C of the 76th

Ohio Volunteer Infantry as a first sergeant in October 1861. Thus began Miller’s odyssey that took him all over the South. Miller saw significant combat with his regiment—at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Corinth, and Arkansas Post; at the siege of Vicksburg; and in the Atlanta campaign. He missed the fighting around Chattanooga and Sherman’s march to the sea. Along the way Miller observed the human condition, described the battles he participated in, and ventured his opinion on a variety of subjects.

Miller’s views on race and slavery were fairly mainstream for the time: He clearly viewed African Americans as inferior but saw the destruction of slavery as a means to an end. If slavery needed to be dispensed with to save the Union, so be it. Initially, he viewed the contrabands as a source for amusement. They played music and danced to entertain the federal troops, and they were also the target of many unkind jokes. They appeared to him to be more a curiosity than anything else. However, as the war continued and more runaway slaves made their way to federal lines, the contrabands attracted Miller’s sympathy. Finally, when African Americans were enlisted for the war effort, Miller approved. He wrote, “The Rebels were making use of them to cultivate the soil and raise supplies to feed their armies and to work on fortifications; hence, every body of negroes taken from them was a blow against their material strength and endurance” (p. 91).

Miller’s comments about politics demonstrate that many of the soldiers in the ranks were aware of the larger political situation. Miller harbored a deep resentment against the Copperheads, discussed them at length, and described a confrontation he had with a Copperhead while home on leave in Mount Vernon, Ohio. It will come as no surprise that Miller strongly backed the re-election of President Abraham Lincoln in 1864. What may surprise the reader is how closely Miller followed the campaign and how he commented upon it and the nomination of Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan to head the Democratic ticket that year. Miller saw the choice in 1864 as a stark one, saying, “Oh, may God deliver us from any change in the administration at this critical state of affairs! I dread a change for it will surely prolong the war. Oh, could we

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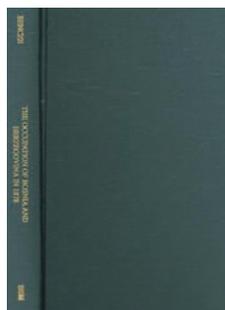
but be left alone in the work of putting down this rebellion” (pp. 208–09).

If one is looking for descriptions of combat or camp life, *Struggle for the Life of the Republic* has that as well. Miller’s account of the Battle of Arkansas Post (9–11 January 1863) is one of the more extensive eyewitness reports of that battle. Miller also had a keen eye for the mundane habits of camp life and recorded many anecdotes that amused or captured the attention of the soldiers.

The biggest shortcoming in *Struggle for the Life of the Republic* is in the appendix, where Tillery and Bennett print three letters from Miller to his family. The editors hint that these letters are just a sampling of a larger collection, although that is not specifically stated. If they are, why not publish *all* the letters? It would be interesting to compare the memoirs in *Struggle for the Life of the Republic*, which were written after the war, with the letters home written during the conflict. Would they differ? How had Miller’s views changed in the intervening years of peace? Had the evolution that in Miller’s memoirs seems to have taken place during the war actually occurred later? Unfortunately, the reader does not know. Indeed he does not even know how many letters between Miller and his family survive. At the very least the reader should have been informed of the extent of that collection.

If the complaint about the family letters in the appendix is any indication, then Tillery and Bennett have succeeded admirably. In the greatest tradition of show business they have left their audience wanting more. One hopes that the editors will edit and annotate the Miller family letters for publication in a journal at the very least. *Struggle for the Life of the Republic* is a significant addition to the primary source literature of the Civil War.

Dr. Terry Beckenbaugh teaches military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He was a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History in 2005. He received his doctorate from the University of Arkansas, where he wrote a dissertation on the career of Iowa congressman and Civil War volunteer Maj. Gen. Samuel Ryan Curtis.



The Occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878

By László Bencze

Edited by Frank N. Schubert

War and Society in East

Central Europe, Vol. 39

Atlantic Research and

Publications, distributed

by Columbia University

Press, 2005, 302 pp., \$50

Review by James C. McNaughton

In 1987, shortly before the “change” in Eastern Europe, the Hungarian Ministry of Defense published a monograph on an obscure topic, the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878. The author, Lt. Col. László Bencze, was a historian at the Institute of Military History in Budapest. In the early 1990s, while participating in professional military history exchanges with official military historians from the United States, Bencze presented a copy to Frank N. Schubert, a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Before long, U.S. involvement in the Balkans stimulated interest in the lessons of earlier military operations in the region, such as the German occupation during World War II. Bryan van Sweringen, command historian at the U.S. European Command, persuaded the Defense Intelligence Agency to translate Bencze’s book in 1998. Schubert subsequently edited the translation and has now made it available to a broader audience as a volume in the War and Society in East Central Europe series.

The Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, little-known to American readers, came at a turning point in the slow-motion collapse of the Ottoman Empire.¹ In fact, the Near Eastern Crisis of 1875–78 threatened war between major European powers. The crisis began with uprisings against Turkish rule by Christian inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, supported by the Serbs. Russia seized the opportunity to attack the Ottomans in the Balkans and the Caucasus, and its Balkan army approached Istanbul. This advance led the British to send its fleet to intervene in the Bosphorus. The Berlin Congress of 1878 settled the crisis at considerable cost to the Ottoman Empire. Montenegro, Serbia, and Romania gained

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their independence, Bulgaria was placed under Russian control, and Bosnia and Herzegovina were given over to Austro-Hungarian occupation. Thus was Ottoman rule in the Balkans, for all its faults, replaced by the political instability resulting from the region's division into small states confronting disgruntled minorities and plagued by Great-power meddling. Little more than a generation later a Serbian terrorist assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo and inadvertently triggered a world war.

None of this was foreseen in mid-1878, when Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph I ordered his army to occupy the territory "as quickly as possible, capturing the most important routes, and concerning themselves with political and administrative matters only insofar as considerations of security of the troops and communications allowed" (p. 112). The emperor's soldiers struggled to control some of the same terrain that U.S. Army forces occupied during the 1990s.

The Thirteenth Corps began the operation with 79,200 troops assigned to subdue 1.16 million inhabitants, especially the 39 percent who were Muslim. More than two-thirds of the Austro-Hungarian forces came from the Hungarian part of the empire. On 29 July 1878 the lead column of 30,000 troops crossed the Sava River on a pontoon bridge. That night a heavy rain soaked the unpaved roads, causing the overlaid supply wagons to fall two days behind the advancing infantry. A few days later several thousand insurgents ambushed a Hussar company and inflicted heavy casualties. The Austrian press accused the insurgents of treachery, and the emperor ordered "harsh reprisals against any of the populace that opposed the occupation" (p. 117). All these were omens of things to come.

In Sarajevo the population rose up, aided by renegade units of the Ottoman army and calls for a holy war against the Christian invaders. Rather than stand up to trained infantry and modern artillery, the insurgents preferred to ambush supply convoys on the narrow mountain roads. The Austro-Hungarian forces soon became outraged and frustrated and accused the insurgents of atrocities. Commanders failed to meet ambitious timelines for the advance, held up by the poor road network and insufficient rear-area security.

Austro-Hungarian troops resorted to brutal measures to crush the insurgency, destroying entire villages and taking no prisoners. "The Austro-Hungarian military leadership did not recognize the insurgents as combatants," thus giving the troops an excuse to deny them "the legal protections of soldiers" (p. 118).

The occupation rapidly became a complex conflict as various groups settled old scores. In one documented case, when the Austro-Hungarian forces succeeded in disarming the Muslims, "armed Christian bands crossed from Croatia into Bosnia and attacked, burned, and pillaged Muslim villages that had been left unprotected" (p. 264).

Bencze describes Austro-Hungarian efforts to capture the key town of Tuzla, held by 4,000 Bosnian Muslim insurgents under the Albanian mufti Mehmet Nureddin Semšikadić. Lacking sufficient forces, the Austro-Hungarian commander, Lt. Gen. Count László Szapáry, a Hungarian aristocrat, decided to break off the attack; he "complained [to Vienna] that every Muslim had become an enemy and that he could complete his original mission only with a force twice as large and with special detachments for supply-line security" (p. 174). Szapáry required six more weeks to outmaneuver the insurgents and force their withdrawal from the town. Vienna ultimately engaged some 270,000 troops to conquer the rebellious territory.

In September the Austro-Hungarians threw an entire division against 3,000 insurgents dug in at Brčka (Brčko) on the Sava River. The surrounding countryside was made up of orchards, fields, and meadows broken by dense undergrowth and hedgerows. "The infantry soldiers found their way with difficulty through this labyrinth of barriers; the horses and wagons were able to use only some of the sodden field roads. The terrain before the city not only inhibited troop movement and battle management, it also made the effective use of artillery virtually impossible" (p. 231). The Muslims offered stiff resistance before finally withdrawing. The Austro-Hungarians took no prisoners, but did not attempt pursuit.

