

# ARMY HISTORY

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The Professional Bulletin of Army History

# ARMY HISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

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**Cover Image:** Lt. Gen. James A. Van Fleet, 5 June 1951/Corbis

**Table of Contents Image:**

**Bottom, center:** A soldier of the 7th Infantry Division rests atop a recently captured Chinese fighting position during the first impulse of the Chinese spring offensives, 25 April 1951. / National Archives

## EDITOR'S JOURNAL

The Winter 2012 issue opens with a study by Robert B. Bruce, an associate professor of military history at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, arguing that the political aims of the Truman administration prevented Lt. Gen. James A. Van Fleet's Eighth Army from achieving a decisive military victory in the spring and summer of 1951. Shortly after Van Fleet arrived in Korea in early April 1951, an enemy spring offensive pushed U.S. and UN forces back to defensive lines that stretched across the width of the Korean peninsula just north of Seoul. Van Fleet's subsequent counteroffensive sent the Communist forces reeling and poised the Eighth Army on the verge of a possible decisive victory. However, restrictions placed on Van Fleet's offensive operations by his superiors halted the allied advance at predetermined lines north of the 38th Parallel. Van Fleet saw victory within his grasp; his superiors saw an opportunity to force the Communists to the bargaining table. The age-old debate concerning politics governing military action is as relevant today as it was sixty years ago during the "forgotten war."

We next feature an article by James N. Leiker, a professor of history at Johnson County Community College, on the Army's approach to the problems of race relations during World War II. As U.S. forces fought across the globe to end tyranny and oppression, many African Americans questioned how the Army could impose its own racist standards and practices on black servicemen. The Army, not unaware of the ironies or injustices, began to implement policies that would pave the way for the eventual desegregation of the U.S. armed forces.

As *Army History's* new managing editor, I invite readers to send me articles and commentaries that cover any aspect of the history of the U.S. Army that will enhance readers' understanding of significant historical developments. It is my belief that this bulletin should educate, spark debate, and encourage innovative examinations of themes both new and familiar.

Lastly, on behalf of the readership of *Army History*, I'd like to extend my sincere appreciation to my predecessor Charles Hendricks. His dedicated stewardship of this publication steered its development into a journal that, in the words of one reader, "is superb in all respects." *Army History's* small team of editors and designers will miss him and will strive to continue the high standards set by him for so many years.

Bryan J. Hockensmith  
Managing Editor



# THE CHIEF'S CORNER

ROBERT J. DALESSANDRO

## CORNERSTONE OF THE FUTURE: THE CENTER'S 2012–2017 STRATEGIC PLAN

**A**s promised, attached as an insert to this issue is the Center's new strategic plan. This strategic plan focuses on our core capabilities and sets the azimuth for the next five years. Furthermore, it seeks to enhance our ability to respond to future challenges while remaining true to our fundamental mission. Finally, the strategic plan serves as a transformational engine for the future restructuring of the Army historical community.

Essentially, the Center of Military History is responsible for the appropriate use of history and historical resources throughout the United States Army. We set priorities for Army historical organizations, publish the Army's official history, provide historical support to the Army Secretariat and Staff, manage the in-theater collection of historical materials, continue a vigorous role in the military history education of soldiers, manage the Army's museum system, record unit lineage and honors, and advance historical knowledge management systems Army-wide.

In short, the Center accurately collects, preserves, interprets, and expresses the Army's history and material culture to more broadly educate and develop our force, the military profession, and the nation.

We accomplish this mission through our primary lines of effort, which entail managing the Army's field history program; developing a cohesive Army museum program; providing historical support to Army leadership; creating and administering a historical knowledge management system; and researching, presenting, and preserving the Army's history and heritage.

Our long-term strategic goals are the following:

1. To improve our business processes and create a superior history and museum structure to meet the demands of a globally engaged Army in the twenty-first century.

2. To align the Center with Army knowledge management initiatives by leveraging twenty-first-century best practices and technology to transform our culture and historical information into an asset that has relevance to the Army.

3. To reaffirm the invaluable and indisputable value of the Army Historical Program to the Army and the nation.

4. To achieve greater effectiveness, enhance credibility, and expand the influence of the Army historical community.

5. To provide a highly motivated and loyal workforce that has superior professional capabilities and skills.

Our work with Army schools ensures that the study of history is an important part of the training of officers and noncommissioned officers. We support the use of history to foster unit pride and to give soldiers an understanding of the Army's past, with much of this educational work occurring at field historical offices and in Army museums.

My vision for the Center's future will establish it as the gold standard for history organizations. By amalgamating historical efforts and focusing on operational enhancements, information technology, internal development, brand enhancement, and strategic alliances, we will globally integrate the Army historical community and achieve indisputable relevance to the Army and the nation.

Our community has been passive far too long. It is time for us to awaken the power that history brings to our Army; only then can the past truly inform the future.

Keep Army History Alive!





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## Features



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TETHERED EAGLE: LT. GEN. JAMES A. VAN FLEET AND THE QUEST FOR MILITARY VICTORY IN THE KOREAN WAR, APRIL-JUNE 1951

By ROBERT B. BRUCE



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FREEDOM, EQUALITY, AND JUSTICE FOR ALL? THE U.S. ARMY AND THE REASSESSMENT OF RACE RELATIONS IN WORLD WAR II

By JAMES N. LEIKER



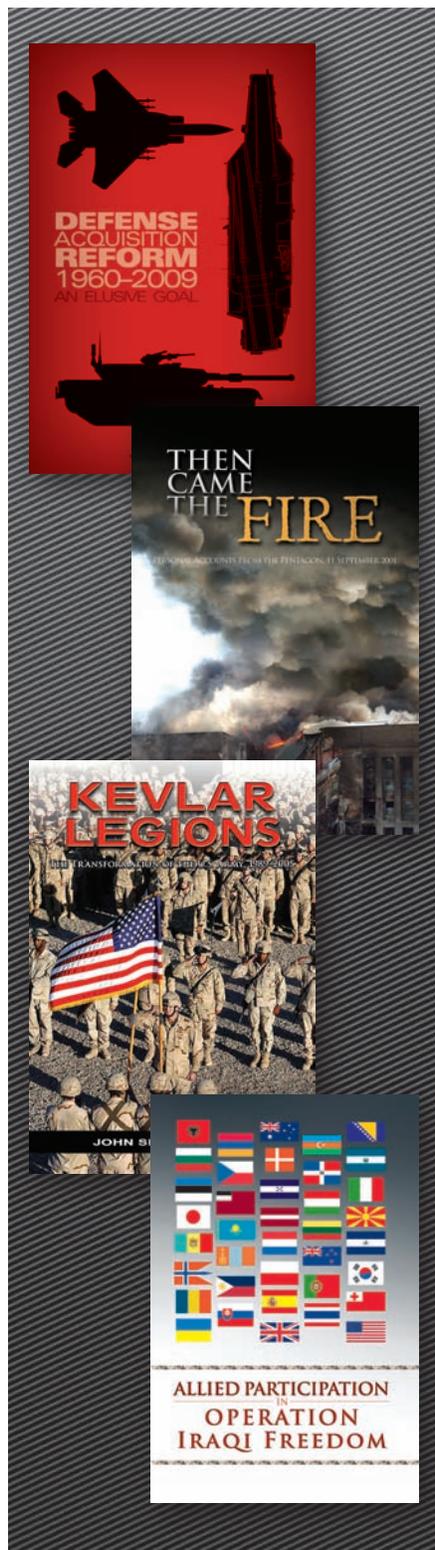
# NEWSNOTES

## CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY ISSUES NEW PUBLICATIONS

The U.S. Army Center of Military History has published a collection of oral history interviews conducted with Army civilians, soldiers, and emergency responders who witnessed the attack on the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, a study of the defense acquisition process for major weapon systems from 1960 to 2009, an examination of the thirty-seven coalition partners whose ground troops fought alongside U.S. forces in Iraq from March 2003 until mid-2009, and a book that details the Army's transformation in response to the end of the Cold War.

*Then Came the Fire: Personal Accounts from the Pentagon, 11 September 2001*, edited by Stephen J. Lofgren, highlights the recollections of those who witnessed some aspect of the attack firsthand. This book is a collection of oral history interviews that provides a unique perspective on the events of that day as they were experienced through the eyes of those inside the Pentagon, emergency responders, and others. Many of the interviews were conducted only a few weeks after the attack. With the memories still fresh in the minds of those interviewed, their stories are gripping and often harrowing as individuals struggled to escape the building, rescued trapped and injured coworkers, and coped with the physical and psychological aftereffects. This 340-page book has been issued in paperback as CMH Pub 70-119-1. It is available for purchase from the Government Printing Office for \$35. Lofgren is the chief of the Center's Historical Support Branch.

J. Ronald Fox's book *Defense Acquisition Reform, 1960-2009: An Elusive Goal*, offers historical and analytical accounts of the defense acquisition



process for major weapon systems in order to identify long-term trends, insights, and observations that could provide perspective and context to assist current defense decision makers, acquisition officials, and the acquisition schoolhouse. From 1960 through 2009, there were more than twenty-seven major studies of defense acquisition commissioned by presidents, Congress, secretaries of defense, government agencies, studies and analyses organizations, and universities. Numerous other noteworthy studies of defense acquisition have been conducted and published by the General Accountability Office during the same period. Much to the surprise of many, the reform studies over the 49-year period arrived at most of the same findings and made similar recommendations. But the political will to make the changes combined with the internal dynamics resistant to them led to only minor improvements. The problems of schedule slippages, cost growth, and technical performance shortfalls on defense acquisition programs remained much the same throughout this time. This 280-page book has been issued in paperback as CMH Pub 55-3-1. Fox is the Tiampo professor of business administration, emeritus, at Harvard Business School.

*Allied Participation in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM*, by Stephen A. Carney, examines the achievements and contributions of the allied nations that supplied ground troops to the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq during 2003-2009. It does not cover forces deployed to Iraq under the aegis of the United Nations or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. From the start of operations in Iraq in March 2003 until mid-2009, ground troops from thirty-seven countries fought at the side of U.S. forces, with many more providing indirect

*Continued on page 42*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Dr. Robert B. Bruce** is an associate professor of military history at the Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, Quantico, Virginia. He holds a Ph.D. in history from Kansas State University and is an award-winning author who has published extensively in the field of military history. His books include *A Fraternity of Arms: America & France in the Great War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), which won the Tomlinson Prize from the Western Front Association for the best book on World War I, and *Pétain: Verdun to Vichy* (Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books, 2008). He is also the coauthor of *Fighting Techniques of the Napoleonic Age, 1792-1815* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008) and *Fighting Techniques of the Colonial Era, 1776-1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009).



General Van Fleet in the autumn of 1952 wearing the fourth star that he received for smashing the Chinese spring offensives the previous year

# TETHERED EAGLE

**Lt. Gen. James A. Van Fleet and the  
Quest for Military Victory in the Korean  
War, April–June 1951**

BY ROBERT B. BRUCE



**I**n April 1951, President Harry Truman relieved General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, commander in chief, Far East, of his command of U.S. and United Nations (UN) forces in the Korean War for publicly questioning presidential policy in the conflict and named General Matthew B. Ridgway, commanding general of the U.S. Eighth Army in Korea, as MacArthur's replacement in senior command. As the nation focused on the fall of this titanic figure, scant attention was paid to a brief ceremony held in Taegu, Republic of Korea (ROK), on 14 April 1951 in which Ridgway handed over control of the Eighth Army to a newcomer to the war and a relative unknown individual outside the professional officer corps of the U.S. Army, Lt. Gen. James Alward Van Fleet. Ridgway briefed Van Fleet on the volatile situation in Korea, where the *Chinese Communist Forces (CCF)* and the *North Korean People's Army (NKPA)* were building up for a major offensive. In fact, eight days after Van Fleet's assumption of command, the Communists struck U.S. forces and their UN allies with the largest offensive of the war in an attempt to capitalize on America's political turmoil, achieve a decisive success, and win the Korean War. The Chinese Fifth Phase Offensive, as it was dubbed by the attackers, inaugurated

a series of battles that would test Van Fleet to the utmost as he led the Eighth Army to victory in what remains the largest campaign waged by the U.S. Army in the post-World War II era. In spite of his operational success on the battlefield, Van Fleet believed his hard-won victory was a hollow one because decisions made by his superiors in the wake of his triumph halted his victorious army in its tracks while the Truman administration sought a political settlement to the war rather than a military victory.

James A. Van Fleet graduated from West Point in 1915 as part of the legendary "class the stars fell on." Over one-third of the members of this remarkable group achieved general officer rank, including Generals of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower and Omar N. Bradley. Van Fleet commanded a machine gun battalion in the 6th Division during World War I, where he won two Silver Stars and was badly wounded in action in the final days of the war. He spent the 1920s and 1930s commanding Reserve Officers' Training Corps detachments at various universities and coaching football, including a successful two-year stint as the head coach of the University of Florida team in 1923–1924. Over six feet tall and powerfully built, Van Fleet had played fullback on Army's unbeaten 1914 squad and was a firm believer in the importance of football

in training young men to be officers. He once wrote, "Football and war are very similar. Books have been written covering the Principles of War. These principles apply equally to combat on the gridiron."<sup>1</sup>

After the entry of the United States into World War II, Van Fleet was continually passed over for promotion in spite of his solid service record and combat experience in the First World War. In later years, a story circulated that George C. Marshall, while serving as assistant commandant of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, had an officer under his command named Van Vliet (pronounced Van Fleet) who was a drunkard and was disciplined by Marshall on several occasions for this problem. When Marshall became U.S. Army Chief of Staff during World War II, he confused James Van Fleet (ironically a teetotaler) with this other officer and thus repeatedly denied recommendations for Van Fleet's promotion to general officer rank from 1941–1944.<sup>2</sup>

Van Fleet commanded the 8th Infantry, U.S. 4th Division, at UTAH Beach on D-Day, 6 June 1944. He rose rapidly in rank during the campaign in northwest Europe as he proved to be a magnificent leader. Van Fleet became assistant division commander of the 2d Infantry Division and then in September 1944 was promoted to major general and given

Van Fleet, front row, third from left, and V. Adm. Forrest P. Sherman, front row, fourth from left, attend the Greek Independence Day parade, 1949.

command of the 4th Infantry Division when its commanding general fell ill. From October 1944 to February 1945, Van Fleet commanded the 90th Infantry Division, which was assigned to Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army, before Patton promoted him to the command of the III Corps during the final drive into Germany. His aggressiveness and skills made him a favorite of Patton, who proclaimed Van Fleet to be the best combat commander in his army.<sup>3</sup>

In 1948, Van Fleet was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general



## RIDGWAY WOULD NOT TOLERATE ANY VIEWS FROM HIS SUBORDINATES THAT CONTRADICTED THE ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION

upon the recommendation of Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army General J. Lawton Collins, who had become a great supporter of Van Fleet during the campaign in northwest Europe during World War II. That same year, Secretary of State George C. Marshall appointed Van Fleet to head the Joint U.S. Military Advisory and Planning Group in Greece, where a Communist insurgency was threatening to topple the pro-American government. Van Fleet oversaw the training and reorganization of the Greek Army into an effective fighting force, playing a significant role in its ultimate victory over the Communist guerrillas.<sup>4</sup> This early Cold War clash with communism had a profound effect on Van Fleet's views of the global nature of the Communist threat to the Free World and he later wrote, "In fighting communist aggression, we are fighting the same enemy in one war on many fronts."<sup>5</sup>

Van Fleet returned to the United States in July 1950, shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, and was placed in command of the U.S. Second Army, which essentially existed only on paper. He followed the war in Asia with keen professional interest, and, in December 1950, while attending the funeral of Eighth Army commander Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker, Van Fleet was taken aside by Collins, now Army chief of staff, who told him to be prepared to assume command of Eighth Army in the near future. When Truman made his fateful decision to fire MacArthur and replace him with Ridgway as commander in chief, Far East, he also suggested that Van Fleet be sent to Korea to take charge of Eighth Army. Collins concurred and on 11 April 1951 telephoned Van Fleet, who was on leave at his home in Florida at the time, to inform him of his new assignment and that he was to depart immediately for Korea.<sup>6</sup>

As head of the U.S. Eighth Army, Van Fleet commanded all U.S. ground forces in Korea, as well as the entire ROK Army and all ground contingents of UN member nations. General George E. Stratemeyer (another member of the West Point class of 1915) commanded the U.S. Far East Air Forces and V. Adm. C. Turner Joy commanded Naval Forces, Far East. General Ridgway, as supreme commander, exercised strategic control of the Far East theater of operations from his headquarters in Tokyo. Ridgway was determined to have a better relationship with his subordinates in Korea than his predecessor MacArthur had maintained. Ridgway wrote,

MacArthur, besides being a dominating personality, had military experience vastly greater than that of any officer under his command. It was only natural that he would have far more confidence in his own

judgment than in that of any of his commanders. Consequently he had undoubtedly felt justified in holding a tight rein on his field commanders and in making all major tactical decisions himself, leaving only details of execution to the discretion of his field subordinates. By contrast, I had full confidence in General Van Fleet, a courageous and competent field commander. Moreover, I had always felt that the views of subordinate field commanders were entitled to the most thoughtful consideration.<sup>7</sup>

In the wake of MacArthur's firing over his disputes with the Truman administration's policies in Korea, however, Ridgway would not tolerate any views from his subordinates that contradicted the administration's decision to keep hostilities limited to Korea. Ridgway stated that he "wanted to keep always in mind the clear policy decisions communicated to me by President Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the most immediate of which was to avoid any action that might result in an extension of hostilities and thus lead to a worldwide conflagration."<sup>8</sup>

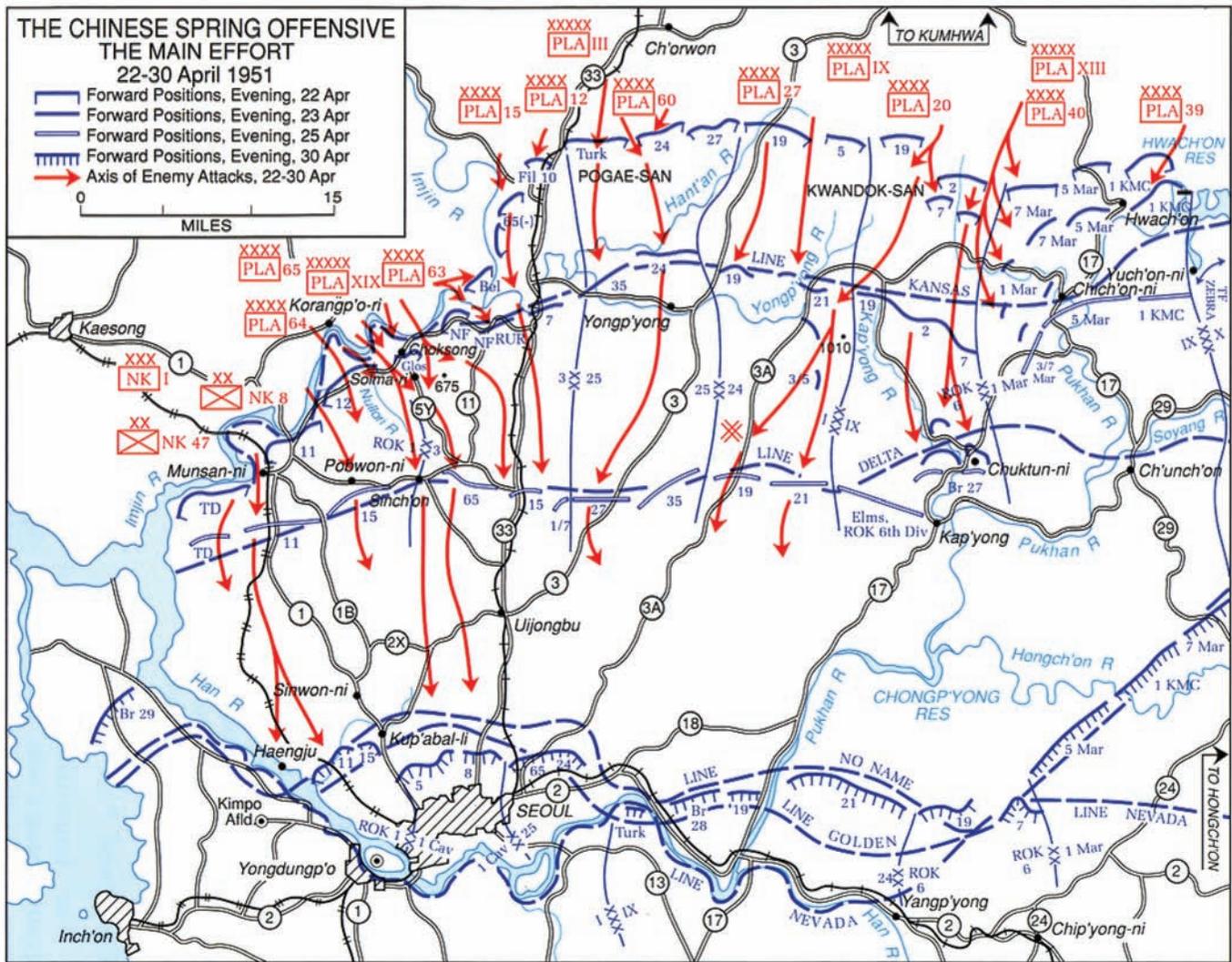
In addition to limiting military operations to the Korean peninsula, Ridgway also restricted the northward movement of Van Fleet's ground forces, informing him that he was to conduct no operations north of the Kansas-Wyoming Line (located just above the 38th Parallel) without prior approval from Ridgway's headquarters in Tokyo.<sup>9</sup> Ridgway stressed to Van Fleet that the danger of Soviet intervention in the war by way of an attack on Western Europe was an overriding concern of Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Thus any movement that might provoke the Soviets was strictly proscribed. In addition, the JCS was sending troops to Europe to bolster North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) defenses against the expected Soviet attack and therefore Ridgway advised Van Fleet that he could expect "no major reinforcements in combat organizations or service support units."<sup>10</sup>

Soon after his arrival, Van Fleet set out on an inspection tour of his new

command, visiting with corps, division, and regimental commanders, traveling the length of the battlefield to get a firsthand assessment of the situation on the ground confronting his army. Van Fleet came away from this trip greatly impressed by the fighting spirit of the Eighth Army.

Ridgway had been instrumental in the transformation of a beaten army reeling from the shock of the initial Chinese intervention in the war to a professional, efficient, and hard-hitting outfit eager for battle. The men of the Eighth Army had acquired a great deal of combat





experience against both the North Koreans and the Chinese and displayed a combativeness and rugged determination to see the job through. After completing his visits, Van Fleet wrote to his family that

Everywhere I went to inspect the Eighth Army my spirits rose. I would shout, "Hi Soldier!" and back would come a grin, a salute and a "Hi General!" The whole atmosphere was alert, well disciplined, friendly, confident. Once a corporal asked me in all seriousness, "What's holding us back, General? Why don't we get it over with?" In place after place I talked to young second lieutenants with grim, set, fighting jaws—and I knew our army was ready.<sup>11</sup>

When Van Fleet arrived in Korea, Operation DAUNTLESS, a methodi-

cal northward advance by the Eighth Army, was under way with UN forces once more pushing north of the 38th Parallel, the prewar Korean border. As the advance elements of the Eighth Army reached the Kansas and Utah lines, reconnaissance aircraft reported large clouds of billowing black smoke rising from the Korean hills. By mid-April, thick clouds of black smoke up to ten miles deep stretched across portions of the Korean peninsula. Through brief gaps in the smoke screen, aerial spotters reported seeing Communist soldiers setting grass and brush on fire as well as operating smoke generators. U.S. intelligence had learned from past experience that the Chinese, who preferred to move units at night to avoid detection from the air, used smoke screens such as this to conceal large-scale daylight troop movements. The only time the

Chinese moved large numbers of men in daylight was when something big was in the offing.<sup>12</sup>

Van Fleet became increasingly concerned about these reports and grew especially wary about the apparent lack of enemy resistance in the western sector of the battlefield north of Seoul. Smelling a trap, Van Fleet halted all offensive operations until the situation developed more fully. On the morning of 22 April 1951, U.S. reconnaissance aircraft spotted large formations of Chinese troops pushing south out of their smoke screen, and, in the gathering twilight of late afternoon, U.S. and ROK units in the western section of the front reported heavy skirmishing in and around their forward outposts.