The assault on Sarajevo ended in an orgy of violence against the city's inhabitants as the Austro-Hungarian troops advanced into the Muslim quarter,

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“mercilessly killing everyone they found on the street,” including women and children who had taken up arms (p. 146).

Organized resistance ended in Bosnia and Herzegovina in October, and Vienna quickly reduced the occupation forces to 80,000 men. Over the next three decades Austro-Hungarian troops suppressed lesser uprisings, but their rule was never seriously challenged. The regional implications were far more serious, because the continued Austro-Hungarian occupation was a significant destabilizing factor in a region in which several powers had vital interests. Austria’s formal annexation of the territory in 1908 “upset the delicate balance of offsetting hatreds,” to quote Henry Kissinger, and lit the long fuse that led to 1914.²

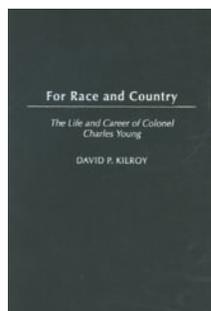
Students of Balkan history will appreciate this first English-language operational narrative of the 1878 occupation. Students of military history will welcome this instructive case study of a counterinsurgency operation. Soldiers who have served in Bosnia and Herzegovina in recent years will be sobered by this study of a forgotten campaign on now all-too familiar soil.

Dr. James C. McNaughton has been the command historian of the U.S. European Command since 2005. A retired Army Reserve lieutenant colonel, he received his doctorate in history from Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service in World War II (Center of Military History, 2006). His article “Japanese Americans and the U.S. Army: A Historical Reconsideration” appeared in the Summer–Fall 2003 issue of Army History.

NOTES

1. For example, U.S. Department of Defense, *Bosnia Country Handbook*, DOD–1540–16–96, December 1995, does not mention the Austro-Hungarian occupation in its brief historical background.

2. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York, 1994), p. 195.



*For Race and Country
The Life and Career
of Colonel Charles Young*
By David P. Kilroy
Praeger, 2003, 183 pp., \$80.95

Review by Frederick H. Black Jr.

The descriptions of Col. Charles Young’s lavish 1923 funeral in Washington, D.C., evoke comparisons to more recent formal obsequies held in the nation’s capital. Unlike many others accorded such a farewell, Colonel Young never reached the highest ranks in the United States military or government. Young’s acclaim stemmed from his status as the most successful, and therefore most popular, black officer in the highly segregated U.S. Army of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. David Kilroy has written a good biography of Young, and one that fills an important gap in the historiography of African American military service. Kilroy intends to provide the “contextual analysis and critical perspective” (p. xii) he finds lacking in three earlier works about Young—Abraham Chew, *A Biography of Colonel Charles Young* (Washington, D.C., 1923); Robert Ewell Greene, *The Early Life of Colonel Charles Young* (Washington, D.C., 1973); and the latter author’s *Colonel Charles Young: Soldier and Diplomat* (Washington, D.C., 1985). Kilroy accomplishes his objectives in this regard, but unfortunately this book will never reach wide audiences because of its academic tone and appearance and its prohibitive price.

Young endured four years of great hardship and isolation to become in 1889 the third black graduate of West Point. That theme continued in his early service with the 9th Cavalry, a unit with black enlisted men, where white officers disapproved of Young’s presence. After arriving at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, a few months after his graduation, Young withstood constant attacks from his commander for various real and perceived infractions. Life improved somewhat after a transfer in 1890 to Fort Duchesne, Utah, where

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Young's hard work and unequalled desire to excel received greater recognition. Kilroy includes several firsthand testimonials to Young's work ethic in Utah and throughout his career. Of particular note, Maj. James Randlett, who had been critical of Young at Fort Robinson, changed his opinion at Fort Duchesne, noting that Young possessed "untiring zeal, fidelity, and well directed energy" (p. 29). Apparently the change in atmosphere had proven quite beneficial to Young.

Young's lifelong passion for education fit well with his next assignment as the professor of military science and tactics at Wilberforce University in Ohio. The opening of the position also helped the Army to isolate Young, alleviating many of the problems created by his presence in a line regiment. Kilroy notes that Young, in addition to his military duties, immersed himself in the social and intellectual communities of the university. Young established his permanent residence, named "Youngsholm," one mile from the Wilberforce campus. Over the years it became well known as a gathering place for the black intelligentsia, including such luminaries as Paul Laurence Dunbar and W. E. B. DuBois. While Young greatly enjoyed his time at Wilberforce, the outbreak of the Spanish-American War made him yearn to return to his regiment.

Unable to secure permission to do that promptly, Young accepted the command of the 9th Separate Battalion Infantry, United States Volunteers, in which he served with the rank of major. Composed entirely of black soldiers and officers, this battalion was recruited in Ohio, but to Young's dismay, the unit remained Stateside in camps in Virginia and South Carolina. Young finally got his wish to deploy overseas in early 1901, when the 9th Cavalry went to the Philippines to help quell the insurrection there. A few months prior to departing, Young became the first black officer promoted to captain in the Regular Army. He served with distinction in the Philippines as a cavalry troop commander and gained the attention of many senior officers in the process.

Several months after the regiment returned in October 1902 to the Presidio of San Francisco, Captain Young led two of its troops to Sequoia and General Grant National Parks in California. While Young served as acting park superintendent, the

soldiers worked on the construction and upkeep of park roads. Young subsequently served as military attaché in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and Monrovia, Liberia, and as a cavalry squadron commander in the Philippines, in Wyoming, and in the pursuit of Pancho Villa in Mexico. Throughout his career Young showed people that black officers could perform at high levels in any number of positions; they simply lacked opportunity. Kilroy emphasizes the range and diversity of Young's talents and examines Young's sense of pride at serving as a beacon for his race. In fact, the title of the book—*For Race and Country*—stems from an inscription that Young used when signing autographs or personal correspondence.

Despite all of Young's impressive achievements over a twenty-seven-year career, he left the Army on a very sour note in 1917. As the United States entered World War I, Young felt he could find a place for himself, but the Army retired him for medical reasons. Young's forced retirement seems to have been largely driven by the Wilson administration's reluctance to place a black lieutenant colonel in a command position in wartime. Of the entire book, though, the chapter on the retirement leaves the most unanswered questions. With the level of controversy surrounding this issue, the author should have derived more insights from government documents, but most of the notes in this chapter cite personal correspondence from the main participants.

The injustice of Young's retirement led to the episode for which he is perhaps best remembered. In June 1918 Young traveled on horseback from Wilberforce, Ohio, to Washington, D.C., to demonstrate his good health; unfortunately, the result did not exactly match his expectations. While he was returned to active duty, instead of a combat command in Europe, he received orders to a training post in Illinois. As he had on any number of previous occasions, Young accepted his orders and threw himself into his new duties. With this new assignment Young also received promotion to the rank of full colonel. Following the conclusion of the war, Young returned to Africa, serving again as military attaché to Liberia until his death in 1922.

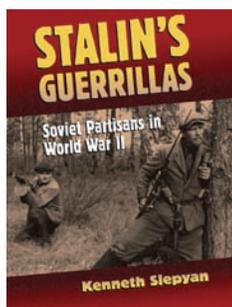
Kilroy has produced an important study for many audiences. Military historians will find appeal

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in the account of an incredibly unique officer during an important time in the development of the U.S. Army. Social historians will appreciate the book for its examination of the racial and social relationships exemplified during Young's career. Those specializing in African American history will see a strong connection between Young's story and that of black pioneers in other arenas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

While the story of Young's travails is well presented, it does have a few flaws. Kilroy attempts to start each chapter with an overview of its contents, which generally does not work well—the transitions remain unclear and the "introduction" simply causes more confusion than it alleviates. The primary flaw of this book, though, remains its prohibitive cost, which will certainly limit its readership.

Maj. Frederick H. Black Jr., an artillery officer, is currently serving with the 3d Infantry Division in Baghdad, Iraq. He has taught military history at the United States Military Academy and holds a doctorate in history from Florida State University.



Stalin's Guerrillas: Soviet Partisans in World War II
By Kenneth Slepyan
University Press of Kansas,
2006, 409 pp., \$34.95

Review by Victoria J. H. Campbell

In *Stalin's Guerrillas: Soviet Partisans in World War II*, Kenneth Slepyan has produced a work of great value to not only military historians but also anyone interested in Soviet history. Slepyan presents a thoughtful, well-documented account of the social aspects of the partisan movement during World War II. He frames the partisan movement within the greater context of Soviet social and political history, considering how the legacy of prewar Stalinist society and the war itself shaped the partisans'

experiences and guided their interactions with the civilian population and the Soviet state.

Slepyan's work regards the partisan movement from an entirely new angle. Whereas previous studies, relying largely on German sources, focused on the military aspects of partisan organization, activities, and effectiveness, Slepyan uses Soviet and Western sources to investigate the influences of Stalinist society, such as collectivization, industrialization, the purges, and nation-building, on partisan organization, participation, identity, and activities. He argues that what it meant to be a partisan depended upon the perspective: The State perceived partisans as brave, disciplined subjects of the *rodina* (motherland) and the Soviet system; the partisans, on the other hand, saw themselves as brave, free defenders of the *rodina*, who exercised great initiative in their activities. Further, although both groups focused on heroism and defense of the *rodina*, the official version defined the motherland as the Soviet State and system, whereas the partisans defined the motherland as local lands and values.