Van Fleet placed the entire Eighth Army on full alert for the evening of 22 April 1951 and ordered his units to assume defensive positions. That

# “THIS IS THE CAMPAIGN THAT WILL DETERMINE THE FATE OF THE KOREAN WAR.”

night approximately 350,000 Chinese troops from the *CCF III, IX, XIII,* and *XIX Army Groups*, together with 25,000 men from the *NKPA I Corps*, launched a powerful assault against the western front of the Eighth Army's battle line.<sup>13</sup> Chinese commanders exhorted their troops as they moved into battle by telling them that “this is the campaign that will determine the fate of the Korean War,” and General Peng Dehuai, the overall commander of Chinese forces in Korea, vowed to present the city of Seoul to his leader Premier Mao Zedong as a May Day present.<sup>14</sup>

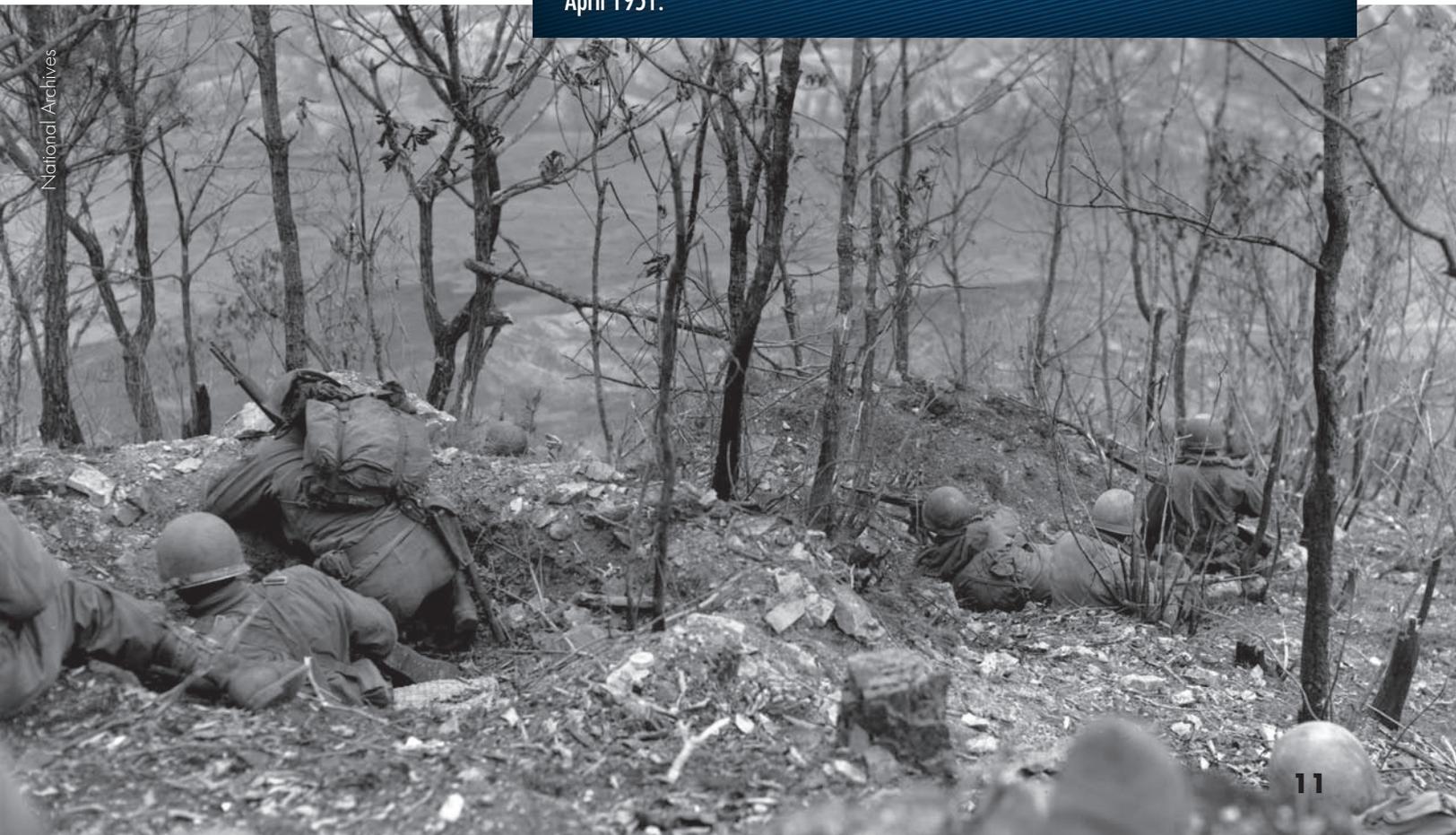
Maj. Gen. Frank W. Milburn's I Corps bore the brunt of the enemy's attacks and took a heavy pounding from the Chinese. Milburn's corps began to fall back under the intense Chinese pressure, something that had been common practice while Ridgway

commanded Eighth Army as he had stressed the idea of “rolling with the punch” and allowing the Chinese to gain ground while exhausting them in the process. Van Fleet completely disagreed with this philosophy but after less than two weeks in command did not feel comfortable changing Ridgway's prior directives just yet. Thus Van Fleet allowed I Corps to fall back toward Seoul but also ordered that the South Korean capital must be held and not allowed to fall again, stating that if the capital fell for a third time to the Communists it would “ruin the spirit of the [Republic of Korea].”<sup>15</sup>

Van Fleet ordered the fortification of a final fall-back position for his units in the west, which he dubbed the

Golden Line. This defensive position ran through the northern outskirts of Seoul and thus protected the South Korean capital, but it meant that Milburn's I Corps and elements of Maj. Gen. William M. Hoge's IX Corps to his east would have the broad expanse of the Han River at their backs. When Van Fleet informed his superiors of this deployment and his determination to hold Seoul, Ridgway and the Joint Chiefs became very concerned and feared Van Fleet was courting disaster. Ridgway flew to Korea and told Van Fleet to withdraw his men south of the Han and make his defensive stand on the other side of the river, even though this meant abandoning Seoul. Van Fleet countered that he was

Members of the 24th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division, fight on rocky slopes against Chinese Communist counterattacks in the west-central front, south of Ch'orwon, 23 April 1951.



# "WE CAN FINISH THEM OFF RIGHT HERE. I AM VERY CONFIDENT WE'LL HOLD."

not afraid of the developing Chinese offensive that was pushing toward the ROK capital and argued that the Golden Line was held in-depth and supported by powerful concentrations of artillery as well as air and naval assets. Van Fleet told Ridgway, "We can finish them off right here. I am very confident we'll hold." After some tense moments of discussion, Ridgway grudgingly gave his approval and returned to Tokyo as Van Fleet continued his preparations to defend the South Korean capital.<sup>16</sup>

Van Fleet's decision to hold was soon proved correct. The Chinese assault divisions were exhausted by this point in the offensive. Fresh formations had been brought forward but command and control, always primitive in the CCF at this stage of the Korean War, had broken down badly as units had become intermingled, and it was difficult for Peng Dehuai to control his divisions. In addition,

the terrain in this area of Korea was relatively open and lacked sufficient natural cover to conceal the Chinese formations, which were thus brought under constant air attack by the U.S. aircraft. This included surprise nighttime bombing raids on suspected enemy concentration areas and avenues of advance. Finally, and perhaps decisively, the Chinese were unable to support their advance logistically. In particular, the Chinese had a hard time resupplying their men with food. Their troops had been issued five days of rations in their assembly areas

prior to the attack. It had taken them twenty-four to forty-eight hours to deploy for the attack before the actual battle began. Thus, by the fifth day of the Chinese offensive, their troops were out of food and desperately in need of resupply. While it appeared the Chinese were advancing in fury on the South Korean capital, in fact the divisions that emerged onto the plains north of Seoul were in no shape to attack and had already reached their culmination point. Unable to properly coordinate and plan the attack and effectively communicate with his forward commanders, Peng lost control of his formations. Chinese division and regimental commanders were thus left to issue attack orders such as "go to Seoul" or "go as far south as possible," with the result being a series of loosely coordinated attacks. Milburn's I Corps, supported by air and naval assets, bloodily repulsed the disjointed Chinese attacks. By 28 April 1951, the first wave of the Chinese Fifth Phase Offensive had spent itself and Peng's battered divisions broke contact and



limped northward having suffered an estimated 79,000 casualties for no tangible gain.<sup>17</sup>

As the Chinese disengaged, Van Fleet remained on the defensive, bracing his Eighth Army for a new enemy onslaught that did not materialize. Van Fleet wrote, “Only later, when I learned more about the enemy and his weakness did I realize what an opportunity we had then. After only two weeks in Korea I had no way of knowing that the Chinese Reds were not at all as advertised and that a counterattack would have sent them reeling toward disaster.”<sup>18</sup> Van Fleet later stated about the Chinese Army in Korea that “about the fifth day the enemy has lost his cohesion, his troops are out of hand, they are butchered up and they are weary. They are talking about troubles. They are complaining of casualties, complaining of supplies. They are having tremendous problems of sustaining the momentum of attack. They don’t know how to maintain momentum of attack.”<sup>19</sup> Van Fleet considered his failure to counterattack in late April 1951 as his “big mistake” in the Korean War, and he was determined that if the opportunity for a counteroffensive should arise again, he would not let the enemy disengage so easily.

Van Fleet would not have to wait long for another engagement with the Chinese. Battered, but far from beaten, Peng Dehuai’s forces withdrew north in the early days of May 1951, but intelligence reported that fresh Chinese armies were entering Korea from Manchuria and that Communist forces already on the peninsula were regrouping and shifting northeast toward the central sector of the front. As dense smoke clouds rose once more over the

Korean peninsula, the head of Eighth Army intelligence, Lt. Col. James C. Tarkenton reported to Van Fleet that another major enemy offensive was imminent. Van Fleet concurred and began to prepare for a battle of annihilation that would not only halt the next Chinese drive, but also destroy the Chinese army by counterattacking before it could disengage.

On 30 April 1951, Van Fleet ordered the Golden Line strengthened and directed that a new defensive line be constructed that would extend eastward from Seoul into the rugged hills and mountains of central Korea. In that region, the U.S. IX and X Corps and the ROK III Corps held the center of Eighth Army’s line. Van Fleet dubbed this new position the No-Name Line and determined to make it the most comprehensive and formidable set of defensive works ever constructed by UN forces in Korea. To this end, he tirelessly toured the battlefield to oversee the construction of the No-Name Line and make sure that it met his strict requirements. He directed that, in addition to having the infantry dig trenches, he wanted sandbag bunkers built for crew-served weapons. He further stipulated that the front line should be protected by three bands of double-apron barbed wire (spaced fifty-yards apart) with dense minefields laid between the bands. He had

“fougasse” mines interspersed in the wire and in the immediate front of the trenches and the bunkers of his units. A fougasse mine was a “homemade” incendiary, which, when detonated, unleashed a sheet of flame ten yards wide and forty yards long.<sup>20</sup>

Van Fleet inspected the IX Corps sector of the front just east of Seoul and told the corps commander, General Hoge, that “this line is the best place to kill the Chinamen. It’s better to do it here and now—this month and the next. I want lots more wire and mines expended, not human life.”<sup>21</sup> Van Fleet was supremely confident of his army’s ability to defeat the Chinese. He wrote to his wife regarding his latest tour of the front:

Part of my day yesterday [11 May 1951] was spent with the 19th Infantry of the 24th [Infantry] Division. This is a splendid regiment, skilled, determined, courageous, and cocky as can be. Going along the front inspecting foxholes, machineguns and other infantry soldiers, I knew I was in good company. . . . I wouldn’t be a bit surprised if the CCF doesn’t expend a full army attacking in column of divisions against this position and the way the men feel about it is that the Chinks will be piled ten deep before their position is breached. Just for good measure

Troops of the 31st Infantry, 7th Infantry Division, on a hill near Ch’unch’on, 24 May 1951

A Marine Corps F4U Corsair fighter-bomber, June 1951



I am going to give them some engineers to improve the defenses and a little thickening up with 155 millimeter and 8-inch howitzers. I too, want to go back to that spot and see those Chinks piled up like cordwood.<sup>22</sup>

The assignment of supporting artillery to the various corps sectors of the Eighth Army was one of Van Fleet's top priorities as he toured the battlefield. Van Fleet realized early in his tenure as Eighth Army commander that his army's artillery was vastly superior to the Chinese in terms of both quality and numbers of guns.<sup>23</sup> Van Fleet strongly believed that to achieve victory on the battlefields of Korea his advantage

in firepower had to be exploited to the fullest. He ordered an immense stockpile of artillery and mortar shells to be gathered in forward depots and also made sure that his artillery was properly registered on projected enemy assembly areas and avenues of attack. On 14 May 1951, Van Fleet told Hoge and his staff at IX Corps headquarters, "I want to stress again that my idea of obstacles and fire power is vast. We must expend steel and fire, not men. I want to stop the Chinaman here and hurt him. I welcome his attack and want to be strong enough in position and fire power to defeat him. I want so many artillery holes that a man can step from one to another. This is not an overstatement; I mean it!"<sup>24</sup>

The application of firepower on the battlefield was an absolute obsession for Van Fleet from the moment he arrived in Korea. He realized that China had an almost limitless supply of manpower that could be fed into the furnace of battle, while he was already outnumbered and had been briefed that he could expect to receive no significant reinforcements. As Van Fleet saw it, the only way to counter the infantry-dense Chinese assault formations was to meet them with powerful artillery fire. Shortly after the first impulse of the Chinese Fifth Phase Offensive was thrown back in April, Van Fleet circulated a directive to all artillery battalion commanders in Korea, stipulating a new rate of fire that would be expected of them during any future enemy attack. Dubbed the Van Fleet Load, this directive called on gunners to achieve a rate of fire five times that utilized during previous operations in the Korean War.

Eighth Army G-4 Col. Albert K. Stebbins calculated that this rate of fire could be supported for about one week, as long as sufficient transportation assets could be shifted from carrying other forms of supply and dedicated exclusively to transporting ammunition. Stebbins believed that this would be feasible if adequate

### Van Fleet Day of Fire Per Tube

Artillery	Totals
105-mm. howitzer	300 rounds
155-mm. howitzer	250 rounds
155-mm. gun	200 rounds
8-inch. howitzer	200 rounds
75-mm. howitzer	250 rounds

Source: Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow, November 1950–July 1951, United States Army in the Korean War* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1990), p. 442.



stores of food, fuel, and other items were stockpiled beforehand.<sup>25</sup>

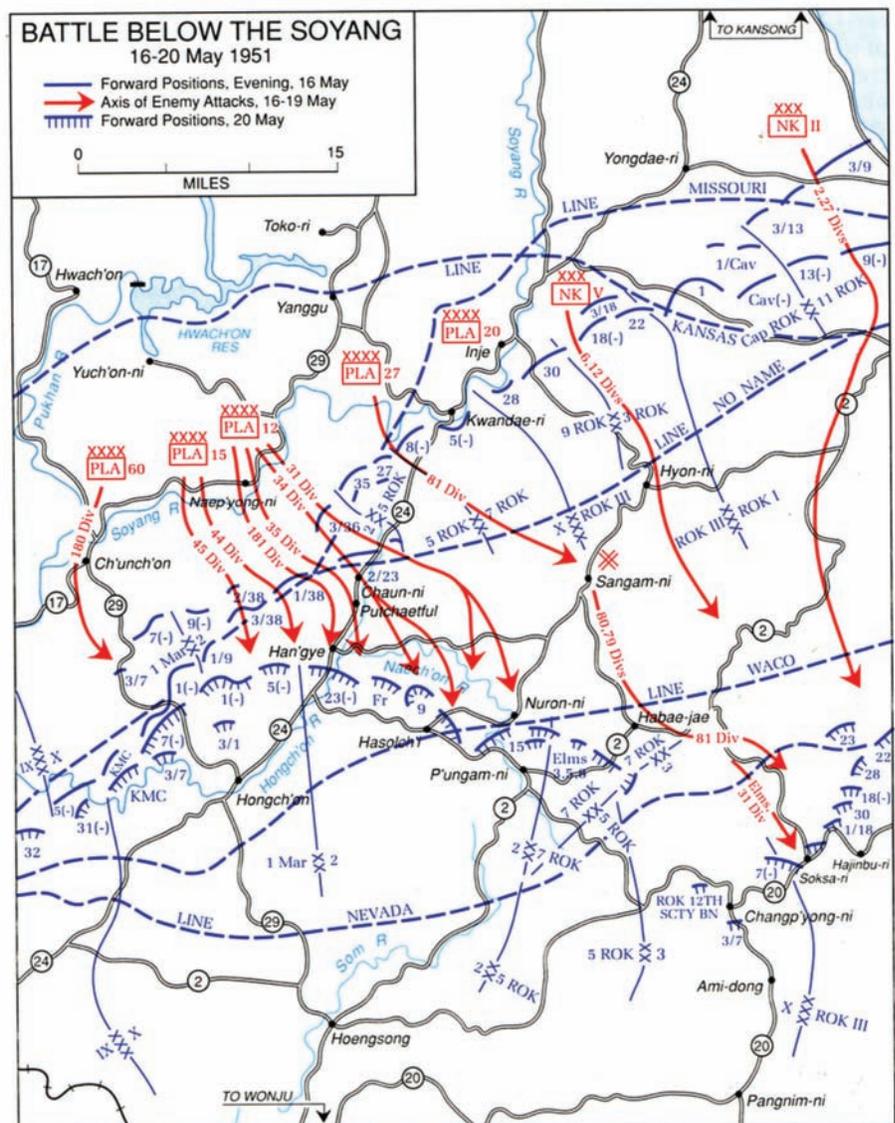
Van Fleet's defensive system was not a static line. He directed that each division in the Eighth Army establish a regiment-size "patrol box" anywhere from five to fifteen miles north of the main line of resistance to provide the earliest possible warning of the impending enemy assault. At the same time, he placed the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (RCT) in reserve to use as a spearhead for the counterattack he intended to launch once the Chinese offensive had spent itself. Eighth Army intelligence worked at a feverish pace during the first two weeks of May, as aggressive reconnaissance probes from Van Fleet's patrol boxes in front of the No-Name Line brought in Chinese prisoners who spoke freely of an impending attack. The captives revealed that the Chinese attack would commence on the evening of 16 May 1951 in east-central Korea and that the objective of the offensive was to destroy all ROK forces east of the breakthrough and the U.S. 2d Infantry Division west of the point of attack. Eighth Army intelligence surmised that the Chinese wanted to move the battlefield away from the clear coastal plain north of Seoul where UN airpower, naval gunfire, and artillery had wreaked such carnage on them during their offensive in April. Instead, Peng hoped to bring the battle into the mountains of central Korea where the rough terrain would provide cover for his men and the poor road network in this area would greatly hamper the mechanized/motorized UN forces. Evidently due to the strong screen of patrol boxes established by Van Fleet well in front of the No-Name Line, the Chinese were unaware

of the daunting field fortifications constructed by Eighth Army in the central region of Korea.<sup>26</sup>

Upon receiving this intelligence, Van Fleet flashed warnings to the commander of the X Corps, Lt. Gen. Edward M. Almond, as well as Maj. Gen. Clark L. Ruffner, commanding general of the U.S. 2d Infantry Division (assigned to X Corps), and Maj. Gen. Yu Jai Heung, commander of the ROK III Corps, that the expected Chinese offensive was now imminent and that all signs indicated that their commands would be the main targets of the assault.

As expected, on the night of 16 May 1951, the second impulse of the Chinese Fifth Phase Offensive began as the CCF 27th Army and the NKPA V Corps struck the ROK III Corps a heavy blow. At the same time, the CCF

92d Army and CCF 5th Army slammed into Ruffner's 2d Infantry Division in a series of fanatical assaults during which the Chinese forged through barbed wire, dense minefields, and incredible volumes of artillery fire to close with the men. Ruffner's division stood fast however, inflicting grievous losses on the Chinese. Only one penetration was made by the Chinese in the 2d Infantry Division's positions on 16 May, and that came in the sector held by the attached Netherlands battalion, which was pushed aside near Hill 1051, opening a gap in the division's lines. Ruffner immediately ordered counterattacks to seal the breach, but these were driven back. The division commander then attempted to cauterize the opening in his lines with prodigious quantities of ar-



Men of the 937th Field Artillery Battalion, attached to the 96th Field Artillery Battalion, U.S. Eighth Army, fire their 155-mm. self-propelled gun at Yanggu, 30 June 1951.

# ADVANCING OVER MOUNDS OF THEIR OWN DEAD AS THEY RUSHED TO EXPLOIT THE HOLE

tillery fire and air strikes. Ground observers, however, reported that the Chinese assault columns were trotting through the heaviest concentrations of fire, advancing over mounds of their own dead as they rushed to exploit the hole in the division's lines. With the breach still not closed at midmorning on 17 May, more bad news arrived at Ruffner's headquarters; the entire ROK III Corps on his right had collapsed into a chaotic mass and was in full retreat. Tens of thousands of Chinese were now pouring past and around the 2d Infantry Division's wide-open right flank, threatening to completely encircle it.<sup>27</sup>

By nightfall of 17 May, the men of the 2d Infantry Division were fighting Chinese to their front, right, and rear, simultaneously. To many veterans of the 2d, the situation looked disturbingly similar to the Battle of the Ch'ongch'on River in November 1950, in which the ROK II Corps had collapsed, leaving the division's right flank exposed. In that battle the Chinese had managed to completely encircle and almost destroy the division before it was able to finally extricate itself.<sup>28</sup>

On 17 May 1951, Van Fleet summoned his senior officers to an emergency meeting to discuss the Chinese offensive. After a briefing on the progress of the Chinese attacks, he ordered all artillery battalions in Eighth Army to begin firing the "Van Fleet" load and directed that there were to be no



National Archives

General Almond

withdrawals from the main line of resistance without his express authorization. Van Fleet then met privately with Almond, the X Corps commander, and his staff and, after a more comprehensive briefing on the situation confronting X Corps, ordered the U.S. 3d Infantry Division to be transferred from IX Corps to Almond's command as soon as possible. Van Fleet cautioned Almond that only the 15th Infantry was available for immediate transfer, however, and that it would take two or three days to get the rest of the 3d Division to him. Almond gratefully accepted the reinforcement and requested that

more artillery battalions be assigned to X Corps and extra trucks to help expedite the movement of artillery ammunition from his supply point to the front. Van Fleet agreed to both of these requests and promised Almond that more vehicles and guns were on the way.<sup>29</sup>

At 0900, on 18 May, Van Fleet called a meeting of his Eighth Army staff to quash rumors about any impending disaster for the 2d Infantry Division or the X Corps and to stress once more that there would be no withdrawals:

We want maximum casualties on the enemy; minimum on our own troops. Terrain in itself doesn't mean much, but certain localities with significance must be held, i.e. Seoul. If we back off MLR held by I, IX, [Corps] and 1st Marine and 2d Inf Division [X Corps], we will

have to meet [the] enemy later, on poorer and less prepared terrain, and in worse weather. We want to hit him here and now. This "roll with the punch" conception is out and I have made this point clear to Corps Commanders. We move back only to prevent loss of a major unit, i.e., a battalion. Units will withdraw only on orders from higher. We must fight on this line and put a terrific toll on the enemy; here is our opportunity.<sup>30</sup>

Van Fleet's confidence was a result of the thoroughly prepared killing

ground he had established along the No-Name Line where his regiments were solidly entrenched and supported by powerful artillery assets and air support. If Peng Dehuai attacked here, he would be launching his men straight into a carefully constructed mincing machine of fire and steel.