Slepyan sees this difference in definitions as influenced by several factors, the first of which was the State's need to present the partisan movement as "an all-people's movement" while still maintaining control over it. He explains that the State distrusted a partisan movement that was not controlled by the Communist Party and initially issued secret instructions that partisan membership was to be limited to party members. German successes, however, led to the need to expand the movement in 1942 to a true all-people's movement, involving all Soviet citizens regardless of gender, nationality, or previous collaboration with the Germans. Slepyan observes that by allowing various social groups to join the partisan effort to defend the motherland, the State legitimized its system and its right to exist but endangered its ability to control the partisans. Thus the Soviet state created in 1942 the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement, addressing State concerns over both how to maintain control and how to handle internal competition for that control among the party, NKVD (predecessor of the KGB), and Red Army.

Partisans, nevertheless, continued to operate with considerable autonomy until the end of the

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war. Their autonomy stemmed from their experience with prewar Soviet society—the second factor influencing relations between the State and the partisans. Slepian notes that the partisans used their knowledge of the Soviet system to present the image of compliance with Soviet expectations as a means of protecting their own freedoms. This did not, however, necessarily mean partisan values were completely different than those of the State. While partisans filtered the information the State received about their activities, recognizing that they had to conform to official expectations, they also willingly incorporated many aspects of Soviet prewar society into their organizations. The importance among the partisans of having party commissars, being “cultured,” and maintaining constant vigilance against the enemy demonstrates how thoroughly official Stalinist values had penetrated Soviet society before the war. Slepian explains how values that had evolved during industrialization were also reflected in partisan society. For example, some women in the bands performed the partisan equivalent of the “double shift,” returning from missions only to start preparing food and fixing equipment while their male comrades rested. Another example was the tension between “specialists” and party members that first surfaced after the October Revolution and later divided partisans affiliated with the Red Army from those tied to the Communist Party. Slepian thus demonstrates how the partisan experience served to reinforce Soviet societal values while at the same time giving the partisans a taste of personal freedom that undermined their relationship with the State.

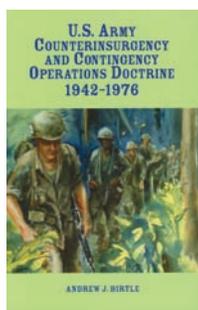
Not surprisingly, Slepian declares the State the ultimate victor in the struggle to define the partisan movement. As the Red Army liberated occupied territories, partisans were incorporated into conventional military forces, thus returning to Soviet discipline and control. Slepian notes that the State extended its control over partisans and partisan identity after the war by defining the official partisan history and forcing published partisan memoirs to conform to this official interpretation. Partisans themselves were lauded for the official version of their resistance, and many former partisans were reintegrated into society by assuming civil leadership

roles and helping to rebuild after the war. While partisan identity may have been contested during the war, ultimately the partisan experience became a tool of the State to unify Soviet citizens and reinforce state authority.

Stalin's Guerrillas is a great book. Slepian's reliance on Soviet archival sources, memoirs, journal articles, and books in Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian, as well as his use of Western sources, allows him to present the Soviet partisan movement both from within and from above in a way that previous scholarship has not. Additionally, it allows him to differentiate convincingly the objective of the Soviet partisan movement to restore the status quo ante from the goals of other anti-German resistance movements, many of which sought changes to prewar political, economic, or social structures. Perhaps its only weakness is a presumption of some outside knowledge of the military aspects of the partisan movement and of Stalinist society and terminology. However, when read in conjunction with other works on these topics, *Stalin's Guerrillas* provides a framework for understanding the motivations of both the State and partisan groups and places the overall structure and direction of the partisan movement in perspective in a way that a strictly military evaluation cannot. I look forward to using it as a source for my class on Soviet unconventional warfare.

Maj. Victoria J. H. Campbell is an instructor in the Department of History at the U.S. Military Academy. A military intelligence officer, she holds a master's degree from Harvard University in the regional studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.

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*U.S. Army Counterinsurgency
and Contingency
Operations Doctrine,
1942-1976*

By Andrew J. Birtle
U.S. Army Center of Military
History, 2006, 570 pp.,
cloth \$52, paper \$49

Review by Conrad C. Crane

This book features fine writing, extensive research, a provocative thesis, and a terrible title. Andrew Birtle gives the reader far more than a dry exposition on Army doctrine. This is really the story of how the United States tried to prevent the spread of Communism with a combination of military deployments and social engineering.