The only area where Van Fleet's order to stand could not be enforced was in the sector of the collapsed ROK III Corps. The absence of any valuable terrain objective in that sector of the front, however, encouraged Van Fleet to ignore the deep southward penetration made in the area by the Chinese and instead mass his forces for a counterattack against the shoulders of the enemy breakthrough. In addition, at 2030 hours on 18 May, Van Fleet directed that the I and IX Corps, holding the western sector of the main line of resistance in front of Seoul and thus far untouched by the current Chinese offensive, be prepared to "move on order in strong probing attacks to line Topeka."<sup>31</sup> Thus even as the Chinese offensive was still in full swing, Van Fleet was already plotting the counterstroke that would launch the entire Eighth Army forward the moment the Chinese attack began to falter.<sup>32</sup>

Upon the recommendation of Ruffner and Almond, Van Fleet reluctantly permitted the besieged 2d Infantry Division to conduct a series of limited withdrawals, which actually involved the division attacking south in order to fight through the encircling Chinese forces. Van Fleet emphasized that the 2d Division's retrograde movements needed to be short ones and that they should be coordinated with X Corps and divisional artillery to continue to lay down heavy fire on the pursuing Chinese. Ruffner executed the 2d Infantry Division's withdrawals with great tactical finesse, and by 20 May 1951 his division had reestablished itself on better ground just a few miles south of its original position on the No-Name Line. With its flanks relatively secured, Ruffner's division turned and stood its ground, absorbing the full fury of attacks from the *CCF 12th* and *15th Armies* from 20–22 May 1951. In forty-eight hours of desperate battle, the men of the 2d



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Two soldiers of the 3d Infantry Division work together — one firing, the other spotting — during a skirmish near Chang'yong-ni, 20 May 1951.

Infantry Division sent these Chinese armies reeling backward. During 16–31 May 1951, the 2d Division inflicted an estimated 40,000 casualties on the Chinese while suffering 2,744 casualties itself, the highest casualty total of any U.S. division during this time period.<sup>33</sup>

Van Fleet would later heap praise on the 2d Infantry Division for its magnificent defensive stand. On 21 May 1951, Van Fleet reflected on the battle and wrote home, "We have stopped temporarily at least, the second Communist offensive, inflicting terrible casualties on him. My old Second Division did most of the work."<sup>34</sup> Van Fleet recommended the division for a Presidential Unit Citation in recognition of its achievements in this fight.<sup>35</sup> In addition, eighteen men of the 2d Infantry Division (including the division commander, General Ruffner) were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for exemplary valor in action during 16–22 May 1951.<sup>36</sup> The men of the 2d Infantry Division themselves would forever remember their battle as the "May Massacre" in reference to

the tremendous losses they inflicted on the Chinese during 16–22 May and the UN counteroffensive that followed.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout its battle the 2d Infantry Division, and indeed the entire X Corps, employed enormous artillery barrages to saturate the attacking Chinese with fire. The amount of artillery shells fired in the X Corps sector during the critical moments of the Chinese offensive from 17–23 May 1951 was nothing short of fantastic. During that week of operations alone, the twenty-one artillery battalions assigned to the X Corps fired 309,958 rounds, or 8,730 tons, of ammunition; by far the heaviest concentration of artillery fire ever seen in the Korean War. By way of comparison, during World War II the thirty-five battalions of artillery attached to Patton's Third Army during its offensive against the German left flank of the "Bulge" from 22–31 December 1944 fired 94,230 rounds. Also during the Second World War, the XX Corps (in which Van Fleet's 90th Division served) fired 10,000 tons of artillery ammunition during its ten-day assault on Metz in September 1944.<sup>38</sup>

The defensive stand of the 2d Infantry Division, along with the timely arrival of the 3d Infantry Division in the X Corps zone of operations,



A crew from the 15th Regimental Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division, fires its 75-mm. recoilless rifle from the base of Hill 502, 21 May 1951.

National Archives

prevented the Chinese from expanding the salient they had created when they had smashed the ROK III Corps. Although the Chinese *20th* and *27th Armies* continued to push south, the attacks of the *12th* and *15th Armies* against the 2d Infantry Division had failed. As a result, Peng Dehuai's forward elements found themselves low on supplies and ammunition and occupying an indefensible thirty-mile-deep salient. As Van Fleet and Almond assembled U.S. and ROK forces at the northern shoulders of the salient, Peng realized the danger his forces were in and ordered his commanders to disengage and withdraw.<sup>39</sup>

On the night of 22–23 May 1951, reports trickled into Eighth Army headquarters that large elements of Chinese forces in the east-central sector of the front had begun to break contact and head north, signaling the beginning of a general withdrawal. By dawn of 23 May 1951, Ridgway, Van Fleet, and Almond recognized that the time had come for a counterattack that could turn an enemy defeat into an enemy disaster. The culminating moment of Van Fleet's battle of annihilation had arrived.<sup>40</sup>

General Almond drafted the plans for Eighth Army's counteroffensive, which his X Corps would spearhead.

Almond called for his corps to attack with the 1st Marine Division, the 9th Infantry of the 2d Infantry Division, and the 187th Airborne RCT from their positions along the western shoulder of the Chinese salient north-northeast toward Route 24. Once Route 24 was secured, the advance would push northeast up this road—the only main thoroughfare in the region—directly across the lines of communications of the Chinese salient and hopefully trap the entire enemy force. Almond later stated that his inspiration for this operation came from Marshal Ferdinand Foch's counterattack against a similarly exposed German salient at the Second Battle of the Marne in July 1918.<sup>41</sup>

Van Fleet approved Almond's plan, and on 23 May 1951 the X Corps went on the attack, joining the U.S. I and IX Corps and ROK I Corps, which had been probing aggressively north in their sectors since 20 May. Van Fleet requested, and received, air support for Almond's X Corps attack across the base of the enemy salient and asked a special effort be made by the Air Force to pound the enemy's road net leading out of the salient to hinder the Chinese withdrawal. The U.S. Air Force, as well as Navy and Marine pilots, responded with an unprecedented effort, scouring the retreating Chinese at every opportunity and inflicting heavy casualties on their already battered formations.<sup>42</sup> Almond made repeated flights over the battlefield as his forces pressed north and recalled that "the enemy was dispersed, disorganized, disheartened and they were being killed by every effort our forces made." Returning to his headquarters Almond reported to Van Fleet that the Chinese were "dying like flies."<sup>43</sup>



Van Fleet, right, talks to Col. George Gerhart, commander of the 187th Airborne RCT, 23 May 1951.

Van Fleet Collection, George C. Marshall Research Library

The Chinese divisions caught up in this maelstrom were some of the finest units in their army, yet under the pressure of this terrific aerial bombardment and relentless ground attack, their retreat turned into a rout. A Chinese medical officer captured during the withdrawal related that his battalion had lost 400 of its 530 officers and men from 16–23 May. He also reported that most of the survivors from his battalion were sick with malaria or dysentery and were also suffering from malnutrition.<sup>44</sup> Peng Dehuai's shattered formations abandoned their weapons and equipment and surrendered in large numbers for the first time in the war. These once superb Chinese soldiers were in a state of panic as they tried to escape the relentless advance of American forces, and Peng struggled mightily to rally the disorganized mass, re-form it into some semblance of order, and establish defensive positions north of the 38th Parallel.<sup>45</sup>

As the U.S. and UN counteroffensive rolled forward, Van Fleet relentlessly toured the battlefield to be as close to the action as possible. On the night of 23 May 1951, Van Fleet cabled Ridgway in Tokyo that the fighting was going well and informed him, "I am pressing Corps Commanders to be on objectives soonest, stressing urgent necessity of liberating US personnel and capturing enemy personnel and equipment before it can withdraw. Follow up plan for X Corps includes drive past Inje to coast thereby cutting off all NK and CCF units. All units

Tanks of the 1st Cavalry Division cross the Imjin River while on patrol, 27 May 1951.

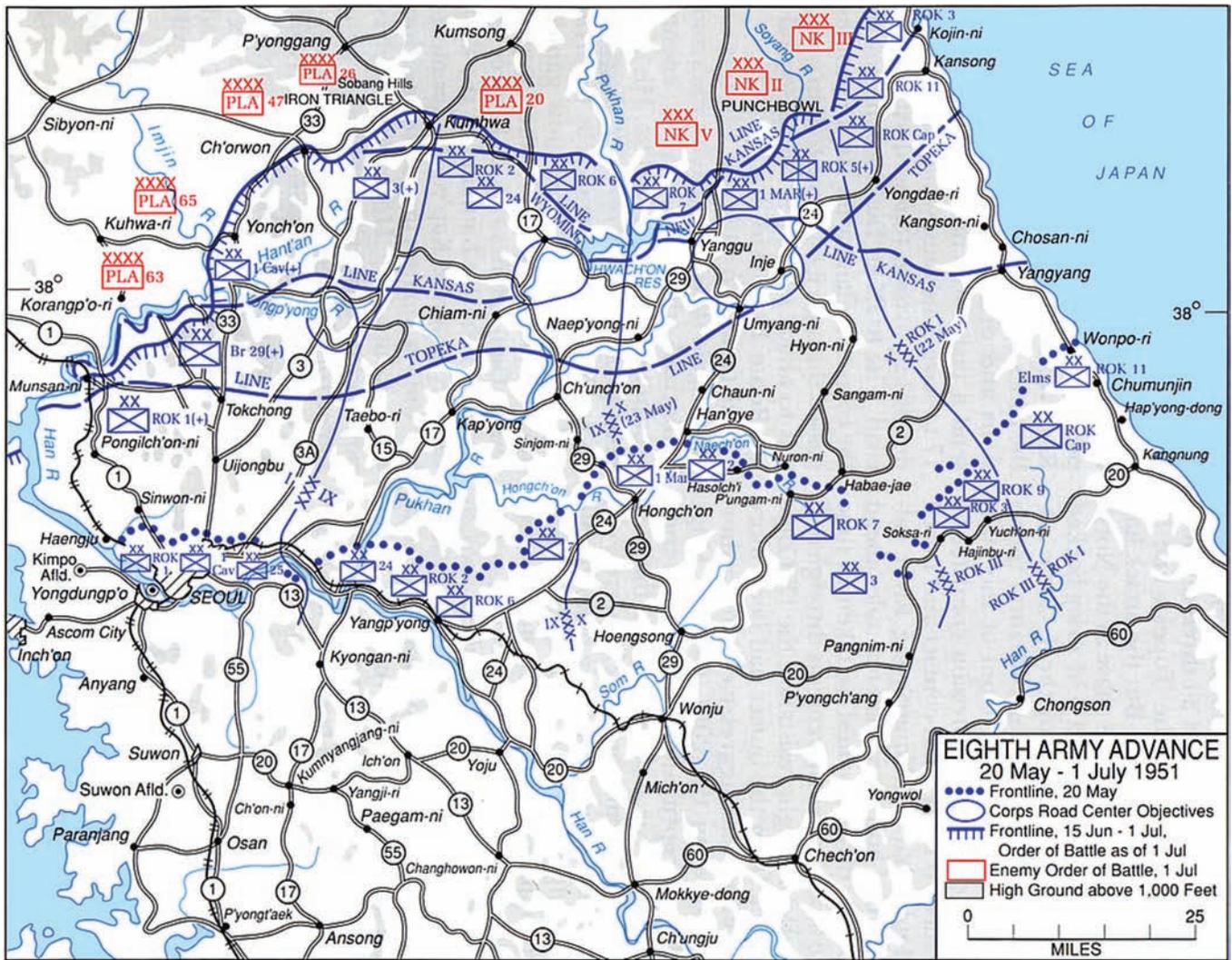
are wild with enthusiasm caused by our counter-offensive and morale of all is high."<sup>46</sup> Van Fleet later recalled of this moment in the campaign that "those days are the ones most vivid in my memory—great days when all the Eighth Army, and we thought America too, were inspired to win. In those days in Korea we reached the heights."<sup>47</sup>

On 24 May 1951, the Eighth Army once more pushed north of the prewar border formed by the 38th Parallel, and a jubilant Van Fleet took the occasion to hold a major press conference where he announced that the second impulse of the Chinese Fifth Phase Offensive had been decisively defeated. He informed the gathering of world media that heavy losses had been inflicted on the Chinese and announced, "The Eighth Army is again moving forward to maintain the initiative, to inflict maximum casualties on the enemy and again, possibly to precipitate prematurely the counter attack of which the enemy is capable considering his known reserve forces. Two outstanding and magnificent characteristics of the Eighth Army are—First the quality of its soldiers

and Second their determined and skillful use of fire power on a scale unheard of in this or any other battle."<sup>48</sup>

As Van Fleet's counteroffensive rolled northward, the weather turned against him. Torrential rains drenched much of the Korean peninsula, turning dirt roads into quagmires and hindering air strikes and aerial reconnaissance. The attack still ground forward but at a much slower pace. Nevertheless, the 187th Airborne RCT fought its way into Inje on 27 May 1951, sealing off the salient and trapping many Chinese, though not the huge numbers for which Almond and Van Fleet had hoped. The weather, along with desperate rearguard actions by individual Chinese regiments, had bought Peng the breathing space he needed to break contact with the Eighth Army, and in spite of the general success of Eighth Army's attack the CCF and NKPA forces in the eastern part of Korea managed to avert being completely destroyed by Van Fleet's counteroffensive.<sup>49</sup> Although a significant victory had been won, neither Van Fleet nor Almond wanted to settle for this operational success and together they sought a decisive strategic victory by means of a final offensive to finish off the Chinese. Almond later recalled, "The enemy was dispersed to the hills and [Van Fleet and I] were prepared, and so recommended, that the pursuit be continued to achieve the destruction of this massive CCF force which was the best that the Chinese had south of the Yalu River."<sup>50</sup>





With his Eighth Army victorious across the front and eager to finish off the Chinese, Van Fleet cabled Ridgway on 28 May 1951 to request permission to thrust north of the Kansas Line to deliver a knockout punch to the reeling Communist forces. Van Fleet's plan called for an amphibious landing at the village of T'ongch'on, on the eastern coast of North Korea, by elements of the U.S. 1st Marine Division to be tied in with an overland attack by Almond's X Corps. He envisioned not only the entrapment and destruction of Communist forces along the east coast, but also an envelopment of the enemy's forces in central Korea, which would compromise their position in the "Iron Triangle" and allow his troops to push as far north as the "waist" of Korea, along a general line running from P'yongyang to Wonsan. Van Fleet believed this operation would

inflict a death blow to the reeling Communist armies in Korea. Although the attack involved a major push north, the objective remained the Chinese armies in Korea, rather than the acquisition of ground or cities, and contained no provision for expanding hostilities to the Chinese mainland, as MacArthur had argued for prior to his dismissal. Instead, Van Fleet reasoned that the annihilation of China's best divisions in Korea would knock the sword from Mao's hand and force the Chinese to ask for terms. Van Fleet's proposed operation sought to turn an operational success into a strategic one through the destruction of China's ability to wage war in Korea, and he urged Ridgway to accept this plan stating that the "potentiality of enemy defeat should over-ride any objections."<sup>51</sup>

The "objections" that Van Fleet feared most were not military but

political. Since his arrival in Korea, Van Fleet had been forbidden to undertake any sustained operations north of the Kansas-Wyoming Line without Ridgway's approval, and he understood that Ridgway's approval was dependent on what the Truman administration wanted. Both Truman and the JCS were convinced that Korea was a sideshow and that the "real" war would come when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which had a mutual defense pact with the People's Republic of China, invaded Western Europe. The Truman administration repeatedly stressed throughout November 1950–June 1951, after Chinese intervention in the Korean War, that the real enemy was neither China nor North Korea, but the Soviet Union. Truman later wrote, "We could not afford to squander our reawaken-

General Ridgway, left, confers with Van Fleet, second from right, on the Eighth Army's continuing offensive and Van Fleet's proposal to drive north, 29 May 1951. Others pictured are General Hoge, between Ridgway and Van Fleet, and Maj. Gen. Blakeshear M. Bryan, 24th Infantry Division commander, far right.

# THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION HAD NO POLICY IN ASIA

ing strength as long as that enemy [USSR] was not committed in the field but only pulling the strings behind the scenes.”<sup>52</sup>

With this view of events, the Truman administration feared that American forces would become bogged down in a long bloody war on the Asian mainland and leave Western Europe defenseless against an anticipated Soviet onslaught. The administration's main objective in Korea was to end the war with a negotiated settlement as soon as possible that would essentially restore the status quo antebellum. The problem in seeking an armistice was one of timing, as the U.S. government did not want its call for a negotiated

peace to be interpreted at home or abroad as a signal of surrender.

On 17 May 1951, in response to allegations made by Douglas MacArthur that the Truman administration “had no policy in Asia,” President Truman authorized the issuance of National Security Council (NSC) 48/5. This memorandum was a sweeping document addressing many issues confronting the United States in Asia but was most significant for its impact on the conduct of the Korean War. With NSC 48/5, government officials formally and publicly announced the policy of seeking a negotiated settlement to the Korean War rather than a military victory. The memo clearly stated that the United States' goal in Korea was to “continue as an ultimate objective to seek by political, as distinguished from military means, a solution of the Korean problem which would provide for a unified, independent and democratic Korea.”<sup>53</sup>

Truman later wrote, “We distinguished between the political aim—a unified, independent, democratic Korea—and the military aim of repelling the aggression and terminating the hostilities under an armistice agreement. With the fighting ended, the purpose would be to establish the authority of the Republic of Korea over all of Korea south of a northern boundary line suitable for defense and administration and not substantially below the 38th parallel.”<sup>54</sup> This was the political situation that confronted Van Fleet when he made his proposal to Ridgway on 28 May 1951 for a major offensive into North Korea to complete the destruction of the Chinese armies.

Within hours of receiving Van Fleet's proposal for the T'ongch'on operation, Ridgway flew from Tokyo to Korea to meet personally with Van Fleet and discuss the plan. Ridgway





A gunner, crouching in foreground, of the 31st Regimental Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division, fires with the assistance of his gun crew a 75-mm. recoilless rifle in support of infantry units, 9 June 1951.

also toured the front to get a firsthand view of the battlefield situation. He was skeptical of the large enemy casualty figures reported by Eighth Army intelligence and wanted to make his own assessment of the damage inflicted on the Chinese and North Koreans during the recently completed battles. Ridgway discovered somewhat to his surprise that the reports on enemy casualties were not only accurate but were perhaps even slightly conservative. When he returned from his tour of the battlefield, Ridgway met again with Van Fleet. Much to the latter's frustration, Ridgway rejected the proposed T'ongch'on operation and forbade any major operations north of the Kansas-Wyoming Line. Ridgway had practical reasons to reject Van Fleet's proposal, stating foremost that an amphibious operation was too risky and also expressing concerns about the logistical issues involved in pushing farther north, which would shorten Communist lines of communications while lengthening his own. Furthermore, Ridgway believed the time was ripe to secure the armistice that Truman had been seeking since the Chinese intervened in the

war, and he believed that further offensive action should not be undertaken with the possibility of peace so close at hand. Van Fleet strongly protested Ridgway's decision to halt the advance of Eighth Army and repeatedly urged Ridgway to approve other courses of action that did not include the allegedly "risky" amphibious movement. All were rejected as Ridgway remained firm.<sup>55</sup>

On 30 May 1951, Ridgway reported to Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that

The enemy has suffered a severe major defeat. Within the past few days there has been a rapidly increasing deterioration of the Chinese forces opposing our IX and X Corps. There has been a marked increase in the number of Chinese surrendering. Enemy ammo dumps are being overrun in quantities far exceeding anything previously captured. . . . In many cases Chinese POWs have reported that their units have had to eat grass and roots because of the exhaustion of their rations. All three US Corps commanders have reported a noticeable deterioration

in the fighting spirit of the CCF and NKPA forces. . . . Eighth Army [is] at near full strength with morale excellent and confidence high . . . and is attacking toward the general line: Chorwon-Kumwha-Hwachon Reservoir thence to the East Coast [the Kansas-Wyoming Line], for the general purpose of inflicting maximum casualties on a defeated and retiring enemy. I therefore believe that for the next 60 days the United States govt. should be able to count with reasonable assurance upon a military situation in Korea offering optimum advantages in support of its diplomatic negotiations.<sup>56</sup>

Upon receipt of Ridgway's communiqué, the Joint Chiefs cabled back with instructions to continue combat operations in Korea to inflict maximum losses on the Chinese and North Koreans but to halt the advance at the Kansas-Wyoming Line. They further instructed Ridgway to obtain JCS approval before undertaking any operations beyond that point. Thus the Eighth Army halted in place along the line as directed, with the concurrence of Ridgway.<sup>57</sup>

Van Fleet was understandably upset over the decision to not approve the plan for an offensive into North Korea and stated so privately to Ridgway. However, Van Fleet contained his displeasure and did not directly communicate his beliefs over Ridgway's head to the JCS or speak publicly at the time in opposition to the policy.<sup>58</sup> Van Fleet knew full well that if a commander with the stature of Douglas MacArthur could be relieved of command for differing with the Truman administration over military policy,

## VAN FLEET STRONGLY PROTESTED RIDGWAY'S DECISION TO HALT THE ADVANCE

# “OH, YES; I WAS CRYING TO TURN ME LOOSE.”

then he certainly could be as well. However, after his retirement in 1953, Van Fleet testified before the Senate Committee on Armed Services that “in June of 1951 we had the Communist armies on the run; they were hurting badly, out of supplies, completely out of hand or control; they were in a panic, and were doing their best to fall as far back as possible, and we stopped by order, did not pursue and finish the enemy.” Senator Harry Flood Byrd of Virginia asked Van Fleet, “Did you recommend that the attack be continued?” to which Van Fleet responded, “Oh, yes; I was crying to turn me loose.” Senator Byrd queried back, “If you had had the authority to go ahead and pursue the enemy as far as you could what would have been the result? Van Fleet responded, “We would have gotten all his heavy equipment and, perhaps, two or three hundred thousand prisoners.”<sup>59</sup> General Almond, whose X Corps had spearheaded the counteroffensive in May–June 1951, concurred wholeheartedly with Van Fleet on this issue. Almond later stated, “I felt at that time that the Chinese Communists and the North Korean armies were on the most wobbly legs that they had been on to that date. They were punch drunk and ineffective, and I, personally, thought at that time that it was the time to finish off the effort.”<sup>60</sup> Almond later wrote that he believed Ridgway’s decision to halt the offensive was not based on military considerations, but rather that “General Ridgway’s strategic philosophy was a compromise with politics.”<sup>61</sup>

On 1 and 2 June 1951, Secretary of State Dean P. Acheson testified before Congress that the only military objective the United States had in Korea

was to “end the aggression.” Acheson went on to state that the unification of Korea was “not sought to be achieved by fighting, but it is sought to be achieved by peaceful means.”<sup>62</sup> It now became painfully clear to Van Fleet that there would be no military victory in the Korean War and under orders from Ridgway he commanded Eighth Army units to halt once they reached the Kansas-Wyoming Line and begin fortifying their positions. On 2 June 1951, Van Fleet informed the international media of the success of Eighth Army’s counteroffensive and of the new situation on the battlefield in Korea. Van Fleet stated,

The Eighth Army’s pursuit phase has now ended with the clearing, again, of enemy units from South Korea. The Eighth Army will continue, however to stop the enemy’s unwarranted aggression against South

Korea, and will, when necessary and profitable, meet such threats within North Korea. The strong and determined counter offensive was a surprise to the Communist High Command and to the individual enemy soldier. Overwhelmed by the impact of the UN drive the enemy held his advance positions only briefly and then reeled back in disorganized retreat. Like the heroic stand of the 2d US Division . . . , the well timed and aggressive UN counter offensive, utilizing artillery and air support to the best advantage, inflicted a terrible toll in killed and wounded. The battlefields show signs of desperate action and hasty flight—abandoned artillery and heavy equipment as well as discarded personal weapons and equipment that made for faster travel. While the inventory of major items of captured equipment is incomplete,



Captured Chinese artillery and antitank guns, spring 1951. These guns are all Soviet made and include 45-mm. and 76-mm. antitank guns as well as 76-mm. and 122-mm. howitzers.

## EUSAK G-2 Estimated Strength of Communist Forces in Korea 16 May–1 June 1951

Location/Units	Strength	
	16 May / 22 May	1 June
<b>East-Central Front</b>		
<i>CCF 12th Army</i>	30,000 / 17,000	10,000
<i>CCF 27th Army</i>	31,000 / 25,000	21,000
<i>CCF 39th Army</i>	20,000 / 20,000	19,000
<i>CCF 40th Army</i>	17,000 / 17,000	17,000
<i>NKPA III Corps</i>	14,000 / 16,000	15,000
<b>Central Front</b>		
<i>CCF 10th (-) Army</i>	24,000 / 24,000	23,000
<i>CCF 15th Army</i>	32,000 / 23,000	14,000
<i>CCF 20th Army</i>	32,000 / 32,000	31,000
<i>CCF 26th Army</i>	21,000 / 17,000	19,000
<i>CCF 60th Army</i>	31,000 / 27,000	14,000
<i>CCF 63d Army</i>	29,000 / 22,000	15,000
<b>Western Front</b>		
<i>CCF 64th Army</i>	28,000 / 22,000	20,000
<i>CCF 65th Army</i>	29,000 / 22,000	18,000
<i>NKPA I Corps</i>	17,000 / 11,000	12,000
<i>NKPA VI Corps</i>	28,000 / 28,000	28,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>383,000 / 323,000</b>	<b>276,000</b>

Source: Eighth U.S. Army in Korea (EUSAK), General Headquarters (GHQ), Intelligence Report on Enemy Strength and Dispositions, 12 Jun 1951, folder 121, box 88, James Van Fleet Papers, George C. Marshall Foundation, Lexington, Va.

the following advanced reports have been received—over 11,000 rifles and 1,000 machine guns; 310 mortars and 120 artillery pieces of various caliber; large quantities of ammunition of all types; 51 truckloads of rations; and 83 serviceable trucks and 400 horses. Concluded then is the “phase” that must be considered as one of the critical battles of the Korean campaign.<sup>63</sup>

Van Fleet later wrote in the margin of his copy of the speech that “this statement vital to us in substantiation we had enemy on run.”<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, in Van Fleet’s and the Eighth Army G-2’s estimation, the Chinese had suffered catastrophic losses in May 1951 and were on the verge of a complete military collapse. Eighth Army intelligence thus concluded that the Communist armies in Korea had suffered approximately 100,000 casualties in two weeks of heavy combat from 16–31 May 1951. The end result was that by 1 June 1951 Chinese combat power in Korea had been bled down to its lowest point of the entire war. Even the heavily censored Chinese official reports to Beijing acknowledged suffering 85,000 casualties, and, for the first and only time in the Korean War, Peng admitted to Chinese Premier Mao Zedong that he had lost more men than the enemy in a major campaign.<sup>65</sup> The Chinese commander later lamented that the Fifth Phase Offensive was one of the greatest mistakes of his otherwise illustrious military career, and Mao concluded that in the aftermath of this defeat it was now impossible to drive the U.S. and its allies out of Korea.<sup>66</sup>

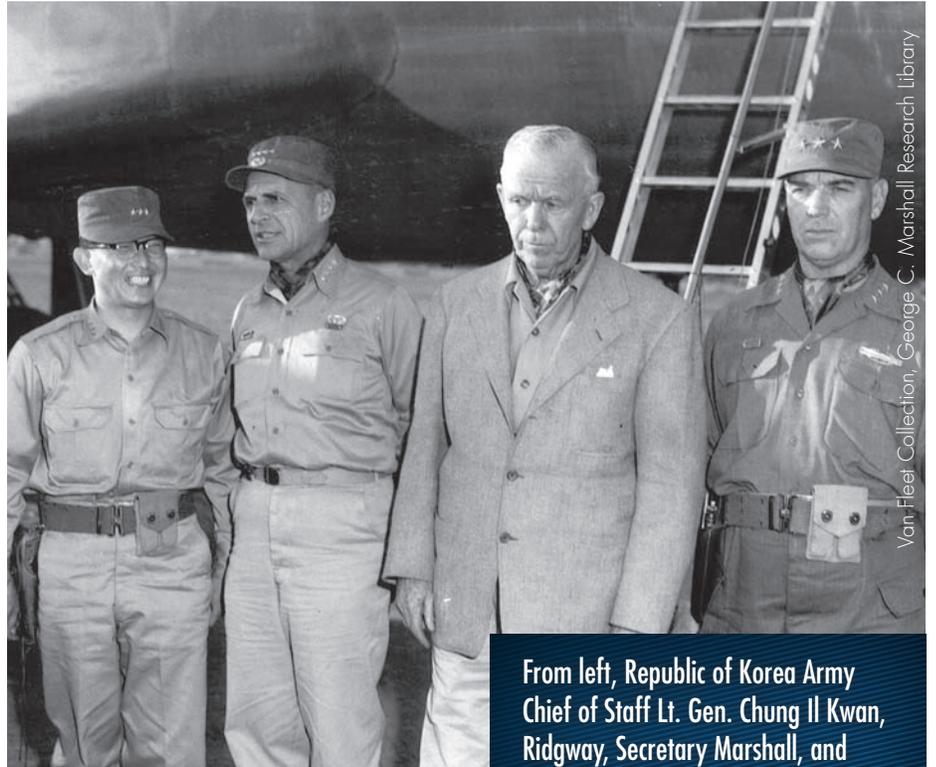
Thus when Ridgway, acting under instructions from the Truman administration and the JCS, halted Van Fleet’s offensive, the Eighth Army commander believed that a great opportunity for a decisive military victory on the battlefield in Korea had been squandered. Van Fleet later wrote, “Though we could readily have followed up our success and defeated the enemy that was not the intention in Washington. . . . Instead of getting directives for offensive

# HE HAD THE COMMUNISTS “ON THE RUN” IN EARLY JUNE

action, we found our activities more and more proscribed as time went on.”<sup>67</sup>

In late June 1951, as preliminary discussions with the Communists for a cease-fire were under way, administration officials informed the Joint Chiefs that an armistice would probably require UN forces to withdraw as much as ten miles south in order to create a demilitarized zone. Therefore, the JCS asked Ridgway about the feasibility of advancing twenty miles north of the Kansas-Wyoming Line so that when an armistice was signed, and the withdrawal initiated, UN forces could retain possession of not only the fortified positions along their line but also a forward line of outposts ten miles in front of the main line of resistance. In other words, the Truman administration and the JCS wanted the Eighth Army to advance twenty miles farther north to obtain territory that would be surrendered at the armistice talks to retain the present UN-occupied territory.<sup>68</sup>

On 25 June 1951, Ridgway informed Van Fleet of the JCS proposal and sought his opinion on the feasibility of launching a limited offensive to gain ground as a bargaining chip for the armistice talks. Van Fleet balked at the idea of losing perhaps thousands of casualties to merely gain ground that would be promptly surrendered. Van Fleet informed Ridgway that after the three-week lull in fighting the Chinese and North Koreans were now rested, reinforced,



Van Fleet Collection, George C. Marshall Research Library

and well entrenched and thus could only be displaced by a *major effort* on the part of Eighth Army, a not so subtle hint that if Ridgway wanted to attack it should be a powerful offensive that would seek a military victory, not merely a bargaining chip for the future peace negotiations. Van Fleet concluded his summary of the situation by stating that the cost in lives and the lack of any significant advantages to be gained by the proposed limited advance made the idea impracticable. Ridgway concurred with Van Fleet’s assessment, and the scheme was abandoned.<sup>69</sup>

Critics of Van Fleet later pointed to this report as evidence that Van Fleet did not really believe that a decisive military victory was possible in Korea in June 1951. Ridgway later wrote that “in light of later statements by Van Fleet to the effect that I had prevented him from driving on toward total victory, it is interesting to recall his reply to this query [for a twenty-mile advance]. His views then were that he did not favor an advance by the Eighth Army to seize the ground at this time. He concluded that the cost in lives and the resulting vulnerability of the Eighth Army was too much to wager on the chance that there might be a cease-fire.”<sup>70</sup>

From left, Republic of Korea Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Chung Il Kwan, Ridgway, Secretary Marshall, and Van Fleet. Marshall is visiting to discuss the Joint Chiefs’ and Truman administration’s decision to halt the Eighth Army’s northward advance, 8 June 1951.

General Collins, the Army chief of staff in June 1951, concurred with Ridgway’s critical assessment and also cited Van Fleet’s reluctance to advance on 26 June 1951 as evidence that Van Fleet had never been on the verge of a great military victory. Collins added that he suspected Van Fleet’s later statements to Congress that he had the Communists “on the run” in early June 1951 were made “for some undisclosed reasons, perhaps political.”<sup>71</sup> This is a strange assertion, given that Van Fleet made no public statements regarding these issues until *after* the 1952 presidential election. In fact, Van Fleet explained his change in position regarding offensive operations shortly after his retirement in 1953 when he wrote,

The enemy recovered quickly from the beating we gave him in May and was entrenched again by June 10. This is the reason I concurred with

General Ridgway—as has been reported in rebuttal against my belief that the enemy was on the run—that a 20-mile advance which was being considered at that time would “cost too many casualties.” There was no similarity between the conditions of June 26 [when he was given permission to attack] and the opportunities that had existed 30 days earlier—or between the value of a final defeat to the enemy and a limited 20-mile advance.<sup>72</sup>

In addition, it is disingenuous of Ridgway and Collins to not mention that while Van Fleet did indeed dismiss their idea of a limited attack, he was simultaneously advocating to Ridgway a plan dubbed Operation OVERWHELMING that called for an all-out offensive by the Eighth Army, which Ridgway refused to approve, judging the cost for such an operation was too prohibitive with peace apparently close at hand.<sup>73</sup>

On 10 July 1951, formal armistice negotiations began at the village of Kaesong and the Korean War entered a new phase. That same month, President Truman awarded Van Fleet a fourth star in recognition of his victories of April–May 1951 and for forcing the Communists to the bargaining table. Much to Truman’s surprise, as well as the JCS and Ridgway, the Communists turned out to not be eager at all to sign an armistice once the talks began. Army historian Billy Mossman later observed, “There was no great ground pressure to help persuade enemy authorities to conclude an early armistice. And without that pressure, neither would there be an early armistice.”<sup>74</sup>

Instead, discussions bogged down, and then in August the Chinese and North Koreans abruptly pulled out of the talks, leaving administration officials in a quandary over what to do next. Their surprise at this turn of events is puzzling given that President Truman, Secretary of State Acheson, and Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall had already witnessed the Chinese Communists utilize armistice talks to allow their armies to recover from military defeats. During the

final phase of the Chinese Civil War (1946–1949), Mao had readily agreed to U.S. proposals for a cease-fire in preparation for peace talks with Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalists just as Chiang’s forces were moving in for the kill in July 1946. Under intense pressure from the Truman administration, Chiang had reluctantly agreed to halt his successful offensive and accept the American-sponsored cease-fire, only to see the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) use the time to recover its losses, reestablish its armies in good positions, and then renew hostilities. Chiang later described his decision to bow to U.S. pressure and accept the cease-fire in 1946 as the worst mistake of his entire career. It appears that, as in Korea five years later, the PLA had no intention of securing peace through these diplomatic negotiations, but

General Hoge, commanding general, IX Corps, fires the seventy-five thousandth round of ammunition at the Chinese Communist Forces in the central front, 24 June 1951. Next to Hoge are Brig. Gen. William Gilmore, artillery commanding general, IX Corps, and Lt. Col. Leon F. Lavoie, commander, 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion.



instead used them to buy time to refit its battered armies.<sup>75</sup>

A frustrated Ridgway ordered Van Fleet to renew military pressure on the Communists to force them back to the talks, though strict limitations on the size and scope of such operations remained in effect. In obedience to these orders, Van Fleet launched a limited offensive during August–October 1951, which succeeded in taking Bloody Ridge and Heartbreak Ridge in central Korea. However, the heavy casualties suffered in these operations demonstrated that the North Koreans and Chinese had used the time gained by the failed armistice talks to substantially reinforce, resupply, reequip, and heavily entrench their armies. Nevertheless, the battles also illustrated the tactical superiority of U.S. forces over their Communist enemies and achieved the desired effect of sending them back to the bargaining table in the hopes of stopping these attacks through words rather than the bodies of their soldiers.

In November 1951, armistice talks began anew, and Ridgway once more ordered a halt to major ground operations. These negotiations, however, also bogged down and promised no quick end to the war. Indeed, the fighting would drag on until 27 July 1953 before an agreement was signed that left Korea a divided nation and the United States without a clear military victory. During those talks, over twelve thousand more American soldiers died in the Korean War, and twice that many would be wounded in battalion- and regiment-sized battles initiated by the Chinese and North Koreans at their discretion. During the lengthy negotiations, Van Fleet's only son, Capt. James A. Van Fleet Jr., was shot down over North Korea in March 1952, becoming one of the 8,177 U.S. servicemen listed as missing in action during the Korean War. The loss of his only son (whose remains were never recovered) deeply disturbed Van Fleet and without question added still more gall to his frustration over Ridgway's decision to halt his advance in June 1951.<sup>76</sup>

A critical issue to consider in this debate is that Van Fleet's proposed offensive north in June 1951, with its stated mission of destroying large num-

bers of Chinese forces in Korea and achieving a decisive military victory in the Korean War, was not necessarily out of line with the Truman administration's strategic goal of achieving an armistice to end the war. Cold War strategist Bernard Brodie noted this and argued that the offensive should have been continued to exert "maximum pressure on the disintegrating Chinese armies as a means of getting them not only to request but actually conclude an armistice."<sup>77</sup> This would have been

for a prolonged struggle. Admiral Joy, who headed the UN delegation at the armistice negotiations, later wrote, "I feel certain the casualties the United Nations Command endured during the two long years of negotiations far exceed any that might have been expected from an offensive in the summer of 1951. The lesson is: Do not stop fighting until hostilities have ended, not if you want an armistice with the Communists on acceptable terms within a reasonable period of time."<sup>79</sup>



The armistice conference site in Kaesong

in keeping with Secretary Marshall's view of the matter. Marshall testified on 7 May 1951 as the battles raged that "if we break the morale of [the Chinese and North Korean] armies, but more particularly, if we destroy their best-trained armies as we have been in the process of doing, there, it seems to me, you develop the best probability of reaching a satisfactory negotiatory [*sic*] basis."<sup>78</sup> Van Fleet had been doing just that when his attack was halted and the Chinese were allowed the breathing space to regain their feet and prepare

In the opinion of Van Fleet, his military victories in Korea in April–June 1951 were squandered and victory in the Korean War was denied him and his Eighth Army not by an enemy in the field but by a policy decision made by his own military and civilian superiors. In later years Van Fleet would write and speak often on what became a recurrent theme to him: "The Will to Win." In Van Fleet's estimation, he had possessed the men and materiel necessary to end the Korean War with a resounding victory in June 1951, but

Ridgway, the Truman administration, and the JCS had lacked this will to win. Yet to many of his superiors, including President Harry Truman, a great victory had been won in Korea. Truman wrote of the Korean War that “we could not idly stand by and allow the Communist imperialists to assume that they were free to go into Korea or elsewhere. This challenge had to be met—and it was met. It had to be met without plunging the world into general war. This was done.”<sup>80</sup>

Van Fleet never agreed with Truman’s assessment of the outcome of the Korean War and in fact later denounced the armistice as “a shameful peace, achieved by conciliation, amounting to surrender.”<sup>81</sup> Several years after the Korean War, Truman and Van Fleet happened to be attending the same banquet. Truman looked across the table at Van Fleet, smiled broadly, and then announced in a loud voice to those around him, gesturing toward Van Fleet, “You want to know about a great general? There’s a great general! I sent him to Greece and he won the war there. I sent him to Korea, and he won that war too.” Van Fleet politely, but pointedly, replied, “Well, actually Mr. President you never quite let me finish that last one.”<sup>82</sup>



## NOTES

1. Autobiographical essay, James A. Van Fleet (hereafter cited as Van Fleet autobiography), folder 15, box 5, Van Fleet and Football, James Van Fleet Papers (VFP), George C. Marshall Foundation, Lexington, Va.

2. J. Lawton Collins, *War in Peacetime* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), p. 294; *Time*, 14 May 1951. Both Van Fleet and Marshall denied the story’s validity, and it may indeed be apocryphal.

3. Paul F. Braim, *The Will to Win: The Life of General James A. Van Fleet* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001), p. 148.

4. Braim, *Will to Win*, pp. 170–81.

5. James A. Van Fleet, Introduction to unfinished article, My Battle with Communism and What I Recommend the Free World Does to Defeat Communism, folder 63, box 95, VFP.

6. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 295.

7. Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), p. 163.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

10. James A. Van Fleet, “The Truth About Korea,” *Life*, 11, 18 May 1953.

11. Ltr, Lt Gen James A. Van Fleet to Van Fleet family, 28 Apr 1951, folder 1, box 78, VFP.

12. Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow, November 1950–July 1951*, United States Army in the Korean War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1990), pp. 373–74.

13. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, p. 379.

14. *Ibid.*, and Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 96.

15. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, p. 434. Seoul had been taken by the North Koreans on 28 June 1950, retaken by United Nations (UN) forces following the Inch’on landing in September 1950, lost again to the Communists during the Chinese Third Phase Offensive in January 1951, and retaken by UN forces once more in March 1951.

16. Braim, *Will to Win*, p. 2.

17. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, pp. 435–37.

18. Van Fleet, “The Truth About Korea.”

19. Address, General James A. Van Fleet to the National War College, 23 March 1953, Washington, D.C., folder 55, box 95, VFP.

20. Jnl, Commanding General (CG), Eighth U.S. Army in Korea (EUSAK), 14 May 1951, folder 7, box 81, VFP. A fougasse consisted of a 55-gallon drum of napalm mixed with gasoline to which a small charge of C4 explosive would be attached. It could be detonated electronically from the allied bunkers.

21. Jnl, CG, EUSAK, 14 May 1951.

22. Ltr, Van Fleet to Van Fleet family, 12 May 1951, folder 13, box 78, VFP.

23. Van Fleet enjoyed this advantage only during 1951. Between the end of 1951 and when Van Fleet left Korea in February 1953, the *Chinese Communist Forces (CCF)* and *North Korean People’s Army (NKPA)*, through a Soviet supplied buildup, had achieved a numerical superiority of two to one over United Nations forces in number of artillery pieces. See U.S. Congress, Senate, *Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services on Ammunition Supplies in the Far East*, 83d Cong., 1st sess., 5, 6, 10 March 1953, p. 22.

24. Jnl, CG, EUSAK, 14 May 1951.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, p. 445.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 447–55; Paik Sun Yup, *From Pusan to Panmunjom* (Washington,

D.C.: Brassey’s, 1992), pp. 147–50; Clark C. Munroe, *The Second United States Infantry Division in Korea* (Nashville, Tenn.: Battery Press, 1992), pp. 129–33. The collapse of the Republic of Korea (ROK) III Corps had serious repercussions for the ROK Army. Van Fleet dissolved the corps and sent its units to the U.S. X Corps and the ROK I Corps. This disaster, however, did have positive results because it set in motion a new training program for the ROK Army, which by late 1951 and early 1952 had transformed it into an effective fighting force. Van Fleet played a major role in this transformation. For details, see Allan R. Millett, “The South Korean Army’s American Godfather,” *MHQ: Quarterly Journal of Military History* 17 (August 2004): 26–37.

28. S. L. A. Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet* (New York: Morrow, 1953); Roy E. Appleman, *Disaster in Korea: The Chinese Confront MacArthur* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1989).

29. Jnl, CG, EUSAK, 17 May 1951.

30. *Ibid.*, 18 May 1951.

31. *Ibid.*; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, p. 465. Ridgway also suggested at this same time that Van Fleet utilize the U.S. I and IX Corps to attack and draw enemy forces away from the central sector of the battlefield, and it is difficult to ascertain which commander conceived of this idea first.

32. Jnl, CG, EUSAK, 18 May 1951.

33. Roy E. Appleman, *Ridgway Duels for Korea* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1990), p. 549; Munroe, *Second United States Infantry Division*, p. 138. Munroe claims that the 2d Infantry Division inflicted 65,000 casualties on the Chinese, but Ridgway, and most historians, believed the figure was actually lower. My estimate represents this lower figure.

34. Ltr, Van Fleet to Helen Van Fleet, 21 May 1951, folder 3, box 78, VFP.

35. Statement to the Press, CG, EUSAK, 24 May 1951, folder 110, box 95, VFP.

36. Jnl, CG, EUSAK, 29 May 1951.

37. Munroe, *Second United States Infantry Division*, pp. 129–38.

38. Appleman, *Ridgway Duels for Korea*, pp. 533–34.

39. Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao’s Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950–1953* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), pp. 151–52; Peng Dehuai, “My Story of the Korean War,” in *Mao’s Generals Remember Korea*, ed. Allan R. Millett et al. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), pp. 35–36.

40. It is unclear as to who first thought of the idea for a counteroffensive, but the concept seems to have been mutually shared by Ridgway, Van Fleet, and Almond.

41. Appleman, *Ridgway Duels for Korea*, p. 534.

42. Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), p. 368.

43. Interv, Capt Thomas G. Fergusson with Lt Gen Edward M. Almond, 29 Mar 1975, Senior Officers Debriefing Program, p. 53, United States Army Military History Institute (MHI), Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

44. Samuel B. Griffith, *The Chinese People's Liberation Army* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), pp. 164–65.

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46. Jnl, CG, EUSAK, 23 May 1951.

47. Van Fleet, "The Truth About Korea."

48. Statement to the Press, CG, EUSAK, 24 May 1951.

49. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, pp. 465–87; Appleman, *Ridgway Duels for Korea*, pp. 536–50.

50. Almond interv, 29 Mar 1975, p. 52.

51. *Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services on Ammunition Supplies in the Far East*, pp. 31–32; Van Fleet, "The Truth About Korea"; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, p. 487.

52. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs of Harry S. Truman*, vol. 2, *Years of Trial and Hope, 1946–52* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 440–50, 456.

53. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1951, vol. 7, pt. 1, p. 439; U.S. Con-

gress, Senate, Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Relations, *Hearings to Conduct an Inquiry into the Military Situation in the Far East and the Facts Surrounding the Relief of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur from His Assignments in That Area*, 82d Cong., 15th sess., pp. 1729–30, 1782.

54. Truman, *Memoirs*, p. 456.

55. Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950–1951: They Came from the North* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), p. 452.

56. Msg, Commander in Chief, Far East (CINCFE), Tokyo, Japan (Ridgway), to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 30 May 1951, in Appleman, *Ridgway Duels for Korea*, pp. 550–51.

57. *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 489–90; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, pp. 488–89.

58. Van Fleet, "The Truth About Korea"; Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950–1953* (New York: Times Books, 1987), p. 900.

59. *Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services on Ammunition Supplies in the Far East*, pp. 31–32.

60. Lynn Montross et al., *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950–1953*, vol. 4, *The East-Central Front* (Washington, D.C.: HQ, United States Marine Corps, 1962), pp. 154–55.

61. D. Clayton James with Anne Sharp Wells, *Refighting the Last War: Command and Crisis in Korea, 1950–1953* (New York: Free Press, 1993), p. 228.