The title may be misleading, but it does accurately reflect the semantic and conceptual muddle that has always characterized the way the U.S. Army has looked at conflicts other than full-scale conventional war. Birtle illustrates superbly how vague and competing definitions, along with a plethora of acronyms, interfered with the creation of a clear and cohesive body of counterinsurgency doctrine. During the period covered by this book, bureaucratic battles over phrases such as “stability operations” and “civic action” roiled the doctrine development process, which was often decentralized and contradictory. The term *counterinsurgency* itself fell out of favor, being replaced by *internal defense and development* by the 1970s and eventually by *low-intensity conflict*, each with a different meaning. (Even the author in his introduction struggles to explain what he means by *contingency operations*, another term that has lost its semantic relevance over time.) The Army’s education and training programs did the best they could to adjust to such definitional obfuscation, though the effectiveness of unit preparation for counterinsurgency varied widely. But the primary military tasks for counterinsurgents envisioned by Army doctrine—destroying guerrillas after separating them from the people and cutting off external support—did not change significantly during the period covered by this book, demonstrating the

doctrine’s overall soundness and providing continuity for the soldiers executing it.

Birtle has done a superb job of research while mastering available sources on this complex subject. The notable exception is his lack of reference to Allan Millett’s revealing new findings on Korea from 1945–1950, but Millett’s book must have been coming out just as Birtle’s was being completed.¹ In fact, the most serious criticism that can be levied against Birtle is that his work needed to be completed in 2002. There is much here that could have enlightened national efforts in the war on terror. It also would have been very helpful for the writers of FM 3–24, the new Army and Marine Corps manual on counterinsurgency, for they had to discover on their own during 2006 much of what Birtle relates here. The problems they wrestled with are the same ones described throughout the pages of this book.

The most important and relevant content of this volume is its description of the repetitive problems affecting the American application of counterinsurgency, which are also common to the experience of other nations. Conventional military forces would rather concede the field to specialists and quickly try to distance themselves from such operations after their conclusion. There never seems to be an adequate appreciation for the type and amount of intelligence needed. The same can be said for psychological operations and public information. It is often difficult to persuade host-nation governments to follow advice, and advisory missions tend to be underemphasized and inadequately resourced. We continue to find out that democracy is not an easily exportable commodity and may be overrated as an effective tool against insurgency. Despite these problems, the military deserves much credit for learning and adapting in the crucible of counterinsurgency, and it performed far better than its civilian counterparts. Birtle shows how civilian government agencies consistently failed to meet their requirements for nation building from World War II through Vietnam, putting increased burdens on the military. At the national level, the United States was also unable to develop an adequate strategy to focus and direct such efforts or to create the structures needed to properly coordinate and

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direct the myriad interagency players. As anyone who has followed the progress of the Global War on Terrorism or operations in Iraq and Afghanistan realizes, these shortcomings still remain.

Though the author is a historian writing for the U.S. Army, this is not a typical official history. Birtle has a clear thesis and strong opinions, many of which will be controversial. He argues that the Army had already developed a traditional approach to counterinsurgency before this period, based on a combination of persuasion and coercion, concepts that he has elaborated in an earlier book.² Advisory experiences in places like Greece and Thailand and full-blown wars in Korea and Vietnam did not really alter that approach very much, as it generally proved effective. But Birtle believes that failure in Southeast Asia resulted from letting that combination become unbalanced, as promises of social scientists and modernization theorists allowed impractical “hearts and minds” assumptions to exert too much influence on the American campaign. He even goes so far as to challenge the consensus opinion emphasizing the fundamental importance of political primacy in counterinsurgency, arguing instead for more emphasis on security operations. Actually, the principle of political primacy, at least as promulgated in FM 3–24, just states that all security operations must keep political objectives in mind and be guided by them, acknowledging that there are times when security operations will indeed be the dominant form of activity. While repeating Chinese General Chang Ting-chen’s dictum that revolutionary war is 80-percent political action and only 20-percent military, the manual admits that there will be times when that

ratio will be reversed, especially early in the conflict.³ Birtle appears to favor enemy-centric strategies in his approach to counterinsurgency, while the new international doctrines are all population-centric. This contributes to his suspicion of social action programs and his emphasis on “the central role force plays in revolutionary warfare” (p. 407).