62. *Hearings to Conduct an Inquiry into the Military Situation in the Far East and the Facts Surrounding the Relief of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur from His Assignments in That Area*, pp. 1729–30, 1782.

63. Statement to the Press, CG, EUSAK, 2 Jun 1951, folder 11, box 95, VFP.

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67. Van Fleet, "The Truth About Korea."

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69. Ibid.

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80. Truman, *Memoirs*, p. 464.

81. Braim, *Will to Win*, p. 328.

82. Van Fleet autobiography.

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His articles have appeared in *Western Historical Quarterly* and *Great Plains Quarterly*, among others. He is the author of *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers Along the Rio Grande* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), a co-winner of the Fehrenbach award for best book on Texas history, and the coauthor of *The Northern Cheyenne Exodus in History and Memory* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011).



The 41st Engineers on parade in a color guard ceremony at Fort Bragg, North Carolina

# Freedom, Equality, *and* Justice



# FOR ALL?

## The U.S. Army and the Reassessment of Race Relations in World War II

By JAMES N. LEIKER

**N**early one month before D-Day, Pvt. Charles F. Wilson—an African American medical corpsman stationed at Davis-Monthan Army Air Field near Tucson, Arizona—wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt applauding his recent affirmation of the central goals of the Allied armies: freedom, equality, and justice for all, regardless of race, color, or creed. As Private Wilson pointed out, however, “the picture in our country is marred by one of the strangest paradoxes in our whole fight against world fascism. The United States Armed Forces, to fight for World Democracy, is within itself undemocratic. Are the Chinese people to believe that we are fighting to bring *them* freedom, equality, and justice, when they can see that in our Armed Forces we are not even practicing ourselves what we are preaching?”<sup>1</sup>

Private Wilson’s perceptive comment identified a core irony of the conflict: namely, that the United States military remained segregated during World War II, reflecting the values of the Jim Crow society it purported to defend. But as several scholars have maintained, the war also stimulated a shift in the social landscape that upheld racial segregation and thereby created a favorable setting for the postwar civil rights

movement. Historian Beth Bailey writes that during the war, the federal government expanded its reach into the social and economic lives of American communities, disrupting many local practices—Jim Crow among them—for the sake of national mobilization against the Axis powers. Effective mobilization required centralization, and, by the end of the war, many military officials concluded that centralization, in turn, required multiracial integration, not for purposes of social justice necessarily, as Private Wilson might have liked, but for purposes of creating a stronger, nationally unified military that protects the shared interests of a nationally bound citizenry.<sup>2</sup>

Several factors combined during World War II to produce this reassessment of racial thinking. In both Japan and Germany, militaristic factions had risen to power through strident assertions of racial supremacy. In an attempt to clearly distinguish itself from its enemies, the U.S. government employed the rhetoric of racial justice and equality. Though such rhetoric amounted to little more than official propaganda, an increasingly militant black civil rights movement had been lobbying for years to reconcile such rhetoric with reality. Black newspapers like the *Crisis* had drawn comparisons

between Nazism and Jim Crow since at least the mid-1930s. Charles Hamilton Houston, for example, chief counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and himself a World War I veteran, wrote Roosevelt in 1937 that given the racist nature of Nazi Germany, the support of African Americans would be crucial in any future war against the fascist state. Black leaders like Houston, as well as black soldiers like Wilson, were likewise quick to emphasize the international dimensions of the struggle; the United States would need to work closely with dark-skinned people from around the world who were themselves challenging colonial systems of racial supremacy.<sup>3</sup> Leaders of the U.S. war effort took these lessons to heart, evidenced in an April 1942 memorandum to Maj. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower: “While military necessity adequately justifies our use of colored troops, the importance of an example of racial cooperation must not be overlooked at a time when so much hinges upon the actions of India and China.”<sup>4</sup>

But both black militancy and the need for multiracial alliances had been present in World War I, which produced no serious reforms regarding segregation. The most crucial new factor that distinguished the Second

World War lay in the role played by the social sciences. In the 1940s, the federal government recruited numerous sociologists and anthropologists to monitor public morale and analyze the foreign cultures with which it worked. The war also appeared to legitimize the ideas of scholars like Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict who wrote popular studies describing race as a historical and social construct rather than a fixed biological trait. The most prominent of these studies, Gunnar Myrdal's 1944 *An American Dilemma*, predicted that the war against fascism would hasten the traditional clash between the United States' cherished national ideals and the country's local realities, ultimately resulting in planned, centralized social reform. Historians have questioned the extent to which white Americans actually adopted a more liberal perspective regarding race during World War II; certainly their racial behavior, if not their minds, did become more progressive. The war caused both soldiers and civilian workers to encounter more racial diversity than they had probably known before, and the Office of War Information (OWI) issued posters showing blacks and whites working together in a common cause. While most white Americans perhaps did not accept the professed goal of the war as a struggle to end racism, such a goal did at least become part of mainstream discourse. As a result, many southern whites came to believe that World War II marked the greatest threat to traditional race relations in their region since Reconstruction.<sup>5</sup>

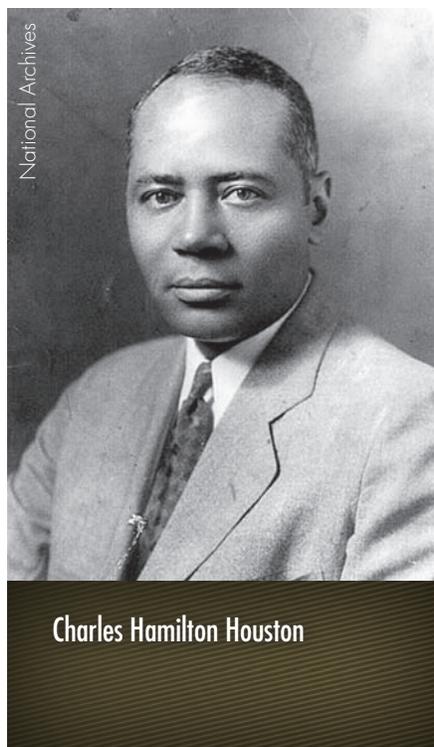
African Americans had served in every U.S. war since the Revolution, including World War I when the 92d and 93d Infantry Divisions had fought briefly in active front areas. Prompted by reports of cowardice and abuse of black troops by their white officers, a subsequent study by the War Department concluded that while leadership by black officers might enhance the performance of these outfits, such units would always be second-rate. Although the study was never widely disseminated, it did serve as an unofficial guide for policymakers through the interwar years.<sup>6</sup> By 1940, the seeming

# THE PROFESSED GOAL OF THE WAR AS A STRUGGLE TO END RACISM

inevitability of a second global conflict caused African American leaders like Walter White and A. Philip Randolph to demand full integration into the armed services and civilian workforce. More specifically, Randolph's threat of a March on Washington—akin to the one later implemented by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963—led to Roosevelt's

Executive Order 8802 in June 1941. This created the Committee on Fair Employment Practices (FEPC) within the Office of Production Management, which was authorized to investigate and redress charges of workplace discrimination. The previous year, the Selective Service Act had required the armed forces to absorb blacks at the same level as their proportion in the national population. Roosevelt also made a handful of significant black appointments, including that of Col. Benjamin Davis to the rank of brigadier general and that of Judge William H. Hastie to civilian aide to the secretary of war. Hastie understood the expectation of him was to advise the department on racial matters.<sup>7</sup>

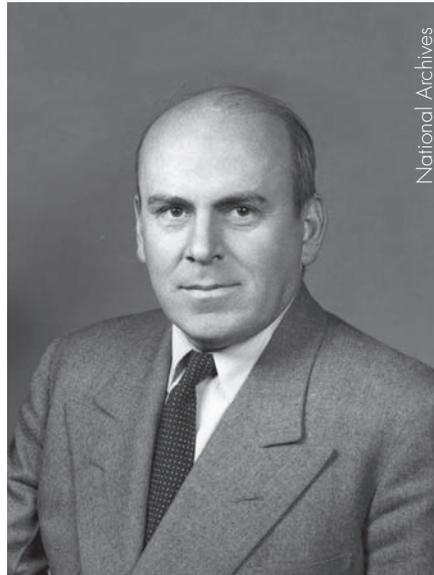
As of September 1941, the U.S. Army was actually accepting more blacks than the anticipated 9 to 10 percent of total recruits required by the Selective Service Act. Following Pearl Harbor, the Army had to postpone the induction of black draftees until separate barracks and other facilities could be built—one consequence of its stubborn commitment to segregation. The military as a whole never met the act's goal of black enlistment proportionate to blacks in the civilian population, at least not during the war itself; by 1943 African Americans constituted only 7.4 percent of enlisted men. Such might have been expected from the Army and War Department, described by black leaders of the time as the most discriminatory of all federal agencies. The Army followed the decades-old practice of assigning southern white officers to command black troops, on the assumption that they understood the black psyche.<sup>8</sup> Some of this prejudice entered a 1942 report titled "The Colored Troops Problem," which maintained that while individual black soldiers could be satisfactory, as a group they were race-conscious, oversensitive, and in need of more training to perform the same tasks as whites. In his position as aide to Secretary Henry L. Stimson, Hastie argued that the Army could utilize many more black recruits and in a greater variety of service if black combat units could be formed as components of larger white regi-



Charles Hamilton Houston



Truman K. Gibson



John J. McCloy



William H. Hastie

ments. Hastie's plan essentially called for a type of experimental integration, which, if successful, could inspire a general plan of integration across all branches of the armed forces. Since some in the Army saw this as needless sociological experimenting, Hastie's idea set him at odds with his boss, Stimson, and, more importantly, with Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall.<sup>9</sup>

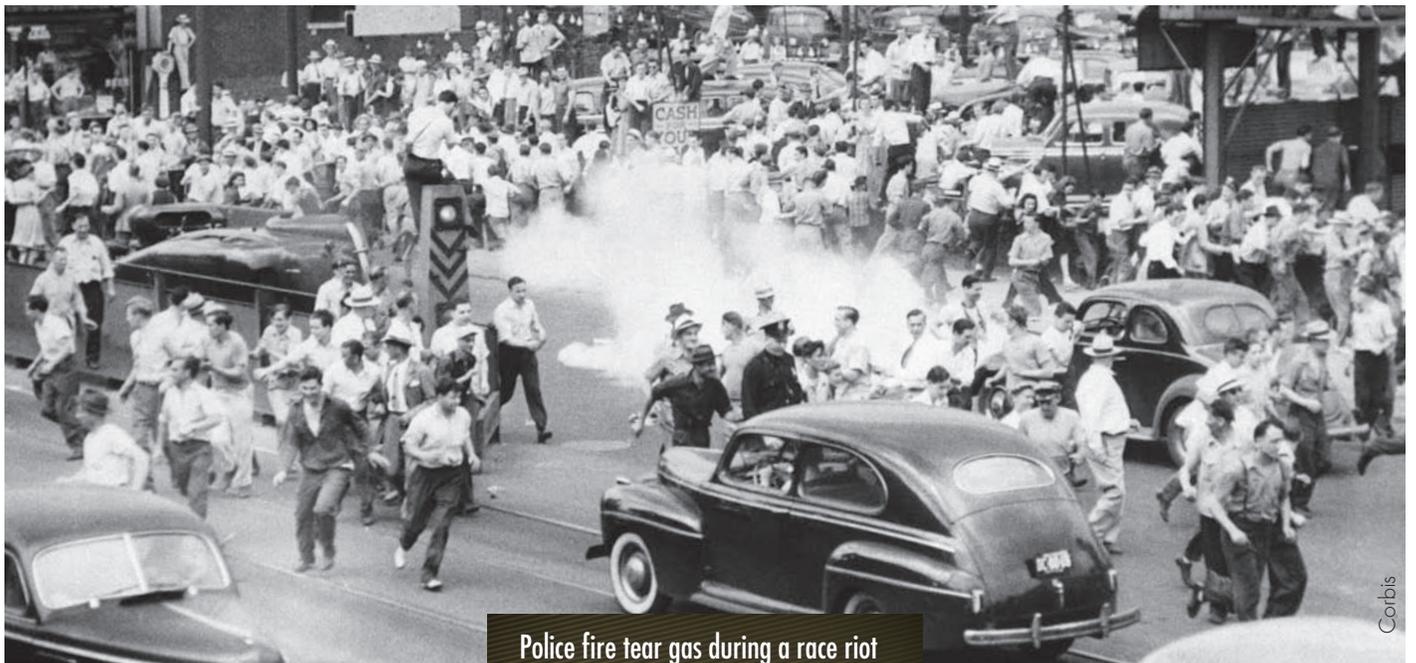
In fact, Hastie's superiors were somewhat correct in seeing his plan as a recipe for social equality. Hastie had worked closely with the NAACP, known for its harsh criticism of military policies. Hastie's outspokenness caused him to become marginalized within the War Department. When in August 1942 the new Advisory Committee on Negro Troop Policies was created, to be chaired by Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, Hastie was neither included nor even informed. Announcing that his office had not been allowed to accomplish anything of importance during its two-year existence, Hastie tendered his resignation in September. His departure having launched a furor in black newspapers, the McCloy Committee—in an attempt to quell the angry voices—invited African American lawyer Truman K. Gibson to succeed

## 90 PERCENT OF WHITE TROOPS FAVORED SEPARATE OUTFITS

Hastie as civilian aide and to attend the advisory committee's meetings. More accommodating than Hastie, Gibson seemed less concerned with overturning segregation policy than with making incremental adjustments to it.<sup>10</sup>

The approach of Gibson and McCloy, more conservative than that of Hastie, characterized the committee's work for the duration of the war, producing reforms that one historian has described as more symbolic than substantive. Such reforms included or-

dering commanders to avoid abusive language that undermined morale and replacing offensive signs like "white" and "colored" with supposedly neutral ones like "No. 1" and "No. 2." Even these small steps, however, marked quite a change in military tradition, demonstrating some heightened sensitivity to African Americans' concerns. In the spring of 1943, the Adjutant General's Office directed all camp authorities to enforce equal access to recreational facilities, even though whites and blacks might still be required to use those facilities at separate times. McCloy's committee explained these policies not as examples of racial segregation but of organizational separation, a subtle difference endorsed by none other than General Davis. Military literature carefully omitted any principles—implicit or explicit—about racial superiority or inferiority, instead justifying continued separation on the basis of avoiding trouble between soldiers of different races. One 1943 survey indicated that nearly 90 percent of white troops favored separate outfits compared to 38 percent of black troops. Even that lower number seems surprising given the unpopularity of segregation among African Americans, but policymakers interpreted the findings as recognition



Police fire tear gas during a race riot in Detroit, where a curfew has been imposed and a state of emergency declared, 21 June 1943.

of the practical problems associated with integration. Maintaining that the Army was only part of a larger social body, one manual writer declared that “the odds are very much in favor of less interracial friction if colored and white enlisted men continue to be organized in separate military units.”<sup>11</sup>

Black manpower generally ran low during the war due to higher rejection rates, often for health reasons like venereal disease or failure to meet minimum educational requirements. The Army General Classification Test (AGCT) classified recruits according to their learning capacity. AGCT categories ran from 1, the highest, to 5, the lowest. Soldiers who scored 1 to 3 were expected to be leadership material or at the least technical specialists, while those scoring 4 or 5 usually became manual laborers. Eighty percent of African Americans scored in the 4 to 5 range, as compared to thirty percent for whites. Some called the AGCT an intelligence exam, but it was not; the test was clearly designed to reflect educational opportunities, and how those opportunities were understood

and applied. AGCT scores showed that blacks and whites who originated from similar backgrounds in the South—a region known for poor schools and a dearth of newspapers and radios—performed about the same. Early in the war, policymakers acknowledged the educational deficiencies of black men to be environmental. Still, the time

required to elevate black recruits to the equivalent standards of most whites was a risky investment, outweighed by the more pressing task of preparing a large, efficient fighting force.<sup>12</sup>

These issues became paramount in the wake of a wave of racial violence that rocked the country in the summer of 1943. Beginning with the “zoot suit” riots in Los Angeles that involved mostly Mexican Americans, cities like Detroit and New York expe-



A military policeman stands ready to answer calls around his area of Columbus, Georgia, 13 April 1942.

# CELEBRITIES SUCH AS JOE LOUIS AND LENA HORNE TOURED THE CAMPS TO BOOST RACIAL PRIDE

rienced mob violence between blacks and whites that left dozens of persons dead or injured. At training camps across the South, multiple reports surfaced of African American troops responding with violence to military and civilian discrimination. Just as the United States was attempting to present a unified front against fascism, these disturbances awakened paranoid fears about rampant disloyalty and internal sabotage. Studies done in the immediate aftermath of the riots blamed Communist and Japanese infiltration of the NAACP, fostering a feeling of “implied racial affinity between the Japanese, the ‘American’ negro and other colored peoples.” One War Department report particularly faulted the black press for “promoting discontent and an inferiority complex among the [black] troops by magnifying imaginary injustices or by false statements.” Once calmer heads prevailed, the McCloy Committee recommended improved training of black military police and convinced Army Chief of Staff Marshall to resist suggestions to censor the black press. A more sober analysis of the Detroit



General Marshall and Secretary Stimson

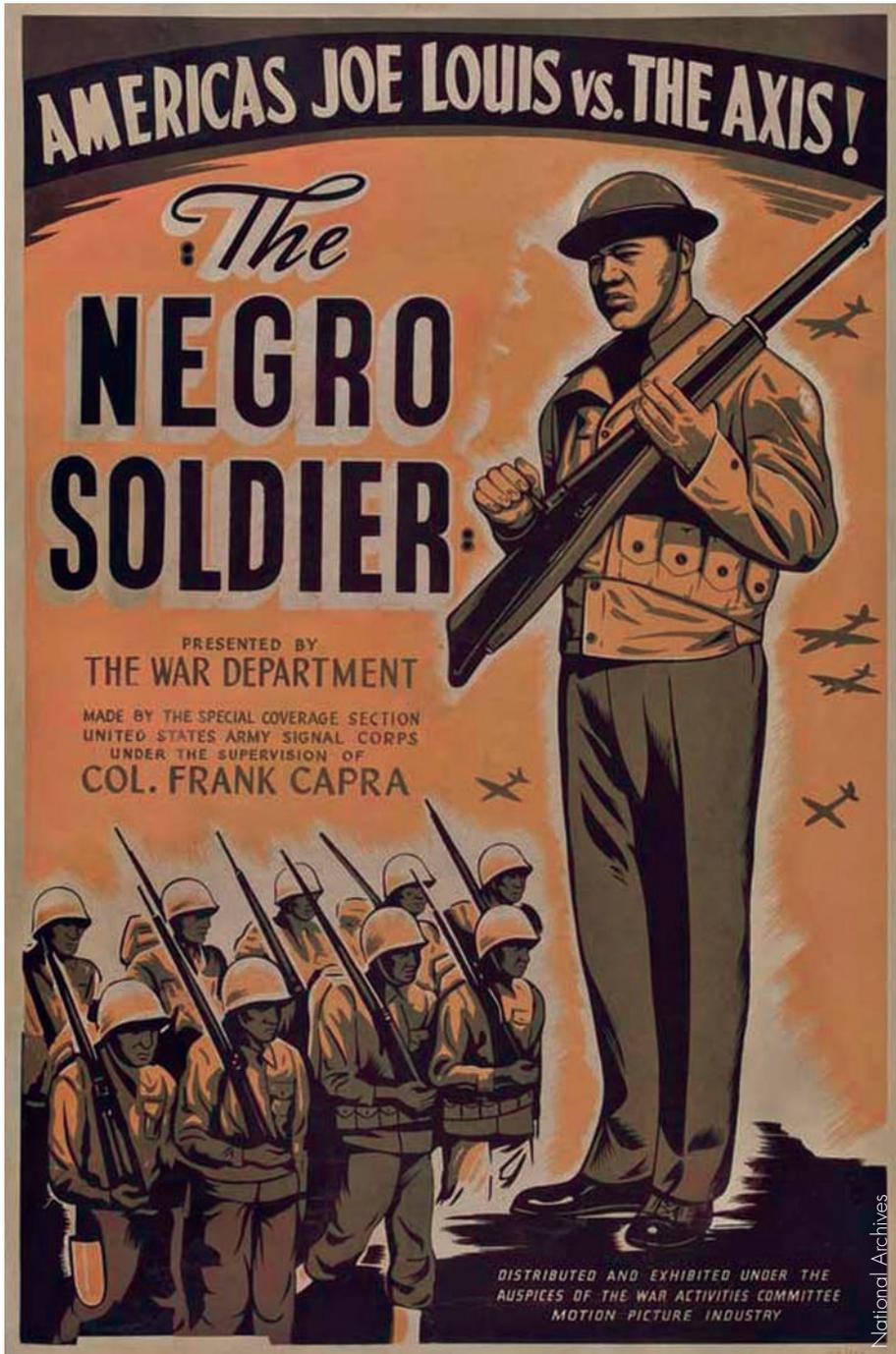
riot emphasized the city’s history of interracial job competition and housing shortages and also revealed a fact that seemed to refute everything policymakers thought they knew about segregation: namely, that those blacks and whites who worked with each other in integrated factories did not participate in the rioting.<sup>13</sup>

Resigned to the fact that they had no control over attitudes of white civilians, military officials did believe that the attitudes of black civilians and servicemen might be improved—and racial violence diminished—through better relations with the African American media. In 1942, a year before the riots in Los Angeles and elsewhere, the Army’s Bureau of Public Relations launched a liaison office for black journalists and assisted with two propaganda films, *The Negro Soldier* and *Teamwork*, to honor the efforts of black soldiers. Celebrities such as Joe Louis and Lena Horne toured the camps to boost racial pride, while in the summer of 1942, at Camp Lockett, California, Bettie Davis, Hattie McDaniel, Dinah Shore, and Mantan Moreland gave performances honoring the black cavalry regiments that served in the Indian Wars and Philippine Insurrection. The disturbances of 1943

boosted these activities, starting with a meeting between OWI representatives and leading black newspapermen later that year. African American journalists protested the government’s depiction of them as rabble-rousers and indicated a wish to cooperate with the Bureau of Public Relations to identify black individuals from the hero and casualty lists so as to better publicize their war contributions. In a new spirit of collaboration between the black press and OWI, the mainstream media would henceforth be pressured to run more stories about African Americans’ courage rather than the usual stories about their supposed criminal and immoral behavior. And, of course, as more stories about black loyalty and patriotism appeared, hope increased that black enlistment would rise and the efforts of possible Communist or Japanese propagandists would be subverted.<sup>14</sup>

A series of OWI bulletins and Army training manuals codified this new emphasis on media management. A research division report titled “The Negro and the War” declared that “The role of the Negro in the armed services must be publicized more than it is. . . . The increasing removal of discrimination against the Negroes in war industries and civilian defense should be publicized. . . . The war must be interpreted in such a way

Movie poster promoting  
*The Negro Soldier*



sence shifted from a publicity style that for decades had ignored or demeaned blacks' military accomplishments to one that now elevated those achievements into the public spotlight.

No less revolutionary was a similar, if less successful, attempt to eliminate prejudice in the Army itself. At the recommendation of the McCloy Committee, a host of new manuals was produced to help officers better understand the black troops whom they commanded. These manuals drew on research generated by a branch of the Information and Education Division chaired by a civilian technical director named Samuel A. Stouffer. A sociologist at the University of Chicago, Professor Stouffer had assisted Myrdal with *An American Dilemma*, and, with the help of fellow sociologist Donald Young who had introduced the term *minority group* into colloquial vocabulary, Stouffer wrote a pamphlet titled *Command of Negro Troops*. Distributed to white officers in 1944, the pamphlet summarized the scientific view of race by rejecting all claims of inherent superiority or inferiority based on skin color. *Command of Negro Troops* also explained and condemned those attitudes and behaviors most likely to create resentment in black servicemen. For instance, officers were warned to avoid jokes that relied on whites' traditional view of blacks and to refrain from using terms that could be seen as derogatory such as *boy*, *darky*, *uncle*, or *mammy*. Stouffer cast the black soldier in a new and clever light; pointing out that blacks quickly learn whether their officers see them as child-like or backward, they soon take advantage of such officers by malingering and "acting like the dullard his officer believes he is" to keep expectations low. In a similar vein, the Army Service Forces issued a more detailed, textbook-like manual titled *Leadership and the Negro Soldier* that explored African American history and social structure. The official newspaper *Army Talk* even

that the Negro feels he is fighting for something, too—a strengthening of democracy at home and abroad, greater rights under the law, a greater opportunity to improve his conditions." With such rhetoric now a part of official government policy, it was no wonder many defenders of Jim Crow feared the postwar future. Regarding the prevention of interracial trouble on military bases, a handbook for officers of black troops warned that "colored soldiers have been angered

into mob action by stories of mistreatment. White soldiers have been similarly goaded by distorted and utterly false tales about Negro behavior. The antidote for such inflammatory rumors is to be found . . . squarely with the truth so stated that it cannot be misunderstood, ignored, or doubted. This should be done as quickly as possible, just as soon as the responsible officer learns that dangerous tales are circulating."<sup>15</sup> Through messages like these, the federal government in es-

# SIMILAR TESTS DURING WORLD WAR I HAD SHOWN GREEKS, POLES, AND ITALIANS AS SCORING EQUALLY LOW.

began to run articles condemning discrimination, such as one titled “How Prejudices Develop.”<sup>16</sup>

The new training manuals illustrated the extent to which not only the ideas but the methods of social science had permeated military leaders’ thinking. *Leadership and the Negro Soldier* described the meaning of the term *stereotype*, defined in the psychological sense as a fixed mental picture perpetrated by offensive film and radio depictions. In what today might be called sensitivity training, the manuals’ authors stated that most whites routinely encountered blacks in construction and everyday



jobs; yet in the media blacks always appeared as beggars, malingerers, and entertainers. Accepting these portrayals as fact was considered detrimental to the war effort. African Americans’ low average AGCT scores were explained as the result of socioeconomic background, not of poor native intelligence. Similar tests during World War I had shown Greeks, Poles, and Italians as scoring equally low. Yet as these recent immigrants remained in the United States and assimilated into the melting pot, their scores advanced, so arguably the same would happen with blacks. Stouffer and Young made very clear the sociological understanding of race, which asserted that “in all the vast number of studies . . . during the past two or three decades, there is not one piece of research which proves that Negroes are, as a group, mentally or emotionally defective by heredity.” Officers were advised not to compliment black soldiers for supposedly inborn abilities like music, sports, or dancing, as this offended them and lowered morale. *Leadership and the Negro Soldier* even included a test bank of multiple choice questions to show the unscientific basis of prejudiced views:

Most reputable biologists and psychologists hold that:

- a) both biological and cultural traits are inherited
- b) only biological traits are inherited
- c) neither biological nor cultural traits are inherited; or
- d) cultural traits alone are inherited.

The correct answer is *b*.

This was followed by what may have been the most revolutionary question of all.

The best way to determine Negroes’ attitudes is to:

- a) ask the whites
- b) read the daily press
- c) listen to the radio; or
- d) ask the Negroes.<sup>17</sup>

The correct answer is *d*.

The new policies and literature concerning African American troops illustrate the extent to which intellectual debates over the meaning of race had influenced the military and highlight the military’s sincere desire to secure the support and loyalty of blacks and other minority groups in the war effort. At the heart of these changes lay the crucial need to repudiate doctrines of Aryan supremacy and Japanese invincibility. A section of *Command of Negro Troops* carried the statement that “The Germans have a theory that they are a race of supermen born to conquer all peoples of inferior blood. This is nonsense, the like of which has no place in the Army of the United States—the Army which has become great through the common effort of all peoples.” Southern legislators and a handful of War Department officials saw the dangerous potential of these sentiments and did not wait for the end of the war to begin suppressing them. In 1944, the Army printed fifty-five thousand copies of the book *The Races of Mankind* by Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish, an anthropological attack on the concept of race by two leading scientists. The copies were to be distributed to Army personnel to help combat Nazi racial ideology. But following an investigation by the Committee on Military Affairs in the House of

Representatives, the book was rejected and the copies destroyed on grounds that Benedict and Weltfish represented the interests of special minority groups and that *The Races of Mankind* contained controversial propaganda.<sup>18</sup>

Despite an enlightened tone, the new manuals continued to insist on the need for segregation, explained as a reflection of civilian society and not as a military value. Yet this sentiment became less tenable over time as the Army confronted multiple instances of where segregation undermined the effective training and utilization of black troops. Commanders complained often about the low physical fitness and lack of stamina among African American soldiers, problems which—if sociological theories were correct—should have been alleviated

once they entered military life. Army doctors blamed part of the problem on blacks' high melancholy and lack of will to keep up with training. In some cases, chronic malingerers or complainers were relegated to special "casual units" to prevent them from affecting the better soldiers. But once such men were grouped together, surgeons maintained, their fancied ills became real and their deterioration as soldiers accelerated. Physicians also studied the exceptionally high rate of venereal disease among black troops, which was seven to ten times higher than that for whites. Doctors attributed the cause to the limited recreational facilities for blacks in civilian areas; unlike white communities, the only stores, restaurants, and theaters available for blacks were often located in prostitution districts. As the reason-

ing went, if blacks enjoyed the same leisure opportunities—on and off the base—as whites, then their rates of venereal disease should go down. The obvious next step required military intervention in civilian communities.<sup>19</sup>

The military's unwillingness to do so may account for why the new approach had limited success. In 1945, the War Department ordered a study on the postwar potential of black troops based on their experiences in World War II. The study revealed that the number of disturbances involving black soldiers had diminished considerably since 1943, but that may have been caused merely by improved use of military police. Most notably, the McCloy Committee had decided that since a greater proportionate participation of minorities in the military was likely to continue, the War Depart-



National Archives

ment should move toward a workable policy of integration—exactly the same point argued by Judge Hastie before his resignation three years earlier. All-black units and organizations that worked with blacks submitted individual reports, most affirming the social science view that African Americans’ deficiencies were caused by a shared history of deprivation. As consensus gradually emerged that African Americans’ military contributions had been substandard and with innate racial differences ruled out as an explanation, many came to regard military segregation itself as the main cause for disparity.<sup>20</sup>

During the Battle of the Bulge, a number of black infantry units merged into white platoons and were sent to the front lines. Some divisional commanders were delighted with their service but

## MILITARY OFFICIALS HAD TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO ATTACK THE IDEOLOGY OF RACISM ABROAD

not all. In February 1945, a task force of the 92d Infantry Division, or “Buffalo Division,” had been pulled out of action after three days of straggling and disorganization. Incurring the wrath of the NAACP and the black press, Truman Gibson—the black civilian aide to the secretary of war—publicly acknowledged that the 92d’s performance was unacceptable, with numerous instances of panicky retreats, poor discipline, and bad morale. In an action that won him few friends among civil rights leaders, Gibson nonetheless posed a shrewd argument that assisted civil rights in the long run: that the real problem was segregation itself. Gibson pointed out that most black combat forces had been

trained near hostile civilian communities and led by officers who had been dumped into black units after failing to meet proper standards in white ones. He contended successfully to Marshall and others that African Americans’ service records could not be compared to those of whites since segregation started them from different playing fields. In 1946, a board chaired by Lt. Gen. Alvan C. Gillem recommended that large all-black units like the 92d be disbanded and that numerous small black units be assigned to larger white ones. No less a convert to integration than John McCloy complained that Gillem’s board had ignored the basic problem of separating soldiers by race. Gibson was actually more optimistic, believing that Gillem’s recommendation marked a move toward weakening racism in the Army, just as federal courts were undermining it in civilian society.<sup>21</sup>

Complete desegregation of the U.S. armed forces would have to wait until President Harry S. Truman’s 1948 executive order. The fight to desegregate and reform the rest of America would continue much longer and perseveres still. But World War II hastened both of those movements, most notably through an ideological assault on the concept of race that reached fruition in United Nations Resolution 217–A, asserting the universal rights and equality of all humans. As the federal government centralized its authority and power, minority groups gained a temporary opportunity to demand more inclusion in the name of national unity. The U.S. Army lay at the center of that battle, for although questions of racial justice and morality did not strongly resonate with military lead-

Soldiers are given permanent station duty assignments at Fort Benning, Georgia, 21 July 1941.

A Christmas dance at Negro Service Club Number 3, Camp Swift, Texas, 23 December 1943



# EVEN ADOLF HITLER AND OTHER ADVOCATES OF RACIAL SUPREMACY DID THEIR UNINTENDED PART

ers, questions of efficiency and image very much did. At each step through the war, military officials had tried unsuccessfully to attack the ideology of racism abroad while simultaneously justifying the continued practice of racial separation at home. As it became clear that segregation weakened mo-

rale, stoked black-white tensions, undermined the United States' position among its Allies, drained resources, and in essence created inferior troops and therefore an inferior Army, some policymakers conceded the necessity of the next step—the same step that the Warren court would take in 1954

when it ruled that being “separate” meant being inherently “unequal.” World War II also gave thousands of returning soldiers a different vision of what the United States could be, white veterans as well as black. Author William Leckie ended his service with the Army Air Forces as an officer overseeing two hundred black airmen returning from the South Pacific, an assignment he regarded at first as onerous. But after the men impressed him with their attitudes and dedication, he returned to civilian life and twenty years later wrote *The Buffalo Soldiers*, the first major study of African Americans in the frontier army—a book that has since become a classic work inspiring dozens of other histories on blacks in the military.<sup>22</sup>

Many people played roles in nudging the U.S. Army toward a genuine reassessment of race in World War II. Civil rights activists and black journalists kept the issue of segregation in the headlines. Sociologists and anthropologists wrote well-researched books and essays that demonstrated the social causes of racial inequality. Even Adolf Hitler and other advocates of racial supremacy did their unintended part by equating racism so strongly with their war aims. But perhaps the real heroes were those whose names we will never know because their actions by definition were unextraordinary. These were the thousands of soldiers, officers, and defense workers of all races who worked in fully or partially integrated settings and managed—if not to actually understand each other—at least to tolerate each other. By their very inaction, they revealed the faulty assumption on which segregation rested, namely, that integration leads to interracial hostility. Their quiet efforts did not go ignored, and they contributed to an erosion of the foundations of American apartheid.

AH

Black soldiers listen to a jukebox in a service club.



## NOTES

1. Emphasis added to quote from Ltr, Charles F. Wilson, Private, Air Corps, 33d Army Air Forces (AAF) Base Unit, Tucson, Ariz., 9 May 1944, to President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), in Phillip McGuire, ed., *Taps for a Jim Crow Army: Letters from Black Soldiers in World War II* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 1983), pp. 134–39.

2. Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 14. See also Alan Brinkley, “Over Here: World War II and American Liberalism,” in *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness During World War II*, ed. Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), pp. 32–34.

3. Richard Dalfiume, “The Forgotten Years of the Negro Revolution,” *Journal of American History* 55 (June 1968): 90–106; Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: Free Press, 1986), pp. 133–42.

4. Memo for General Eisenhower, 2 Apr 1942, sub: The Colored Troops Problem, “Colored Troops Problem” folder, Record Group (RG) 107, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and in Theodore A. Wilson, ed., *America and World War II: Critical Issues* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 2005), pp. 187–91.

5. Gunner Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944); Daniel Kryder, *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State During World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 4–11; Sherie Mershon and Steven Schlossman, *Foxholes and Color Lines: Desegregating the Armed Forces* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 105–14.

6. A. Russell Buchanan, *Black Americans in World War II* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 1977), pp. 59–61.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–27; Ltr, Robert Patterson, Under Secretary of War, to Eleanor Roosevelt, 13 Jun 1941, in Wilson, *America and World War II*, pp. 168–69.

8. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, pp. 133–42; Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, pp. 134–41; Morris J. MacGregor Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940–1965*, Defense Studies (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1981), pp. 23–24.

9. MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, pp. 13–22; Ltr, William H. Hastie to Patterson, 22 Sep 1942, “Colored Troops Problem” folder, RG 107, NARA, and in Wilson, *America and World War II*, pp. 197–98.

10. Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, pp. 134–53.

11. *Ibid.*; War Department Pamphlet 20–6, *Command of Negro Troops*, 29 February 1944, pp. 12–14, quote p. 14; Army Service Forces (ASF) Manual, M5, *Leadership and the Negro Soldier*, October 1944, pp. 1–5.

12. *Command of Negro Troops*, pp. 3–4; Warren L. Young, *Minorities and the Military: A Cross-National Study in World Perspective* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 209–15.

13. Memo for Eisenhower, 2 Apr 1942, sub: The Colored Troops Problem, pp. 187–91; Rpt to Stimson, 23 Jun 1943, sub: Causative Factors of the Detroit Race Riot, Correspondence of the Secretary of War, RG 107, NARA, and in Wilson, *America and World War II*, pp. 283–85; Buchanan, *Black Americans in World War II*, pp. 45–57, 71–83.

14. Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, pp. 153–58; Mershon and Schlossman, *Foxholes and Color Lines*, pp. 98–105.

15. *Command of Negro Troops*, pp. 18–19; “The Negro and the War,” box 1519, Research Division reports, “Basic Information Themes,” E-285, NARA.

16. Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, pp. 153–58; *Command of Negro Troops*, pp. 9–11; Mershon and Schlossman, *Foxholes and Color Lines*, pp. 114–20.

17. *Command of Negro Troops*, pp. 5–7, 11–12; *Leadership and the Negro Soldier*, pp. 28–30, 66–67, test questions in supplement; Audrey M. Shuey, *The Testing of Negro Intelligence*, 2d ed. (New York: Social Science Press, 1966).

18. *Command of Negro Troops*, p. 7 (quote); *Leadership and the Negro Soldier*, pp. 26–28; Mershon and Schlossman, *Foxholes and Color Lines*, pp. 114–20.

19. Army Service Forces Study Concerning Participation of Negro Troops in the Postwar Military Establishment, 19 Sep 1945, in Morris J. MacGregor Jr. and Bernard C. Nalty, eds., *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents*, 13 vols. (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1977), 7:25–62; Alan M. Osur, *Separate and Unequal: Race Relations in the AAF During World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2000), pp. 48–50; Alan L. Gropman, *The Air Force Integrates, 1945–1964* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), pp. 23–27; Ulysses Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1994), pp. 291–98; *Leadership and the Negro Soldier*, pp. 45–53.

20. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, pp. 214–16.

21. Martin Binkin and Mark J. Eitelberg, *Blacks and the Military* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1982), pp. 18–25; MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, pp. 123–43.

22. Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, pp. 163–67; United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217 A, (III), 10 Dec 1948, doc A810, in Wilson, *America and World War II*, pp. 391–95; Preface to William H. Leckie and Shirley A. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (1967; repr. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003).

# NEWSNOTES

*Continued from page 5*

support and assistance. These countries furnished significant military aid to the United States Army and performed vital missions relevant to combat, intelligence, reconstruction, and support operations. The participation of these coalition partners proved critical to the success of the overall mission. The U.S. military's experience in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM reconfirms the necessity of coalition building in modern warfare, even when the U.S. Army and Marine Corps ground forces shoulder the largest burden. This monograph offers separate sections on each coalition ally and presents basic information about deployed military forces and their general operational experiences in Iraq. It also provides a framework for more detailed histories to follow. The Center has issued this 139-page monograph in paperback as CMH Pub 59-3-1. Carney is a historian and staff ride leader in the Center's Field Programs and Historical Services Division.

*Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the U.S. Army, 1989-2005*, by John Sloan Brown, is the story of how the United States Army responded to the challenges of the end of the Cold War by transforming itself into the most capable ground force in the world today. It argues that from 1989 through 2005 the U.S. Army attempted, and largely achieved, a centrally directed and institutionally driven transformation relevant to ground warfare that exploited Information Age technology, adapted to post-Cold War strategic circumstances, and integrated into parallel Department of Defense efforts. The process not only modernized equipment, it also substantially altered doctrine, organization, training, administrative and logistical practices, and the service culture. *Kevlar Legions* further contends that the digitized expeditionary Army has withstood the test of combat, performing superbly

with respect to deployment and high-end conventional combat and capably with respect to low-intensity conflict and the counterinsurgency challenges of Iraq and Afghanistan. The Center has issued this 557-page work in cloth as CMH Pub 70-118 and in paper as CMH Pub 70-118-1. These volumes are available for purchase from the Government Printing Office for \$65 and \$50, respectively. Brown was the chief of military history at the U.S. Army Center of Military History from 1998-2005. He retired in October 2005 as a brigadier general after more than thirty-four years of service to the Army.

## IN MEMORIAM GENERAL DONN A. STARRY (1925-2011)

General Donn A. Starry, a former commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and the U.S. Readiness Command, died on 26 August 2011 at the age of 86 after a long illness. Starry, a 1948 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, held numerous commands during his career including the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Vietnam, where he was wounded by an enemy grenade; the U.S. Army Armor Center and School, Fort Knox, Kentucky; and the V Corps in Germany. While serving as the TRADOC commander, Starry was instrumental in authoring the AirLand Battle Doctrine and helping to establish the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California. He retired in 1983 as the commander of the U.S. Readiness Command. Starry is the author of *Mounted Combat in Vietnam*, a book in the Department of the Army's Vietnam Studies series published in 1979, which the Center of Military History has issued as CMH Pub 90-17-1. His collected works, *Press On! Selected*

*Works of General Donn A. Starry*, were recently published by the Combat Studies Institute Press at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This two-volume set, edited by Lewis Sorley, covers a myriad of professional topics and contains all of Starry's speeches, articles, cables, and letters. General Starry's decorations included the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, two Distinguished Service Medals, the Silver Star, three Legions of Merit, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. He is survived by his wife Karen and four adult children.

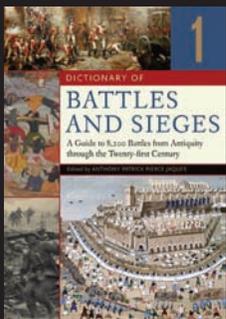
## U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE 2012 ESSAY CONTEST

The United States Army War College and the United States Army War College Foundation have announced their 2012 Strategic Landpower Essay Contest. The contest is open to anyone and offers a prize of \$4,000 to the author of the best essay and a prize of \$1,000 to the second-place winner. The topic of the essay must relate to the strategic use of military power on land with recommended topics being "The Future of Landpower," the "Strategic Role of Landpower," and "The Army's Role in National Security." Essays should be original, must not have been previously published, and are not to exceed five thousand words. All entries should be directed to Dr. Michael R. Matheny, USAWC Strategic Landpower Essay Contest, U.S. Army War College, Dept. of Military Strategy, Planning and Operations, 122 Forbes Ave., Carlisle, PA 17013-5242. Essays must be post-marked on or before 17 February 2012. For more information, please contact Dr. Michael R. Matheny at (717) 245-3459 or Michael.matheny@us.army.mil.



# BOOKREVIEWS

*Dictionary of Battles and Sieges: A Guide to 8,500 Battles from Antiquity through the Twenty-first Century (3 vols.)*



By Tony Jaques  
Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007  
Pp. lvi, 1354. \$299.95

## Review by Grant T. Weller

Tony Jaques, an independent scholar, has created a truly monumental work, stunningly complete in geographical and chronological scope. The cost of this scope is depth, as each of the battles or sieges listed receives only a sentence or two of explanation, giving name, location, the larger conflict of which it was a part, opposing commanders, outcome, and any cross-references. This can be illustrated by the entry for a battle with which most readers will be familiar.

### Gettysburg | 1863 | American Civil War (Eastern Theater)

Marching north across the Potomac to Gettysburg in Pennsylvania, Confederate commander Robert E. Lee attacked General George G. Meade's Union army in a defensive position south of town. In the bloodiest battle on American soil, Lee was decisively defeated with terrible losses and

began his retreat southwest through **Williamsport**, cautiously pursued by the shattered victors (1–3 July 1863) (vol. 2, p. 391).

At first glance, this hardly seems adequate, but it is, as intended, a very good starting point. After reading this, a student, military professional, or scholar would have the key facts necessary to begin more detailed research. When one considers that the volume has 8,499 more entries, most of them on battles far less well known, the value becomes clear. This is a work not intended as an end but as a beginning.

Many readers will wonder about the value of such a set in the Internet age. Certainly, one could find such basic information about Gettysburg through a quick search using any standard search engine. One would, however, have to wade through the flotsam that any Internet search turns up. For example, this reviewer tried to do a “quick” search for some of the battles of the Russian Civil War and turned up more mail-order bride sites than solid references. Jaques' efforts have placed the key facts about the selected battles at one's fingertips, without pop-ups, advertisements, or other distractions. This reviewer repeated the earlier effort, using more exact keywords drawn from the “Belaya Glina” entry (vol. 1, p. 124), and found the search results to be far more valuable.

Noted military historian Dennis E. Showalter provides a foreword, in which he argues that the publication of this work emphasizes the centrality of battle to the study of military history. Showalter's point is well-taken and built upon by Jaques in the preface, in which he wrestles

with questions of the definition of battle, which battles to include, and naming and dating conventions.

While every reader will have his quibbles with Jaques' choices of details or presentation (this reviewer was disappointed that the author uses *Russian* instead of *Soviet* where the latter would be more appropriate), the entries are of uniformly high quality. My random sampling of entries failed to detect any errors of fact, and any disagreements about interpretation are best resolved by doing exactly what Jaques hopes the reader will do—attempt further research.

Aside from the content of the entries, the most important part of a reference work is its method of access. The main entries are listed alphabetically, then chronologically if two or more battles carry the same name. There is also a thorough index (183 pages) and a comprehensive and useful bibliography. The most important way of working through the volumes, however, is the Chronological Reference Guide, a chronological listing of all the wars and conflicts referenced in the entries, accompanied by a list by year of each battle of that conflict. Between the reference guide and the index, if one knows even a single detail about a battle, one should be able to find the entry. The reference guide also includes wars and conflicts that did not generate any battles, per se, which are listed and described in the appendix.

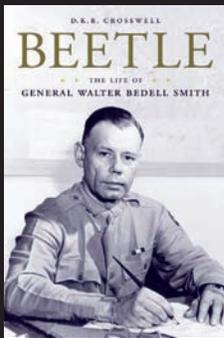
This set is too expensive for most private bookshelves but is highly recommended for academic and military libraries. It provides an essential first step in research, be it formal or casual. This reviewer foresees using it to generate ideas and examples in

the classroom and referring students to it for starting their assignments.

**Dr. Grant T. Weller** is an Air Force lieutenant colonel and is deputy chief of the Air Force Watch in the Pentagon. He is a former associate professor of history at the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and is coeditor of *Harnessing the Heavens: National Defense Through Space* (Chicago, Ill., 2008).



*Beetle: The Life of General Walter Bedell Smith*



By D. K. R. Crosswell  
University of Kentucky Press, 2010  
Pp. xvii, 1070. \$39.95

**Review by Pang Yang Hwei**

This is a judicious biographical treatment of General Walter Bedell Smith's life and career. Two decades in the making, Dan Crosswell charts the entire life of "Beetle" with aplomb and vigor. The "unorthodox" approach of presenting Smith's important but overlooked Cold War career first (United States ambassador to Soviet Union, Central Intelligence Agency director, and under secretary of state) is particularly apt as one realizes belatedly in Chapter 6 that Smith started off as a private in the National Guard in 1911. Not a West Point graduate, Smith worked doubly hard to prove himself. Smith

was fortunate to have enlightened mentors such as Maj. Gen. George Van Horn Moseley and Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall. By the time Smith became secretary of the War Department General Staff in August 1941, he had already proved himself in the eyes of Marshall and established a reputation for getting the job done. Smith played a vital role as architect of the American joint and allied combined chiefs of staff structures; small wonder that once confirmed as the commander of the European Theater of Operations in 1942 Maj. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower specifically requested Smith as his chief of staff.