Birtle describes how the tools of coercion were deemphasized, first by American approval in the 1950s of the Geneva Conventions that outlawed tactics like hostage taking and mass retaliatory devastation, and later by the “hearts and minds” approaches so dominant in Vietnam. He acknowledges the negative backlash that can result from brutality in counterinsurgency, but argues for actions that intimidate people not to support an insurgency without driving them to it. He admits that is a “fine line to walk” (p. 392), which is quite an understatement. At a recent conference in Paris, U.S., British, German, and French doctrine writers unanimously rejected such an approach, basing their action on international law, the realities of the current media environment, and a shared conviction that efforts to intimidate are counterproductive. Population control measures are an important part of current counterinsurgency practices, but not with the goal of “out-terrorizing the terrorists,” as some extreme critics of the new doctrine espouse. Birtle seems to lean toward the position of those like Edward Luttwak, who suggested this year in an article in *Harper’s Magazine* that we should model our counterinsurgency practices on those of the Romans and the Nazis.⁴

Because Birtle is covering so much ground in his book, he can only make assertions rather than provide definitive proof. A detailed study is needed to examine the effectiveness of brutal coercion of the populace in places like Greece and Korea. This would involve compiling a record of the number and degree of such activities and determining whether counterinsurgencies were successful because of or in spite of these actions, which also hindered the political reconciliation necessary to really end such conflicts. And Birtle’s strong condemnation of “hearts and minds” approaches in Vietnam also carves out a unique niche in the historiography of that war that



A South Vietnamese Army cultural drama group woos villagers as a part of the battle for the hearts and minds of the population.

BOOK REVIEWS

deserves further evaluation. The conclusions of both studies could have important implications for the continuing evolution of counterinsurgency doctrine and the potential for its successful application by Western democracies emphasizing the rule of law.

Birtle takes on a number of other contemporary “truths” about Vietnam in this book. He challenges John Nagl’s thesis, asserted in his influential book *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, that American soldiers in Vietnam did not learn and adapt during that war.⁵ Birtle does criticize the bureaucracy at home, but he argues that units in Vietnam engaged in a seesaw battle as each side “adapted to the adversary’s latest innovation and countered with one of its own” (p. 387). Birtle also provides the most objective evaluation of the Marine Corps’ combined action platoons I have seen, revealing that the concept “realized neither the loftiest hopes of its proponents nor the darkest fears of its detractors” (p. 399). In addition, he downplays the differences between the strategies of Generals William Westmoreland and Creighton Abrams, claiming that their campaigns differed “more in emphasis than in substance,” primarily because of “the ultimate failure . . . to win the main force war” (pp. 367–68), a position echoing somewhat that of Harry Summers.⁶

Led by air power zealots, one school of critics of the new Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency doctrine has decried it as “ground centric,” arguing that air strikes should be used to replace boots on the ground. I might suggest that an appropriate target for them or anyone desiring to return to past policies of intimidation through devastation would be the Government Printing Office. The listed price of \$49 for a paperbound copy of this book is steep, and despite that it is printed on awful glossy paper. I like to take notes in the books I read seriously, and in this case my ink ran and impressions passed through to pages underneath. This important book needs to be republished with an accurate title on good paper at a more reasonable price. The University of Chicago did a fine reprint of FM 3–24, which like this book is in the public domain. If the Government Printing Office cannot do better, then perhaps some private press with foresight and initiative will take up the project. They would be doing a great public service,

perpetuating a work that will enlighten soldiers, scholars, policy-makers, and general readers.

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NOTES

1. Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945–1950: A House Burning* (Lawrence, Kans., 2005).

2. Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860–1941* (Washington, D.C., 1997).

3. Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual no. 3–24 (Washington, D.C., 2006), p. 1-22, para. 1-123. This manual, jointly published with the Headquarters, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy, and Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, is also Marine Corps Warfighting Publication no. 3–33.5.

4. Edward Luttwak, “Deadend: Counterinsurgency warfare as military malpractice,” *Harper’s Magazine* 314 (February 2007): 33–42.

5. John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago, 2005), a paperback imprint of *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Westport, Conn., 2002).