No treatment of Smith is possible without examining Eisenhower's command style. Scholars of the Eisenhower presidency would be enlightened by Crosswell's incisive analysis of the wartime general. "The exterior calm, geniality, and constant buoyancy," concludes Crosswell, "cloaked an unsentimental operator who manipulated people in pursuit of his own ends" (p. 316). Eisenhower's "passive-negative" leadership style meant the general liked to have numerous avenues of action explored and exhausted. This invariably evoked the charge that "indecisive Ike" could not make up his mind. Eisenhower balked at issuing "unequivocal orders" that would upset people, yet stubbornly defended his command prerogatives, all the while busy building a consensus. In fact, Eisenhower proved decisive only when he made up his mind *not* to do something.

One matter Eisenhower recoiled from was running his headquarters. Smith was superbly equipped to handle this chore. Having obtained carte blanche from Eisenhower in managing the staff, Smith proved a tough taskmaster. Subordinates conformed to Smith's exacting standards or got shipped out. When staff officers complained about the remote location of the new Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), Smith curtly recommended more work as a cure for boredom. To

achieve results, Smith had no qualms about busting heads and making enemies of obstinate senior commanders. Yet with British officers, he was all charm. Ever a practical man, Smith knew that the British staff system had its advantages and how the American staff system suffered in comparison. If Smith was to hammer out a workable headquarters, he had to watch and adapt.

The most critical contribution made by Crosswell is in the area of operational logistics. A subject too often neglected (Eisenhower himself left most of the mess to Smith), Crosswell plunges into the morass of logistical confusion and explains various causes for the ambivalence manifested by the U.S. Army about supply. For example, the supply debacle of Operation TORCH is revealing. Competent logistical officers were in short supply. "Officers and men learned their jobs through trial and error, and there were plenty of both" (p. 294). Troops often arrived in Britain far ahead of their supplies. When supplies did arrive, they did not correspond to Services of Supply (SOS) demands, were unloaded haphazardly at different ports, and crucial materials disappeared "in the labyrinth of SOS installations" (p. 295). As a result, U.S. troops had to borrow equipment from the British to carry out training. Smith did much to resolve the logistical nightmare by impinging on British stocks and goodwill, which was fostered by his aforementioned charm.

The logistical imbroglio persisted, though not for the lack of plans for an organizational shakeup. Smith repeatedly tried to persuade Eisenhower to do so but the supreme commander insisted on only superficial changes. Eisenhower's inability to fix the bifurcated supply and administrative structures and firmly establish responsibilities between the various headquarters and the operational commands hindered operations from TORCH to later campaigns in France; often with dire consequences. Eisenhower strongly believed that "personalities" would resolve organizational

impasses. This line of thought formed the *leitmotif* of the Allied logistical problems. Crosswell gives a masterful account of such failings when the Allied advance floundered in late summer 1944. Consumed by the desire to push ahead without the vital Brittany ports and associated supply lines, the Communications Zone never created essential installations such as supply depots, regulating stations, and proper accounting procedures. As a result, vast amounts of ammunition remained in Normandy, and ships could not unload their cargoes. Characteristically, Eisenhower resorted to an ad hoc solution by having his personal friend Brig. Gen. Lucius D. Clay work out the Cherbourg bottleneck. In hindsight, Smith's reorganization attempts, which would have provoked a maelstrom of controversy, were doomed from the start. Perhaps the best quote, revealing Eisenhower's habitual avoidance of dealing with organizational problems, is when he concluded that "the only point of friction is in parts of the machine where friction should be of no particular moment" (p. 438), a statement that left Smith befuddled.

A related problem that plagued U.S. forces was manpower. Crosswell underscores the role played by General Marshall in authoring the shortage. Although SHAEF under Smith was tasked to resolve the problem (and the negative publicity arising from the manpower crunch), Crosswell demonstrates just how much of it was systemic all the way up the chain to the War Department. Marshall remained trapped by the lessons of World War I when he witnessed problems caused by excessive expansions and rapid demobilizations. The solution rested in maintaining a manageable ninety divisions with rolling manpower replacements according to a system of automatic resupply. American replacement troops were treated like widgets. But unexpected casualty rates and flawed assumptions amplified the manpower issue. Compounding the quandary, Eisenhower resisted investing in a manpower command just as he obstructed a logistical reorganization.

The firestorm produced by the Darlan deal (1942), in which the French retained administrative control of North Africa, taught Eisenhower a crucial lesson. After being badly stung by the criticisms, he resolved always to have a buffer or someone to act as a lightning rod. Smith turned out to be the perfect choice. Eisenhower's "passive-negative" (p. 59) approach invited attempts by the British to replace him as ground commander in Europe. Field Marshal Alan F. Brooke's machinations in October 1944 were a good example. For this reviewer, Smith's most significant act was his steady hand when Eisenhower was on the verge of recommending the sacking of Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery in December 1944. Despite sharing in Eisenhower's "towering rage" (p. 825) over Montgomery's imperiousness, Smith obliged Eisenhower to wait it out. Crosswell rightly points out that the repercussions from Montgomery's relief "might fissure the alliance" (p. 828).

Despite being the number two man, Beetle never enjoyed a close personal relationship with Eisenhower. The taciturn chief of staff was not the type who would lend his superior "a warm shoulder to cry on" (p. 317). Even their wives were not friends. Crosswell carefully details that as early as December 1942 Milton Eisenhower advised his older brother to dump Smith. A minor quarrel in December 1943 over Smith's reluctance to partake in a dinner party organized by Eisenhower signaled a growing personal strain between the general and his chief of staff. By 1944, Eisenhower and Smith were "socially estranged" (p. 570). When Eisenhower was appointed North Atlantic Treaty Organization head in 1952, Lt. Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther was his preferred choice as deputy. This speaks volumes as to why Smith only received the post of under secretary of state during the Eisenhower presidency; Smith wanted and thought he deserved the chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs and bitterly resented being "Ike's prat boy" (p. 105).

One surprising revelation is Crosswell's measured acknowledgment of

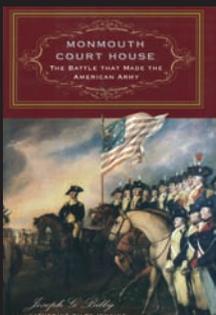
Montgomery's contributions. For example, Montgomery could justly lay a proprietary claim on the OVERLORD plan. Crucial input such as expanding the landing zone, increasing the number of divisions participating, and inserting more transport assets all bore Montgomery's hallmarks. More importantly, the breakout from Normandy also conformed to Montgomery's strategy of pinning the Germans at Caen while allowing the Americans to breakout at St. Lô. Yet Montgomery's obnoxious personality is also readily flagged. As Crosswell wryly points out, "he even managed to transform his virtues—dogged self-assuredness, high-minded professionalism, and undaunted daring—into vices" (p. 389).

Crosswell's masterfully researched volume adds an important dimension to biographical writing and significantly contributes to the literature on the U.S. involvement in the European Theater of Operations during World War II and the Cold War. By deftly incorporating a difficult subject such as military logistics into an accessible biography, Crosswell's work cautions that future scholars of World War II should not neglect this vital aspect of military operations.

**Dr. Pang Yang Huei** is the editor of *Pointer: The Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*. He has a Ph.D. in history from the National University of Singapore and has published articles in *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, and *Critique*. Currently, he is working on a monograph that deals with the Taiwan Strait crises in the 1950s and an annotated volume of speeches on national defense by Singapore's second deputy prime minister, Goh Keng Swee.



*Monmouth Court House: The Battle That Made the American Army*



By Joseph G. Bilby and  
Katherine Bilby Jenkins  
Westholme Publishing, 2010  
Pp. x, 310. \$26

**Review by Gregory J. W. Urwin**

It is curious that the Battle of Monmouth has not received the intensive treatment accorded to other Revolutionary War battles, such as Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Brandywine, Germantown, Saratoga, Cowpens, and Guilford Court House. Fought in scorching heat on difficult, ravine-slashed terrain in New Jersey on 28 June 1778, Monmouth developed into the longest pitched battle of the War of Independence and one of its largest. It was also the last major engagement fought in the northern theater. American historians have long argued that Monmouth marked the coming of age of the Continental Army. According to the oft-told tale, the grueling 1777–1778 winter encampment at Valley Forge and the innovative tactical training of Maj. Gen. Friedrich Wilhelm Augustus von Steuben transformed the ragged American regulars who fought at Monmouth into the match of any troops in the world. The combination of this new potency with the inspiring leadership of General George Washington enabled the continentals to battle their British foes to a standstill. Though technically a draw, Monmouth was really an American moral victory that marked an end to British battlefield supremacy.

Judging from the title, *Monmouth Court House: The Battle That Made the American Army* should be another rehash of the traditional Monmouth narrative. This book, however, takes a

number of surprising twists and turns. Its unorthodox structure reflects the interests and expertise of its lead co-author, Joseph G. Bilby. A Vietnam veteran, who later became a supervising investigator for the New Jersey Department of Labor, Bilby has managed to produce an amazing number of books on his home state and the American Civil War. His fascination with local history and firearms is evident throughout this work. These predilections enrich the reader's appreciation for what happened at Monmouth, but they sometimes lead Bilby and his coauthor (and daughter), Katherine Bilby Jenkins, into digressions that contribute little to their overall purpose. For instance, the team devotes six pages to the British Ferguson rifle, which had no noticeable effect on the outcome at Monmouth.

Bilby and Jenkins begin their march to Monmouth Court House by introducing the reader to the cultural terrain on which the battle was fought. Their first two chapters deal with how the Revolutionary War's first three years impacted New Jersey, giving special attention to Monmouth County. Bilby and Jenkins demonstrate that the conflict was as much a civil war as it was a colonial revolt. While Patriots may have outnumbered Loyalists, the latter remained quite active—even when British troops lay beyond supporting distance.

Against this backdrop, the authors cover General Sir William Howe's invasion of New Jersey in the autumn of 1776, the redemptive effect of Washington's daring Trenton and Princeton campaign, and Howe's ill-fated decision to capture Philadelphia in 1777 rather than support Lt. Gen. John Burgoyne's invasion of upstate New York. The fall of Philadelphia failed to have the pacifying effect that Howe anticipated, and Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga hastened France's entry into the war. Howe washed his hands of the mess he created by resigning his command, which left General Sir Henry Clinton to evacuate Philadelphia on 16–18 June 1778. As Clinton's British, Hessian, and Loyalist troops—encumbered by a sizable baggage train and swarms of refugees—wound their way through

the New Jersey countryside toward New York, Patriot militia harassed the enemy's every step. At the same time, General Washington followed in Clinton's wake, looking for the opportunity to strike a telling blow.

As Bilby and Jenkins follow the opposing armies across New Jersey, they pause to analyze the leadership, composition, and quality of these forces. The authors also devote an entire chapter to tactics, training, and weapons. Bilby and Jenkins are to be commended for dispensing with the many inaccurate stereotypes that American historians still cherish about the British Redcoat. They explain how the British soldier discarded impractical parade-ground finery for plainer dress while on campaign. The authors also recognize that British infantry regiments adopted open-order formations better suited for the vast expanses and broken country they encountered in North America. Many of these ideas come from Matthew H. Spring's revolutionary book, *With Zeal and with Bayonets Only: The British Army on Campaign in North America, 1775–1783* (Norman, Okla., 2008). Yet while the authors list Spring in their bibliography, they curiously fail to cite him in their endnotes.

Bilby and Jenkins cover the battle that raged northwest of Monmouth Court House from roughly 0730 to 1800 in a single fifty-page chapter. The confusion and contradictions that exist in the relatively few available eyewitness sources have always made unraveling what happened at Monmouth particularly challenging. Bilby and Jenkins wisely tap recent archaeological surveys to assist in their efforts to decipher the written record, and they present a credible reconstruction of the battle. The authors conclude with a look at how Monmouth has been remembered and commemorated in the 233 years that followed the battle. Their final chapter deals with such diverse topics as the erection of monuments, the legend of Molly Pitcher, battlefield preservation, and reenactments.

*Monmouth Court House* is an interesting book and a worthy addition to the military history of the American Revolution. Bilby and Jenkins deserve praise for taking such pains to set the

battle in a broad context, although they occasionally sidetrack the reader with self-indulgent digressions of peripheral importance. Their description of the battle itself is not detailed enough to be considered definitive, which leaves the door open to other historians to tackle this subject.

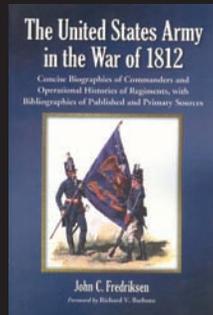
The authors claim that Monmouth proved that rebellious Americans had succeeded in creating a reliable regular army. They laud its “professionalization” and describe it as “a long-service force able to integrate recruits seamlessly into its structure” (p. 231). They also credit Baron von Steuben with imbuing the continentals with a higher sense of confidence by training them in a uniform drill system whose simplified nature better suited American tastes.

The authors fail, however, to explicitly explain how the army that Washington led at Monmouth differed qualitatively from the one with which he tried to defend Philadelphia the previous year. As at Germantown on 4 October 1777, the opening phase at Monmouth saw Continental commanders unable to conduct a coordinated offensive. Indeed, the willingness of Continental units to retire in the face of British counterblows hardly reflected the new confidence that supposedly possessed them. Washington did succeed in rallying his army and checking the enemy’s advance, but continentals had exhibited similar tenacity on the defensive at Brandywine on 11 September 1777. While Bilby and Jenkins have peeled away many of the myths that shroud this campaign, they fail to push far enough to entirely free themselves of formulaic conventions and produce a truly great book.

**Dr. Gregory J. W. Urwin** is a professor of history at Temple University. His latest book is *Victory in Defeat: The Wake Island Defenders in Captivity, 1941–1945* (Annapolis, Md., 2010), and he is now researching a social history of British Lt. Gen. Charles, Earl Cornwallis’ 1781 Virginia campaign.



*The United States Army in the War of 1812: Concise Biographies of Commanders and Operational Histories of Regiments, with Bibliographies of Published and Primary Sources*



By John C. Fredriksen  
McFarland, 2009  
Pp. vii, 303. \$45

### Review by Larry A. Grant

Good reference works help historians to find and deal coherently with the mass of material that often surrounds a subject. More than that, they can highlight gaps in the literature that have been overlooked and deserve attention. John C. Fredriksen’s *The United States Army in the War of 1812: Concise Biographies of Commanders and Operational Histories of Regiments, with Bibliographies of Published and Primary Sources* is such a reference work.

As Richard V. Barbuto points out in the foreword, “virtually every regiment that fought in the Civil War has its history recorded. However, fewer than 5 percent of War of 1812 regiments are documented in a scholarly, comprehensive fashion” (p. 3). The strength of Fredriksen’s volume is that it provides the historian with a guide to the essential documents for each regiment raised in the War of 1812. Fredriksen also includes some source material for senior American leaders, but more complete guides to the papers of the principal participants can be found elsewhere.

*The United States Army in the War of 1812* is divided into ten chapters organized into two thematic sections, Army leadership and Army organization. The first four chapters focus on

the president in his role as commander in chief, the men who held the post of secretary of war during the war period, and the Army’s serving brigadier and major generals. The remaining chapters deal with Army organization. The various staff branches are lumped together in a single chapter, while each of the combat arms branches—artillery, cavalry, engineers, and infantry, or rifles—has a separate chapter devoted to its units, principally at the regimental level.

The leadership entries follow the same general pattern. An essay providing a brief introduction to the individual is followed by a list of source materials related to the subject. These are sorted according to their type—archival, manuscript, printed primary, and select secondary. Combat unit entries begin with the date the unit was raised, information on subordinate units recruited and their geographic origins, and unit battle honors. This is accompanied by a short unit history and a list of individuals promoted for noteworthy conduct in the field. A listing of unit source material according to the same arrangement used for individuals completes each entry.

While the usual sources are appended to the entries for the Adjutant General, Inspector General, Medical Department, Commissary of Ordnance, Judge Advocate General’s Department, Quartermaster Department/Supply Services, and the U.S. Military Academy, background essays are not provided for these “Various Departments.” An organization as important to the war effort as the Quartermaster Department deserves at least as much, since even the 32d Regiment of Infantry, a New York garrison regiment that never saw combat, is allotted a paragraph to place it in context.

*The United States Army in the War of 1812* would have benefited by the addition of a short summary of the principal events of the war. Such an essay might have offered the opportunity for a more consistent treatment of the battles briefly mentioned in the biographical essays. These short essays, when the focus must be on

the individual, leave any discussion of operations necessarily incomplete.

This leads to occasional inconsistencies when the essays of different leaders are compared. One such is the characterization of Andrew Jackson's behavior before the battle of New Orleans. The Jackson essay flatters him as having hastened to New Orleans when he "divined that New Orleans was most likely their [the British's] next object of attention . . ." (p. 54). But the James Monroe essay states that the secretary of war, whose intelligence sources predicted an attack on New Orleans, was frustrated in the defense of the city by Jackson's "single-minded" obsession with his attack on Pensacola, which kept him from shifting his operations to New Orleans until the last moment (p. 26).

Fredriksen's work provides an introduction to the basic source materials for the top-level leadership and for unit histories at the regimental level and above. Political, economic, or social aspects of the Army or leadership in the war are not mentioned, and only one archive outside the United States in Canada is included in the list of repositories. For these reasons, *The United States Army in the War of 1812* must be combined with other reference works if undertaking a broader study of the history of the war. To that end, a bibliographic essay pointing to other guides for further research would have been useful.

Probably the most helpful addition to this volume would have been some annotation of the source material entries. Helping the researcher to find the required information must be the goal of such guides, but the entries under the archival or manuscript sources for each unit or individual give little unique description beyond noting, for instance, that they refer to letters or orders. For example, the section for Maj. Gen. George Izard contains about a dozen entries for material at the National Archives. Comparing two entries shows that the only distinguishing feature is that one is RG98, 458/357; the other is RG98, 451/350.

Each entry in these sections provides enough information to permit the researcher to locate the material but not

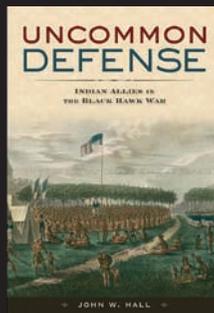
enough to describe the contents in a way that would minimize the amount of time spent following false leads. A line of text describing each item might have saved the next researcher many minutes or even hours of work. It is worth noting that a great deal of information can now be found on the Internet Web pages of many of the organizations in the list of repositories, though this was not included.

Nevertheless, Fredriksen's *The United States Army in the War of 1812* fills an important gap in the military history of the United States Army. Historians using this useful guide to the essential documents will be able finally to do justice to the histories of the regiments in the War of 1812.

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



*Uncommon Defense: Indian Allies in the Black Hawk War*



By John W. Hall  
Harvard University Press, 2009  
Pp. vi, 367. \$31.50

Review by Deborah C. Kidwell

In *Uncommon Defense*, John Hall explains the unlikely alliance among elements of the Menominee, Dakota, Potawatomi, and Ho Chunk tribes

and U.S. forces during the Black Hawk War of 1832. Black Hawk and his band sought to reoccupy lands previously ceded to the United States in the upper Mississippi region known as the *pays d'en haut*. Hall reminds us that this alliance between Indian groups and Americans is difficult to understand given their history of conflict but maintains that the Indians "were the true architects of an alliance that served their own ends first and always" (p. 10). He concludes that "each [tribe] allied with the United States against Black Hawk to serve the best interests of their people in a time of considerable change, and they did so in accordance with protocols they had negotiated with earlier European powers"<sup>1</sup> (p. 9). This sometimes half-hearted and self-serving participation of Native American groups did not overcome their internal tensions, prevent intertribal conflict, nor resolve outstanding issues with settlers. Although Black Hawk's defeat contributed to the stability of the region, the increased economic development that followed ultimately fostered Indian removal policies, as Americans justified continued settlement under the narrative of "Manifest Destiny." Thus, Hall argues that the conflict represented a turning point in the history of the Old Northwest.

Hall, who is the Ambrose-Hesseltine assistant professor of U.S. military history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a former West Point graduate and instructor, maintains that his book provides a case study for the use of indigenous forces by a conventional military power. Indeed, the author succeeds in restoring relevance to a short, comparatively insignificant conflict. He notes that "far from unique, their experience is worth remembering for those who would make such promises again—and those who would listen to them" (p. 12). This reference represents the moral of the story, if you will, and certainly food for thought—do not make promises that you cannot keep, and do not believe promises that the evidence suggests your allies cannot, or will not, keep.

Hall's chapter titles are descriptive; the first three discuss the background

for the conflict. Native Americans had developed patterns of accommodation with European powers for over two hundred years prior to 1830. These military partnerships generally worked well, in large part due to the competition between the two major powers of the region and shared commercial interests. By 1816, however, the two remaining groups expressed diverging worldviews. Americans saw themselves as conquerors and sought political, social, and economic control backed by military might if necessary, even as they extended treaties of trade and friendship. Native Americans expected renewed traditional accommodations, respect for tribal sovereignty, and the leeway to resolve internal and intertribal disputes with violence if necessary. As Hall explains, “unresolved issues between the Indians and their new American ‘allies’ simmered beneath a patina of tranquility that promised to break if subjected to excessive pressure” (p. 69). Traders cheated Indians and sold them liquor, settlers felt threatened by warriors, the Army did little to mediate disputes among the tribes, and government agents extracted land concessions. Native Americans had little interest in becoming “civilized” farmers and blacksmiths.

Hall’s next three chapters describe the increasing regional instability and the destruction of Black Hawk’s band. He observes that some tribal leaders concluded that “the Great Father did not uphold his obligations to his red children . . . but he was too powerful to oppose by force of arms” (p. 97). Moreover, Hall asserts that military operations often relied on a concept of deterrence that valued “projections of might . . . to cow the Indians into passivity” (p. 228). Government agents, “cultural brokers,” and military commanders, some of whom expressed sympathy toward the Indian’s plight, attempted to quell the violence, however, resolution was most often obtained at the greater expense of the tribes, which compounded the Indians’ grievances and led to a desire for retribution. Hall observes that Brig. Gen. Henry Atkinson mismanaged and misunderstood his allies, who

“contributed little;” the Ho Chunks and the Potawatomis lack of contribution “was partly by design,” and the Menominees, Dakotas, and western Ho Chunks “sought combat with the British Band but encountered only frustration” (p. 179).

The last three chapters analyze the consequences of the Black Hawk War. Hall concludes that tribal groups participated for four broadly defined objectives: “to reap material gain, to exert political leverage, to settle intertribal scores, and to fulfill male gender roles” (p. 237). Atkinson’s allies settled old scores as they pursued the remnants of Black Hawk’s band into Wisconsin and Iowa. Hall observes that, “whatever their operational significance, the final maneuvers of the Menominees, Dakotas, Potawatomis, and Ho Chunks illustrate well the disparity of their motives in terms of both ends and intensity” (p. 205). Ultimately, Indian actions “failed to sway the popular opinion of frontier whites, who continued to regard all Indians as a threat,” and Potawatomi and Ho Chunk military assistance failed to “offset the manifest evidence that other members of their tribe had shed white blood without reservation” (pp. 205–06). The United States continued to pressure Indians to relinquish their remaining lands for smaller, inferior parcels; inadequate compensation; and geographical placement between traditional enemies.