6. Harry G. Summers Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa., 1981).



The Chief Historian's Footnote

Dr. Richard W. Stewart

In the last issue of *Army History*, I briefly highlighted the importance of writing carefully crafted and clear performance objectives as one of the keys to preparing successful performance plans under the new National Security Personnel System (NSPS). If you have taken any NSPS training, either as an employee or as a supervisor, you know how critical it is to use SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Aligned to organizational goals, Relevant/realistic, and Time-bound) in constructing those plans. It is no exaggeration to say that the ultimate success or failure of the NSPS rests on the performance objectives. The goal of the entire new personnel system is to improve employee performance by having the rater and ratee collaborate in preparing clear, measurable, and enhanced performance objectives and by suitably rewarding the attainment of those objectives. Yet as the members of my panel at the Conference of Army Historians in August pointed out, writing such objectives for historians is difficult, and it is especially difficult to measure what we do. Historians find it hard to quantify quality, but, much like what Justice Potter Stewart (no relation) wrote about pornography, we know it when we see it. That approach is simply not sufficient when our employee ratings reach the NSPS pay pool. If we fail to write performance objectives and respective ratings in ways that clearly demonstrate the quality of our employees' performance, their ratings (and wallets) will suffer.

To take a first stab at writing sample performance objectives for historians, I propose that we consider for discussion two categories of employees that might be found at the Center of Military History or in field history offices: historical project managers and historical action officers. These are just samples to consider and discuss. Each job is a little different, but perhaps there will be enough similarities to allow you to modify these examples to fit the peculiarities

of your own office. Once you have evaluated them, I encourage you to let me know which objectives work and which ones do not so that I can share your insights throughout the Army historical community.

Remember, the goal is to write clear objectives that each party (supervisor and employer) understands. If objectives are unclear or impossible to measure, no matter how carefully they are written, they will not be a valid basis for measuring work performance. Always remember, too, that the final word in setting objectives belongs to the supervisor, who is tasked by his or her supervisors to accomplish the mission. On the other hand, supervisors should remember that mutually agreed-upon objectives, reached in a spirit of cooperation and understanding, will work much better than those that are arbitrarily imposed.

Samples

1. Project Manager

Performance Objectives: Provide historical project management for division/branch/office historical projects including eight major book manuscripts and five historical pamphlets; for historical inquiry support to the Department of the Army and other staffs (as required); and for the conduct of the Army Oral History Program. Coordinate the workload, taskings, and allocation of resources for accomplishing the mission of the division/branch. Provide regular updates, on at least a quarterly basis, highlighting division/branch mission accomplishments in the previous quarter, specific goals for the next quarter, and any areas of concern or requirements for assistance. This supports the organization's principal goals of writing quality official histories and providing relevant and timely historical inquiry support for Army policymakers.

Measurement: Ensures that at least 90 percent of all project milestones are met on time and that responses to historical inquiries meet the suspense 95 percent of the time.

Contributing Factors: Cooperation, Teamwork, Resource management, Leadership.

2. Action Officer (Command history office, organizational/unit history)

Performance Objectives: Provide on demand historical research support on U.S. Army/Command policy issues/organizational or unit history issues. Prepare on demand within a specified time frame short, well-written, cogent information papers, staff actions, or studies, researched as carefully as time allows, that answer the questions posed. This supports the organization's goal of providing timely and relevant historical support to the U.S. Army/Command.

Measurement: Prepares papers or actions on time at least 90 percent of the time and requires not more than one rewrite before submission to the requesting staff or command element.

Contributing Factors: Critical thinking, Customer focus, Communication

For some offices, this will be the first full year of implementing the NSPS. It is important to take extra

care in crafting, and discussing, all performance objectives to improve *what* is being measured, *how* we measure it, and to what *standards*. All through this process it is important also to remember that ultimately the goal of the supervisor and the employee is the same: improved mission performance. Almost without exception people want to do a good job, and all of us need to work together to more clearly define what "good" is and how to measure it.

The bottom line is this. All of us face a learning curve when it comes to the NSPS and its requirements. Start now to understand how to write the best and clearest objectives, and work together to figure out how to measure what you do. The mission performance, and even the salary, of you and your historians may well be at stake.

In the next issue of *Army History*, I will offer some examples of performance objectives for writing historians and along the way provide my opinion on why it takes so long to write official history—always a controversial subject!

ARMY HISTORY

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Army History welcomes essays not to exceed 12,000 words on any topic relating to the history of the U.S. Army or to wars and conflicts in which the U.S. Army participated or by which it was substantially influenced. The Army's history extends to the present day, and *Army History* seeks accounts of the Army's actions in ongoing conflicts as well as those of earlier years. The bulletin particularly seeks writing, including commentaries, that presents new approaches to historical issues. It encourages readers to submit responses to essays or commentaries that have appeared in its pages and to present cogent arguments on any question (controversial or otherwise) relating to the history of the Army. Such contributions need not be lengthy. Essays and commentaries should be annotated with endnotes, preferably embedded, to indicate the sources relied on to support factual assertions. Preferably, a manuscript should be submitted as an attachment to an email sent to the managing editor at charles.hendricks@hqda.army.mil.

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