Hall more than accomplishes his objectives; he expertly explains the motivations, agendas, and consequences for the unlikely alliances and rivalries between and among Native American groups and the U.S. government. Moreover, Hall has treated us to a well-researched and skillfully written historical account of a nineteenth-century conflict with relevance to contemporary military operations. For example, we can promote or even impose (if strong enough militarily) peace, but, if we fail to provide an avenue to settle grievances and reach consensus, we may have merely postponed armed conflict and encouraged desires of retribution. Furthermore, we may not prefer the method of resolution eventually chosen and have

fewer viable options to exert a positive influence. In this case, unresolved issues simmered, with no culturally acceptable means of settlement. As the parties became increasingly polarized, General Atkinson sometimes found it necessary to make exceptions, especially when larger considerations were at stake. In addition, clear consistent policy and action are requirements for long-term stability. The rotating system of Army officers, “cultural brokers,” and tribal leaders described here fostered agreement among individuals but often were not honored by their successors. Finally, perhaps some conceptions of race or socioeconomic status as unifying concepts blind us to other constructions of community. Hall points out that, for many inhabitants of the upper Mississippi, affiliations were local.

The real strength of this book is its depth in clearly establishing not only the complexity of the events prior to, during, and after the Black Hawk War from a historical perspective, but also its relevance to contemporary military operations. Thus Hall’s work helps us understand not only the history—useful for students and scholars—but also the role of history in explaining tribal societies and motivations for war and military alliances. In doing so the author provides a number of timeless lessons.

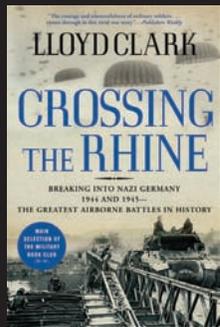
## NOTE

1. Hall maintains that the tribal distinctions he refers to “do not represent discrete political units but identities based on a shared language and culture.” Thus, he observes that the alliances were “always local rather than tribal.” He details how different bands of the same tribe often pursued a number of impulses and reactions that characterized diverse policies (pp. 10–11).

**Dr. Deborah C. Kidwell** is a former associate professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, has served as a staff historian at Edwards Air Force Base, and now works in the Air Force Historical Studies Office in Washington, D.C.



*Crossing the Rhine: Breaking into Nazi Germany 1944 and 1945—The Greatest Airborne Battles in History*



By Lloyd Clark  
Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008  
Pp. xxx, 415. \$25

**Review by Michael A. Boden**

Lloyd Clark's latest book, *Crossing the Rhine: Breaking into Nazi Germany 1944 and 1945—The Greatest Airborne Battles in History*, examines the two attempts by British Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery's 21 Army Group to jump the final river barrier that prevented the Allies from entering the heart of Germany. In conducting his analysis, Clark does not try to provide a singular analysis of Operation MARKET-GARDEN, an endeavor that many historians have studied in the past. Instead, he goes beyond Arnhem to scrutinize the breadth of Allied strategy along the lower Rhine, carrying the action forward to look at the subsequent 21 Army Group effort to cross the Rhine, Operation PLUNDER VARSITY, conducted six months later. In analyzing British-led operations between late 1944 and early 1945, the author supplies a linkage between these two campaigns that is tremendously beneficial to the reader wishing to learn more about Allied strategy and operations along the German frontier.

Initially, one may perceive *Crossing the Rhine* as another "A Bridge Too Far," and hesitate to pick it up. Clark, however, has much more to offer than a simplistic examination of MARKET-GARDEN. Certainly any work that focuses on British attempts to cross the Rhine must address the events of September 1944, and the first

part of the book does so. However, the author's unique presentation of events makes his book a distinctive addition to the historiography of the period. Clark is adept at utilizing first-person accounts of small-unit actions and blending them into the overall narrative. Where other authors describe brief incidences of combat, Clark takes participants' own words and uses them to bring the reader inside the action, describing settings so that the reader gains a first-person perspective. Admittedly certain specifics can be lost in such an account, but for the most part the information lost consists primarily of facts and figures, which are either already known to the reader or can be easily discovered elsewhere. The author includes detailed, appropriate maps to supplement the work, which provide the reader with added context.

The aspects of these campaigns best captured by Clark and those elements of his scholarship that demonstrate the fullest contribution of his research involve detailing the continuity between not only the two operations, but also the connectivity between airborne and ground offensives within them. *Crossing the Rhine* is predominantly a history of World War II airborne operations. The author recognizes that these airborne operations did not occur in a vacuum and were conducted with simultaneous ground maneuvers. This relationship is more challenging to construct in the case of Operation MARKET-GARDEN due to the breadth of the airborne insertion and ground support activity. However, Clark ably highlights this multidimensional aspect of both MARKET-GARDEN and PLUNDER VARSITY.

To ground the connection between the two operations firmly, Clark incorporates a chronological narrative that explains the strategic linkages and draws a direct line between September 1944 and March 1945. In too many studies of this same period, the evacuation of the Oosterbeek bridgehead marks a definitive capstone to combat on the Rhine for a number of months. The clearing of the Antwerp approaches and the battle for the Reichswald seldom appear as anything other than brief and divergent sideshows. PLUN-

DER VARSITY seems equally as forgotten and commonly earns recognition as an unsophisticated maneuver across a lightly defended water obstacle. Clark weaves the entirety of events along the Rhine together, providing not only the strategic imperatives that led to Operation PLUNDER VARSITY, but also the context in which it occurred. Presented this way, the fighting on the lower Rhine is much more coherent and understandable.

Although titled *Crossing the Rhine*, the focus of the research rests exclusively in the 21 Army Group's area of operations; Montgomery's activities form the centerpiece of this work. The operations of General Omar N. Bradley's 12th Army Group and the Rhine crossings along the upper Rhine receive only passing mention. Clark is fairly typical of contemporary historiographers in his depiction of Montgomery and the strained relationships within the highest ranks of the Allied command structure. The author emphasizes Montgomery's significant tactical abilities, particularly in methodical and deliberate operations, as well as his egotistical nature and abrasiveness when dealing with others.

In Clark's critique of the tactical operations, he is much more judgmental of Montgomery's conduct in MARKET-GARDEN than in PLUNDER VARSITY, emphasizing the lessons he learned in the earlier endeavor that were successfully integrated into the later one. While finding Montgomery's underlying strategic reasoning for MARKET-GARDEN sound, Clark finds fault with his rush to execution and lack of detailed planning for such a complex operation. However, six months later Montgomery had internalized tactical mistakes from the earlier defeat and taken heed of the key lessons in Holland. The results were tremendously successful. For Clark, however, tactical evaluations are not central to the study. The author's intent, which he accomplishes, remains to demonstrate the relationship of MARKET-GARDEN and PLUNDER VARSITY to the overall strategic vision of Allied leadership in Western Europe.

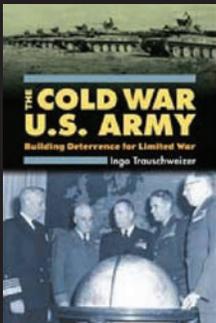
Military and historical professionals will not be the only appreciative

readers of *Crossing the Rhine*. Clark's work will have broad appeal and find a wide audience. Particularly with his discussion on PLUNDER VARSITY, which does not often receive the attention of its more famous predecessor MARKET-GARDEN, Clark is able to add useful debates and insights into Allied strategy and the British-led airborne operations that jumped the Rhine, leading to the final defeat of Germany in 1945.

**Dr. Michael A. Boden**, a retired Army officer, is an associate dean of academic affairs at Dutchess Community College in Poughkeepsie, New York. Previously, he taught history at the United States Military Academy at West Point and Hofstra University. He is currently editing for publication his dissertation on Friedrich Engels and nineteenth-century socialist military thought.



*The Cold War U.S. Army: Building Deterrence for Limited War*



By Ingo Tauschweizer  
University of Kansas Press, 2008  
Pp. xv, 366. \$39.95

**Review by Stephen A. Bourque**

With the plethora of books covering America's wars in Korea and Vietnam, the casual reader could exaggerate the importance of these conflicts on the United States Army. While these Asian land wars sapped the Army's energy and blood, the institution never lost sight of its primary task

of defeating a Soviet incursion into Western Europe. As any professional soldier who served between 1950 and 1990 knows, the U.S. Army was a European army. Most veterans of that era, especially those serving in armor, mechanized infantry, and field artillery units, experienced multiple Return of Forces to Germany exercises, gunnery at Grafenwöhr, cross-country maneuvers in the fall and winter, Army Training and Evaluation Programs at Hohenfels, and evenings in German *gasthauser* with schnitzel and beer.

Ingo Tauschweizer, a former Max Weber fellow and now an assistant professor of history at Ohio University, reminds us that the U.S. Army of that era was primarily a Cold War Army. It was a ground force designed to convince the Red Army's political bosses that an attack against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states would not be a bloodless training exercise. As such, it prepared for, in Tauschweizer's view, a limited war, a term he adapted from Robert Osgood's book *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy* (Chicago, Ill., 1957). This kind of conflict resulted from the realization that the destructiveness of nuclear weapons was so great that Soviet leaders would probably limit their military aims to what they could get away with short of triggering a massive American atomic retaliation. Hence, the forces confronting the Red Army in Europe needed to be powerful enough to deter such aggression. This was a challenge unprecedented in the history of the U.S. Army, in that it needed to have a credible force ready to fight at the beginning of a war.

The U.S. Army's journey from postwar demobilization and confusion in the atomic era to mastery of operational art in Operation DESERT STORM was long and difficult. In six well-crafted chapters, the author leads the reader through a complex interplay of politicians, generals, doctrine, technology, and international relations. Arguing that there never was a master plan, he dissects the Army's integration of nuclear weapons, the Pentomic experiment in the Eisenhower administration, the introduc-

tion of the Reorganization Objective Army Division in the Kennedy era, the effect of the Vietnam era on the Army in Europe, the introduction of operational art, and the development of AirLand Battle doctrine. The force that emerged in 1991, according to Tauschweizer, bore little resemblance to its World War II predecessor but was the product of its NATO partnership, especially its relationship to the Bundeswehr. Guided by an array of forward-thinking leaders, especially Matthew B. Ridgway, Maxwell D. Taylor, William E. DePuy, and Donn A. Starry, the U.S. Army slowly evolved into a professional force able to immediately execute limited, high-intensity war.

*The Cold War U.S. Army* is a model of scholarly research. The author's preface leaves little doubt that he consulted each period's experts in his quest for meaningful evidence. Every chapter's documentation cites the most important secondary sources on the topic and augments them with an impressive array of primary material, including government reports, military orders, and personal interviews. His extensive bibliography will be a valuable resource to students interested in understanding the Army in the second half of the twentieth century.

Potential readers should be aware of some of this book's limitations. As the author acknowledges, *The Cold War U.S. Army* is about the Army and especially the European-based Army. Enthusiasts of the XVIII Airborne Corps, the Army Rangers, and the Special Forces will find little to embrace. It is ground-centric, and the author discusses the period's contributions by the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps only in passing. Tauschweizer sometimes finds it difficult to escape from the military penchant for acronyms. Pages full of abbreviations such as CONARC (Continental Army Command), ROCAD (Reorganization of the Current Armored Division), and ROTAD (Reorganization of the Airborne Division) are annoying to this reviewer, especially since he is fighting battles each day to remove these distractions from his own student's prose. Finally, *The Cold War*

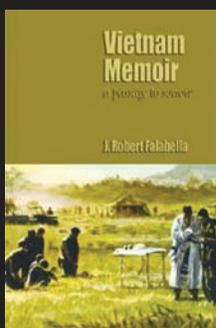
*U.S. Army* is the result of a well-written and researched doctoral dissertation. As such, the prose is matter-of-fact and not especially stirring.

However, considering these minor caveats, *The Cold War U.S. Army* is an extremely important book. Thorough, competently crafted, and insightful, this volume presents the best operational and strategic analysis to date of the U.S. Army's experience from 1950 to 1991. It will become an essential reference for current officers and military historians alike. Readers of *Army History* should acquire it for their personal libraries.

**Dr. Stephen A. Bourque** is a professor of military history at the School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He is the author of *Jayhawk! The VII Corps in the Persian Gulf War* (CMH, 2002) and *The Road to Safwan* (Denton, Tex., 2007).



### *Vietnam Memoir: A Passage to Sorrow*



By J. Robert Falabella  
Naval Institute Press, 2010  
Pp. v, 136. \$17.95

### Review by Jonathan Newell

While many war memoirs describe battles, troop movements, and strategy, J. Robert Falabella's memoir maps the human dimensions of war. He delivers a gripping account of war's effect on the human body and spirit as

seen from a chaplain's perspective. Falabella volunteered in 1966 as a Roman Catholic priest for a tour in Vietnam, and he served with the 25th Infantry Division in 1967–1968, seeing combat and earning Silver and Bronze Stars.

The author was initially assigned to the Support Command at Cu Chi near Saigon but was then transferred by his superior to a combat unit. He quickly realized that he had to create opportunities and utilize his own resources to accomplish his chaplain duties. Because of the nature of the infantry mission, Falabella adapted to the harsh field conditions, learned how to gain transportation and access to the troops, and tried to share as many of their experiences as he could. Through such work, he earned his spot as a respected member of the infantry unit.

Even as a chaplain, he participated in combat operations. From his discussions with soldiers about the morality of war, he came to believe it appropriate to bear arms. Falabella sought to aid his soldiers whenever possible, rescuing the wounded, scavenging discarded ammunition, or providing cover fire. Such experiences gave him the emotional understanding he needed to better comprehend the lives of his soldiers. While his views on the morality of killing in war did not change, his views on the essential moral nature of the conflict in Vietnam did.

One of the recurrent themes in the memoir is carelessness. The author saw it everywhere. A lieutenant teaching about ordnance safety kills himself and injures others; troops distracted by prostitutes compromise security; and soldiers leaving discarded supplies within the Viet Cong's reach. Falabella argues that such carelessness was systemic, not just part of life in base camp. He faults leaders for removing themselves from the real-life experiences of the troops and focusing on the wrong priorities. Ultimately, he believes the nation was careless with its young men and blindly sacrificed its soldiers because it did not understand the nature of the war.

Falabella also noted deep ironies in the Vietnam experience. He high-

lighted incidents such as departing troops jeering the newcomers. He reminisced about helping a local orphanage then coming to the realization that the American presence may have created the greater need for the institution. Troops were given sexually stimulating material then expected not to act on it. Soldiers turned to drugs and prostitutes, weakening their own personal moral fiber. Sometimes troops were in more danger at base camp than in the field. His first hooch was flattened by an enemy rocket; later, a negligent soldier almost killed him with shrapnel from a mishandled rocket. Such juxtapositions of life and death, ideals and moral failure, give an unsettling picture of war as a kind of moral and ethical chaos wherein nothing is certain.

These elements lead to a sense of injustice permeating the stories the author recounts. Troops both in the field and at base camp get combat pay even though conditions are entirely different. Infantrymen receive the poorest food, shelter, and equipment while support troops enjoy a "typical American lifestyle" back at the base. Scratches and life-threatening injuries both receive Purple Hearts. Men die days before catching the "Freedom Bird" home; other men die because politicians refuse certain tactical adjustments. Such events leave Falabella emotionally drained. As a chaplain, he had entered the war motivated by the ideals of service. He left the war disillusioned though he capably fulfilled his chaplain ministry. Surrounded by death and destruction, he questions the basic premises of the war. He remarks that he entered Vietnam with "apprehension" and "hope" but left with only "disappointment" and "sorrow" (p. 136).

His work makes an excellent contribution to the vast category of Vietnam War memoirs. As a chaplain, he offers a unique perspective and provides an ethical and moral evaluation of experiences. He gives vivid descriptions of the sights and sounds of life in base camp, rear detachments, and the front lines. While he excels at presenting the details of when and where his stories take place, the setting always

fades into the background and the emotional and spiritual events take center stage. Throughout the book, Falabella is refreshingly honest about his own misgivings and discomforts. He is also remarkably candid in his assessment of the moral and ethical conduct of the war, and this is where the ultimate value of this short work lies. Such stories keep the human element at the forefront of the nation's memory. Discussions of strategic and tactical concerns have their place, but

they must be accompanied by works such as Falabella's. At its core, war will always remain a human activity, guided by powerful values, ethics, and emotions. Stories and memoirs like this one serve the nation well by not allowing citizens to forget the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by its servicemen and servicewomen every day, whether at peace or at war.

Note: This work was originally published in 1971 by Pageant Press International.

**First Lt. Jonathan Newell** served as a commissioned officer in the Army Reserve from 2004 to 2010. As a chaplain candidate, he supported religious operations throughout the northeastern United States and is currently an ordained Baptist minister.



## ARMYHISTORY

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# THE CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

DR. RICHARD W. STEWART



## WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG? (AN OFFICIAL HISTORY'S JOURNEY)

In my last column, as you may recall, I tried to answer the question posed to me by some unit historians about what happened to the historical material they collected while in an overseas contingency operation and sent to the Center. This footnote will try to respond to another question about the historical process, which also comes up frequently. That question is why does the Center take so long to write official history volumes? This is a serious question that deserves a serious answer.

There are a number of reasons why official history products take longer (sometimes much longer) to produce than other historical books. The first revolves around the very nature of the product. The kind of book desired always drives the content, length, sources used, and thus the time necessary to produce it. Official histories are very different than those produced in academia. They cover large spans of time and include detailed institutional, logistical, organizational, and combat information in an attempt to be as comprehensive as possible. Academic military historians can limit the scope of their coverage, focus on a few key events, or even skip quickly from topic to topic with generally no pretense to comprehensiveness. They also rarely deal in any great detail with the nuts and bolts of military operations, logistics, transportation, personnel policy, recruitment, or a host of other support functions. They can focus on high-level policy or just specialize in combat operations or biography. The Center does not have that luxury. We owe it to the Army to try and tell the whole story of an event or portion of a conflict or campaign, and that takes time.

The next big problem we face is one of source materials. Official histories of the Army are generally started shortly after the end of a conflict although often shorter studies are written during an operation. They are thus heavily reliant on a wide variety of documents and unit history material collected haphazardly by unit historians or Military History Detachments (MHDs) during the conflict. This material is necessarily hit or miss in terms of its coverage of events, is often completely unsorted, and is

generally classified. This is in direct contrast to the World War II-era historians, who were, in essence, presented a huge collection of pre-sorted historical documents, most of which had been administratively collected and declassified by an army of clerks. This explains, in part, why Army historians could generate dozens of volumes of the official history of World War II in a relatively short period. Most of the combat volumes were published within fifteen years of the end of the war. Official histories today start out with a major challenge of collecting, collating, sorting, and organizing material that has not yet made it to a major archive, has had no order imposed on it, and often retains its classification so it must be handled carefully. The official historians of contemporary operations are thus often the first to attempt to tell a detailed and accurate story of specific military operations to serve the Army and the public. There are few secondary sources or guideposts to illuminate the way. And accuracy in an official history is *not* optional.

Once some of the major sources are sorted and in place, the real research begins as official historians seek to master the subject sufficiently to begin writing the first draft of their volume. Detailed research without any previous secondary sources to “lead the way” is time-intensive, with many chances of blind alleys, contradictory data, or major holes in the evidence. Those holes may have to be filled with time-consuming oral history interviews (in the case of contemporary events) or lengthy research journeys to university archives, presidential libraries, state and local historical societies, various Army posts, or any number of other sites. And contrary to the beliefs of many non-historians, all the historical evidence is not “online” and available electronically. Historians still have to go out and find the evidence.

After completing the research, official historians then face the task of collating that data into an organized outline to produce a coherent narrative of 400 to 600 manuscript pages, but the size can easily grow in excess of 700 pages depending on the topic. These pages consist of thousands

of carefully crafted sentences built into hundreds of logically structured paragraphs. Anyone who has ever attempted to write a long narrative manuscript complete with returns to archives and long “dry-spells” of days and weeks of writer’s block knows how challenging this can be even for fully trained historians. Writing is hard work and the high standards of the Center mandate a well-crafted account.

Once the manuscript is written, which can easily take eight years, again depending on the topic, an author is about halfway there. While academic historians often share their work with friends and colleagues for their criticism, Center historians have many levels of mandated reviews besides their peers. Branch chiefs review chapters and make numerous changes of style, organization, and content. The official histories are written in the Center’s Histories Division, and that division chief must provide a final review of the entire manuscript before it is forwarded to the Chief Historian for further examination and paneling with outside experts. Those experts often recommend extensive changes to the manuscript. The Chief Historian specifies in his panel report which changes must be made by the author. The process can take a year or more just to make these final changes to satisfy the highest standards of historical scholarship and to withstand the most exacting scrutiny by the historical community. No academic historians face this same level of intensive review.

Once the manuscript gains the final approval of the Chief Historian, it goes to the editors in the Historical Products Branch. An editor reviews it extensively and provides detailed recommendations on changes to grammar, style, scholarly notation, and presentation. Often she or he reviews the footnotes and citations just to be sure that they are accurate and thorough. The editor works closely with the author to resolve all changes, but for a major historical manuscript the process can easily take a year to eighteen months. While the manuscript is being edited, the author finalizes his or her graphics and photo plans. Finding just the right photographs often can take a great deal of additional research. While the search for photos continues, the cartographer works on creating original maps. It is not uncommon for Center publications, especially combat histories, to create upwards of thirty original maps, many in color. Few university presses or commercial publishing houses have the resources or interest to prepare such high-quality maps, but the official histories require them. Maps simply add an essential dimension to our products that the Army and the public deserve. Upon completion of editing, the entire manuscript then moves to the production section for final layout in pages. Only then can the manuscript go to an indexer, who can take up to three months to prepare a comprehensive, useful index. Again, our standards for indexes are higher than most commercial publishers because we want to ensure that our detailed analysis has the right index so that Army audiences and doctrine writers can take full advantage of the information in the book. Once the manuscript is indexed and page proofs are created, it undergoes one final proofreading before the book is sent to the Government Printing Office (GPO). Once at GPO

printing a full-color scholarly book with dozens of maps, a hundred photographs, and many charts often takes three to four months. The printing process will also include interim page proofs, press inspections, press quality control steps, and finally shipping to the Center and to the St. Louis publications warehouse.

All of the above steps in the production of a high-quality official history of the U.S. Army can easily take nine years from start to finish: from assignment of a topic through research and writing to reviewing, editing, layout, indexing, and printing. This timeline also assumes that the historians are not assigned any additional tasks (serving on study groups; writing commemorative or Army birthday pamphlets; crafting historical information papers for the Army Staff; being detailed to Headquarters, Department of the Army, to serve on a “roles and missions” study for six to eight months; or being sent to serve on a Chief of Staff of the Army transition group; and so forth). This often happens. In one recent instance with one of the most productive historians at the Center, of the eight and a half years he spent completing his project, only five and a half years actually consisted of work on the manuscript. The other three years involved diversions to a wide variety of additional duties and tasks. Such diversions are all too common and give the false impression to outsiders that an author cannot complete a work in a timely fashion, when the reality is quite different. The nine-year timetable also assumes that the assigned author will stay with the project and not take another job or seek professional advancement elsewhere. When an author leaves a book project for whatever reason, finding another historian who is not already working on a project and bringing him or her up to speed on a new, partially completed, history can take some time. Occasionally, the transition does not work because all historians are not created equally and some simply cannot handle the stress of researching and writing a large official history regardless of educational preparation. Then a book project can languish for years waiting for the right author.

In short, even in an ideal world, the creation of an official history is a major undertaking that takes, on average, approximately eight years from start to finish assuming no significant diversions or loss of an author. Any attempts to speed up the process and rush to conclusions, to be less than thorough in locating evidence or assessing how well that evidence is presented, or to cut corners on production standards will do the Army a disservice. Only through the careful sifting of fragments of evidence and the construction of accurate, objective, logically reasoned sentences, paragraphs, and chapters can the best official history be produced. That takes time. This is similar in some ways to a famous wine commercial of a number of years back that stated, “We serve no wine before its time.” Similarly, we at the Center will serve no history before it is ready. If we produced less than the highest quality work, we would regret it, and so would the Army. As always, I welcome your comments at [Richard.Stewart2@us.army.mil](mailto:Richard.Stewart2@us.army.mil).



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